

A Sermon.

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(Taken down by a Hearer.)

“But in the last days it shall come to pass; that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow into it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem” – Micah 4:1,2.

The preceding chapter closes with a gloomy view of the Church. Zion was to be ploughed as a field; Jerusalem was to become heaps; and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest. There was to be a desolation; and the prophet tells the procuring cause of this desolation, namely, the sins of the people, and the sin of idolatry in particular. The priests and the princes – the leaders of the people – led them astray and made them to err. It is observable that in every time of declension in the Church, the evil begins with the teachers, whether they be prophets or priests. And as a rule the practice of the people will be according to the teaching they receive; and here the teaching and the practice were sinful. But the Lord threatened the people for their sins, and He threatened in particular the leaders of the people. The people were to be deprived of seers or prophets. “Therefore night shall be unto you, that ye shall not have a vision: and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine: and the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall be dark over them. Then shall the seers be ashamed, and the diviners confounded: yea, they shall all cover their lips, for there is no answer of God.”

The leaders of the people professed to build up Zion, but it was in the wrong way – it was by blood, by persecuting to death those who would not comply with their own corrupt teaching. This is always the case when there is a great forsaking of the faith, and those persecuted are God’s people. Such are persecuted because they will not turn from the truth to believe a lie. It is no new thing. History repeats itself. It was the case in the days of Micah, and for the sake of these false teachers Zion was to be ploughed, Jerusalem to become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest.

But is not God to have a Church in the world? Is it to become extinct? No. Although He punishes people for their sins, and although the Church is brought low because of them, yet the Lord will have a Church on the earth. He destroyed the old world, and swept off from the face of the earth the workers of iniquity – almost all that generation except eight persons – but He provided for His Church; He raised up Zion again. The chapter in which we have our text begins with a “But,” indicating that better things were to take place. In endeavouring to speak from these words, as the Lord may enable me, I shall direct your attention to three things: –

- I. – The Church as it is spoken of here – as the mountain of the house of the Lord.
- II. – The promise concerning the Church.
- III. – The means to accomplish the promise.

I. – The Church is spoken of here under the emblem of a mountain. You know it was on a mountain that the temple was built by Solomon – Mount Zion; and not only that, the Old Testament Church is sometimes called in Scripture a mountain. The New Testament Church

is also so called, as you find the Apostle Paul saying in Hebrews 12:18, "For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, . . . but ye are come unto Mount Zion." Now this term "mountain," as applied to the Church of God, is suggestive of several things.

It suggests, first, to our mind the idea of *creation*. A mountain is the work of God. Man can do many things, but he cannot create a mountain. He cannot create even the least atom of matter. When you see a house, you know that it was built by man; but when you see a mountain you say instinctively, within yourself, "This is the work of God," though there are indeed many who deny God Himself; and when they see a mountain, never think of it as the work of God. Well, as a mountain is part of the creation of God, so is the Church, whether we take the Church to mean the members of the Church or the outward organization thereof, the means of grace, and the ordinances of God's house. We find believers themselves acknowledging this: "We are his workmanship, created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works." Believers, then, who are true members of the Church, are created by God, who created the whole world. Man cannot change himself in a saving way: that is the work of God. And God creates them anew in Christ Jesus by the effectual working of His Spirit through the Word. Christ taught the necessity of this change to Nicodemus: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." As a mountain is the creation of God, so are the means of grace and the ordinances of His house. They are not the invention of man, but they have been divinely appointed, and they are, we may say, His creation, for before He instituted them they had no existence. God gave existence to them, and set them up in His Church, and such things as have no divine authority – the inventions of men – do not belong to the Church of God at all. People are better without them, and they should have no place in the worship of God.

The second idea suggested by a mountain is *stability* and *durability*. A mountain is a stable, firm, and lasting thing, and so we read of "the everlasting hills." Not that any hills are, in the absolute sense, everlasting, but, relatively, they stand firm and sure from the creation till this earth shall be destroyed. In the midst of all the changes that have taken place during past ages, there is no change on the mountains. Many generations have passed from time to eternity, but the present generation looks at the very same mountains and hills that the first generation in the world saw. The Church, however, is more stable than the "everlasting hills;" for "the mountains shall depart and the hills shall be removed," but the Church built on the Rock Christ shall not be overthrown or removed. The foundation of the Church was laid in the divine purpose before the foundation of the world, and it is more durable than the mountains. Notwithstanding all the efforts made by enemies to throw it off its foundation, the Church is still in the world, and that is a great wonder; but all the works of God are works of wonder. Satan and all his hosts are unable to overthrow the Church of God: "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." No man ever thought of going to Ben Wyvis with the intention of throwing it off its foundations; it would be madness to think of such a thing, for it is impossible; and yet many try to put their shoulders to the Church of God to overthrow it, but even the gates of hell cannot prevail against it. This is an encouragement to God's people in all ages: the Church cannot be overthrown by the power of enemies, however strong and however numerous they may be. Greater is he that is with the Church than all they that be against it. This is as true today as it was in the past, and we ought to derive comfort from it, if we take upon ourselves the burden of Christ's cause, and we cannot but take that burden upon us, because God laid it on our shoulders and we dare not throw it off till He takes it off Himself, and that may not be long in the case of some. If saved, it would be better to be taken away from this burden in an evil age. I was at one time so concerned about the declension of the Church, and the evils that were coming in upon her, that I was desirous, if prepared, that God would take me home; but I was rebuked for that, and was made to see that such a desire was selfish, and arose from a desire for self-preservation, and not from a desire for His glory;

and from that day I have been endeavouring to say, “Thy will be done.” I would not like to go from the midst of trouble to the rest of heaven merely to escape my share of the afflictions of the Church.

Another idea suggested by the term mountain, is *visibility*. The Church is a visible institution. Many lesser objects may escape your view when travelling through the country, but you cannot avoid seeing a mountain, if you have eyes to see. The Church is like a mountain that rises high and must be seen; and so Christ says to His disciples that they are like a city built upon a hill that cannot be hid. The Church means both God’s people and those institutions which he has set up in it. There is a Church that claims visibility, but it is not like a city set upon a hill, for they do most of their work in secret, and that is a bad sign. There is nothing in the Church of God that requires to be hid. Everything in it stands the light of day; and everything in a Church that cannot stand the light of day belongs to the works of darkness. Remember this, my friends. For instance, in the Ritualistic section of the Protestant Church of England there are seven secret societies, and they try to hide everything they do from the sight of the world, and especially from Protestants. Why is that? Ah, my friends, it is because they do not belong to the visible Church of God. The true Church of God can stand the gaze of enemies as well as of friends; it can stand the light of day; it has nothing to hide: but a church that has many things to hide belongs rather to the kingdom of darkness than to the true Church of God.

But although a mountain is visible, as a rule, yet sometimes it is made invisible by mist, and under that cloud of mist it is out of sight for a time, so that no creature can see it. And so it has sometimes been with the Church. It has sometimes been covered from view by the mist of error, and error has its degrees in the Church just as natural mist has its degrees. Sometimes only the top of the mountain is covered with mist, while the rest of it is quite visible. At other times the mist may descend half-way down the mountain. But occasionally you find the entire mountain covered with mist from top to base, so that it is entirely hid from view. So it is with the Church. For more than one thousand years before the glorious Reformation of the sixteenth century the Church was covered from the very top to the bottom with the mist of error, and no mist is so injurious and so dangerous as the mist of error. You may walk many miles in a natural mist and be nothing the worse for it, but not so in the mist of error. It is hurtful and destructive to a high degree, and many have lost their souls in it. During that long period the light of the Bible was not seen. There was no such thing as family worship, or reading the Bible, at least in the Church. What, then? Fables and traditions of the elders, with superstitions of the heathen and Jewish ceremonies, made up all the teaching given during that long period to immortal souls. When the Reformers began to teach the people from the Bible the priests denounced them as heretics, and charged them with introducing innovations into the Church. What do you think of such false teachers of the people? Yet today we see foolish people going with the stream – the stream that is flowing towards the dark ages again – and there are very few to warn them. Paul says “Preach the word,” and if we do not preach the Scriptures to the people, we have nothing else to give them; but these priests said that it was the devil’s work to teach the people from the Scriptures, and instead of preaching Christ and His atoning sacrifice and forgiveness through His blood, they sent agents through the different countries of Europe with indulgences and promises to the people that, if they paid so much, all their sins would be forgiven – not only their past sins but their future sins – and they were promised God would not punish them! Was it not a fearful thing to be selling such things? Well, instead of this the gospel began to be preached; and as when the wind blows, the mist covering the mountains is dispelled, so when the Holy Spirit blew upon the Church, through His own Word, the mist of error vanished away. Ah, my friends, what a blessing came to the countries of Europe at the Reformation when that mist was dispelled! There is nothing that can dispel the lie but the

truth. Though the mist covered the Church for so many years, yet the Church was not extinct. There still was a remnant in France, in Switzerland, and in other parts of the world. There was a witness for God left on the earth. When the mist vanishes, the same old mountain appears again, and so when the mist of error was dispelled the Church reappeared in all its beauty.

Alas, that in our own day the mist should be coming down heavily upon the mountain of the house of the Lord. I am not going to say much upon this, but is the mist not coming down when in the Protestant Church of England there are 9,600 “priests” celebrating mass, hearing confession, and teaching all manner of Romish doctrines? Again, Mr. Walter Walsh, author of “The Secret History of the Oxford Movement,” who searched into the matter, assures us that of the 300 clergymen in the Scottish Episcopal Church, no fewer than 250 [in 1894] are Romanisers; and the way he came to know this was that he found their names as members of Romanising secret societies! The late Bishop of Argyle and the Isles, who lived at Ballachulish, was a member of a Romanising society, and yet he pretended to be a Protestant. The way in which these Ritualists introduce the mass (they do not call it mass) is a very cunning one. They changed the hour of the communion from the evening to the morning, as they knew people would not be fasting in the evening – and mass must be celebrated fasting. I have seen myself, in passing through the country, and even in the Highlands, a placard, “Holy Communion at 8 o’clock a.m.”, placed outside the doors of Scottish Episcopal Churches. Whenever I see that, I say to myself, “That is suspicious: I suspect that Church is a Roman Catholic Church:” and I judge from the way they are going on in England. That is how they introduced the mass into the English Church. In the mass they profess to offer up Christ as a sacrifice, not only for the living, but also for the dead; that is, they profess to bring the dead out of purgatory – but, as there is no such place, they must mean hell, and they cannot take them out of hell. Now, I wish to impress this upon you, as I may not have the opportunity of warning you much longer. The intention of the Ritualists is to have the Protestant Churches united with the Romish Church, and so to bring these under the Papacy again. That is the aim. Take warning, my friends, the day may come, and little children here today may see it, if they live to be 40 years of age, or even less, when people will be put to death if they refuse to burn their Bibles, or if they refuse to kneel down before the image of the Virgin Mary to worship her. We are fast hurrying on to this. The King on the throne encourages it, and the Queen is an idolatress. She has, we are told, images of the Virgin Mary and other saints in her room, and once a year, at least, she goes to make confession to a priest. Ah, my friends, that is what it has come to. Ah! take warning.

Another idea suggested by a mountain, is *height*. The mountain is the highest part of the earth. God, in His infinite wisdom, saw it proper, in creating the world, that all the earth should not be of the same level. He ordained that some parts of the earth should be higher than other parts, and so He made hillocks and hills higher than the plains, and mountains the highest of all. The Church, then, is the highest and most glorious institution that God has set up in the world. He has set up kingdoms and other powers, but the Church is above them all. I do not mean that in civil matters the Church is not to obey the civil magistrate, but in religious matters the Church is the highest institution in the world. The Church and the State have co-ordinate jurisdictions; the one is not to encroach on the other. The Roman Catholic Church, so far as they can carry that out, say that they are not subject to the law of the kingdom; that is, if a priest commits any crime, he claims the right of exemption from punishment. Is not that extraordinary? Well, that is not the view we Protestants take of it. If a minister breaks the law of the kingdom, he is to be dealt with according to the law of the kingdom, and to be punished. We keep to the rule of God’s Word, while those who claim to be the only true Church do not accept God’s Word as their rule at all.

Well, from the top of the mountain a more extensive view can be had than from the other parts of the earth. We see yearly a large number of people visiting the Highlands, who climb the high hills to get a more extensive view. What views, then, are to be had from the top of the mountain of the house of the Lord? You can see upwards, downwards, and around you.

Looking *upwards* you can see to the third heaven; you can see within the veil; you can see God; you can see on His right hand Christ the Mediator, ever living to make intercession for His people; you can see the holy angels; you can see the spirits of just men made perfect. You can see all these from the top of this mountain; you cannot see them from the plain ground where the unconverted are. Looking *downwards*, how far can you see?

You can see to the lowest hell. You can see the old enemy, Satan, there; you can see fallen angels there; and you can see there the spirits of wicked men that died. You can see them there in hell. John Bunyan had a sight of hell, but you also may have a sight of hell if you come to the top of the mountain of the house of the Lord. Then, looking *around* you, what do you see? You see the state of the human race in their sinful and lost condition; “for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” It is only in the Church you can see this – in the Church where God has given us the revelation of His Word. You remember that David was tempted on a certain occasion to envy the wicked because of their prosperity, but when he entered the sanctuary – or, in other words, when he ascended this mountain – he saw that their end was destruction, and then he ceased to envy them.

These ideas, then, are suggested to us by the term “mountain,” but as it would keep you too long to take up the other heads, we must leave them till the evening or some future occasion, if the Lord will. May God bless His Word!

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(Continued)

When speaking from these words in the afternoon we stopped at considering the height of the mountain and the views to be seen from the top of it. Before leaving this point I may say that one looking down from the top of this mountain will see the things of this world very small. Houses and castles, and other things that appeared so big to him when standing on the low ground, now appear to be very little indeed; and men who looked so great in the eyes of their fellows now appear to be just like little children. As this is true naturally, so it is true spiritually. Before conversion, and before ascending this mountain of the house of the Lord, the sinner looked upon this world as the greatest thing in existence; but now, being changed himself by the Spirit of God, he views things in the light of eternity and in the light of God’s Word, and, like Paul, he counts all things loss – yea, he reckons them as dung – compared with the knowledge of Christ Jesus, his Lord. Before conversion he sought his happiness in the pleasures and amusements of this earth – labouring to draw happiness from broken cisterns which can hold no water; but now, being savingly changed, he views the pleasures of this life from the top of the mountain as nothing compared with the pleasures that the Holy Spirit imparts to his soul – the joy that is unspeakable and full of glory. If you ask those who seek happiness in amusements – “innocent amusements” they call the theatre, concerts, and dances – why they do not give up such things, “Ah,” they will say, “we shall be dull and without happiness if we give up all our amusements.” That is their answer. But the Christian would not exchange his joy in the Lord for one moment for all the pleasures derived by the people of the world from their amusements. The Psalmist says –

“For in Thy courts one day excels
a thousand; rather in
My God’s house will I keep a door
than dwell in tents of sin.”

I am not going to dwell upon this, but it gives pain to my heart – knowing the things of eternity and the preciousness of immortal souls – when I see and read of young boys and girls, and even their fathers and mothers, going to the dance and to the theatre at our very doors.

II. – I now proceed to the second head, viz., the promise concerning the Church, and you will observe that this promise is twofold. It has respect

(1) to what God promises to do concerning the Church itself, and

(2) concerning the flowing of people and nations into the Church.

(1) Well, the promise as it relates to the Church itself is this – “It shall be established on the top of the mountains and exalted above the hills,” and this was to take place “in the last days.” Though God had a Church in the world during the Old Testament dispensation, yet it was not so established as not to give place to a Church in a new form, for you remember that the Apostle Paul quoted from Old Testament prophecy – “I will shake not the earth only, but the heavens also. Here the earth means the political state, and the heavens the ecclesiastical state; and Paul quotes this Scripture as an argument why the old dispensation should pass away to give place to the new. The Church state under the old economy was changed, but the Church state under the new is established in such a way that it shall never be moved till Christ comes to shake the heavens and the earth, and to judge the world. This was accomplished when the canon of Scripture was completed, and when the doctrines of the Church were fixed and the mode of worship settled; so that the state of the Church now, with regard to doctrine and mode of worship, is the best that can be on this side of glory. People who desire change in these matters ought to give good heed to this.

The Apostle Paul, in the same epistle to the Hebrews, brings forward another argument in the seventh chapter. “The law,” that is, the ceremonial law, “made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did.” That is, the Gospel made things perfect. Perfection came not by the Levitical priesthood, but perfection came by the Priesthood of Christ. The sacrifice He offered up was perfect; the satisfaction He rendered to divine justice was perfect; and the mode of worship He has appointed in the New Testament Church is so perfect that it is finally fixed, established, and can never be removed to give place to a third dispensation. It is remarkable that any changes that are made by people in the way of worship are backward movement. The change from the Old Testament to the New Testament was a forward one. Why is it that, when people make any change at all, it is a change for the worse? Ah! just because it is impossible to improve upon the mode of worship and doctrine appointed by Christ, and any move from that must necessarily be a retrograde and not a progressive one. People ought to have their eyes opened. It is to be feared that this generation is blindfolded. They shut their eyes willingly, and do not try to think of spiritual things at all according to Scripture. They act like children. When changes are proposed people ought to ask themselves if what is proposed is a new thing, and if it ever existed in the world before? If people exercised their reason and knowledge in this way they would find that the so-called “new” ideas are nothing but a backward movement to modes and doctrines that existed during a previous dispensation which is abolished. Christ not only gives His people a spiritual understanding, but even in natural things God’s people are more intelligent than those that are still in a state of nature.

Well, then, it was promised that the Church should be rooted in the earth, and fixed in regard to doctrine and mode of worship. It was to be established on the top of the mountains and exalted above the hills. Not on the top of one mountain, as it was of old – on Mount Zion – but in Gospel times the Church was to be established on the top of all the mountains of the earth and exalted above all the hills. Mountains and hills are here spoken of figuratively. As mountains are greater than hills, so mountains here may mean kingdoms; and this means, as

far as we understand it, that the kingdoms of the world shall give its proper place to the kingdom of Christ. Instead of lifting their heads above it and despising it, they now submit themselves willingly to the government of Christ, and give the highest place in their minds to the cause of Christ. Oh, what a glorious day! This is the promise, then, and faithful is He that promised, who also will perform. The promise is absolute. It does not say, "It may be," or "It will be on such and such conditions." No; there are no conditions or qualifications. It is an absolute promise, and as sure as God gave the promise, it shall be fulfilled. The Church of Christ shall be acknowledged by all the kingdoms of this world, and they will consider themselves under the law of Christ and not above it. The great majority of the kingdoms of the earth have raised their heads above the cause of Christ, and despised it, and persecuted it; but ah! in the last days (and we are, in a sense, living already in the last days, which began when Christ rose from the dead, and shall continue till He comes again to judge the world) the promise is to be fulfilled concerning the mountain of the house of the Lord. Christianity will be embraced then not only by the mountains, or kingdoms, but also by the hills, or all the other parts of the earth. All the kingdoms of the world shall be made the kingdoms of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The prophet Micah had to deliver this comforting message at a time when it was much needed. When the mountain of the house of the Lord was a ploughed field and made heaps and a desolation, Micah was commissioned by God to declare this message, and we declare it at second hand. It is not the less divine, it is not of less authority because we deliver it at second hand. It is the truth of God that never changes. The promise was far from being accomplished in the time of the prophet Micah, and although it is partially fulfilled in our day, yet it is far from being completely fulfilled; but it is our privilege to declare it; and it is indeed a consolation to ourselves that there is such a promise in the Scriptures. As mountains may represent kingdoms, hills, which are less than mountains, may represent smaller communities, such as the inhabitants of our large cities. It cannot yet be said that there is a city in the world of which all the inhabitants have submitted to Christ and His government, and have given the place to His cause that it ought to have in their hearts. No doubt there are kingdoms and cities that *profess* to submit themselves to Christ's government, and one of our large cities, *i.e.*, Glasgow, adopted as its municipal motto, "Let Glasgow flourish by the preaching of the Word;" and Glasgow did flourish. But now there is a change, and what do you think of the action of the Glasgow magistrates? They held a meeting concerning the motto of their city, when it was proposed, put to the vote, and carried, that part of the motto should in future be dropped. That part was "by the preaching of the Word"; so that the official motto is now the bare "Let Glasgow flourish!" Ah! those councillors were very foolish, because, apart from God's word, Glasgow will not flourish. This kingdom is nominally a Christian kingdom, but are we not coming again under the mist of error to which I referred in the earlier part of the day? Ah, my friends, those magistrates of Glasgow who dropped that part of the motto are the enemies of Christ, and Glasgow cannot prosper while they are opposing Him. There is the promise of this life and that which is to come given to godliness, and when people put off godliness there is no promise of prosperity. If you are made godly by God Himself, and cast all your cares upon Him for everything you require during your time in this world, depend upon it you will never lack; but those who cast off the fear and authority of God make themselves liable to be deprived of the temporal blessings they need during their time in this world. "Godliness is profitable in all things, having the promise of this life and that which is to come."

(2) The next part of the promise is the coming of people and nations into the Church. It begins thus: – "The people shall flow into it," and then "many nations shall come." That is the order. People first – perhaps the people of one nation – and then many nations, till all nations of the world shall flow into the Church. But, you say, "It is far from being so in this

age, though the Gospel has been preached for nearly two thousand years now.” Ah! but I have already pointed out that the promise was absolute and sure, and God will fulfil His own Word in His own time. But this is our time; we are passing on swiftly to eternity, and it is now that God is dealing with us with His Gospel, now He is inviting us into His Church. Well, the manner they come is that they *flow*, and this implies that they come *willingly*. Not that by nature they are willing to come into the Church or to accept of Christ, but they shall be made willing in the day of God’s power, as David says, “A willing people in Thy day of power shall come to Thee.” None are willing by nature. Those taught of God found out that they would require to have their will renewed as well as their mind enlightened. An ancient heresy has been revived in our age – that man is willing to repent and to believe in Christ. One of these free-willers was arguing with me on the subject, and holding that man had perfect power of will to receive Christ, but I asked him how it was that although ministers were preaching the Gospel and pressing their fellow-sinners to believe in Christ, yet there are so few that do believe, and, of course, he could not answer. One argument these people have is that if you deny freewill, you discourage the sinner to make any effort to be saved. But there are duties enjoined by God which do not mean that man is able by nature to obey any of the commands of God. We are commanded in Scripture to make us a new heart. Can we do that? No; but God means that we should go to Himself to work in us the new heart we need. The free-willers do not understand the Word of God at all. They twist Scripture to their own destruction. They ask, “Would God command so many duties if man were unable to obey?” But though man, by sin, lost his ability to obey, surely that does not mean that God lost His right to demand obedience! That is the manner in which the subject should be understood. A bankrupt cannot pay his creditors, but surely that does not mean that the demands of his creditors are unjust.

Well, the nations shall come willingly into the Church, and it is very likely that during the millennium this shall be fulfilled with respect to all the nations of the world. Comparatively few nations of the earth have received Christ yet, but during the millennium it will probably be true that all kings and queens of the earth shall be submissive to Him. With the probable exception of one sovereign, as far as we know, there is not a godly king or a godly queen in the world today, and the noble exception, we trust, is Gustavus of Sweden. Read his speech to his subjects. Ah! how different from the speeches of the other sovereigns and rulers of Europe, and how different from the speeches of our own king! Indeed, it ought to put us to shame to read such a speech that contains so much of the glorious Gospel. I think everyone should read that speech, and preserve it as a memorial of that king. It is to be found in a recent issue of the *English Churchman* or the *Protestant Observer*. It is more like a sermon from the pulpit by a Gospel minister than a speech from the throne by an earthly sovereign. Long may the Christian king of Sweden live!

There is only one mountain spoken of here, and as all nations shall flow into this one mountain, there shall only be one Church. Now, we speak of many Churches. What has been the cause of so many denominations existing in the world? Just a departure from the one doctrine and mode of worship which God set up on earth. There are now many branches of the Christian Church, and so far as these adhere to the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, they are to be recognised as such; but there are other branches that, although holding by some doctrines about the person of Christ, and even about His sacrifice, yet by their own inventions they overthrow these doctrines, and such cannot be called branches of the visible Church. If there be anything of the Word of God in such Churches, there may be individual Christians there; but so far as a testimony for the truth is concerned, we are assured by those who have made enquiry into the state of matters that, for example, the Episcopal Church of Scotland cannot be regarded as a branch of the visible Church, and yet we see people flocking to that Church.

We feel as Micah did in his own day. He had to testify against error, against the priests and the princes and the leaders of the people who were leading them astray. There is much need in our day of warning people against error. I do not see many being brought to Christ through my ministry, but I think I recognise that a great part of the work God has assigned to me is to warn people of the dangerous tendency of this age towards error in religion. I endeavour to show you the way of salvation, but I feel impelled to speak of the mist of error that is coming down upon us, not from any ill-will towards my fellow-creatures, but because of my love to God, to His truth, and to His cause, and of my desire that His kingdom should be advanced, and that the kingdom of Satan should be destroyed. For these reasons I speak so often of these errors.

When you go home you would do well to read the whole of the prophecy of Micah. It is not long, having but seven chapters, and on Sabbath night you will not be long in reading them. You will see how great are his denunciations of those things that destroy souls and that make desolate the Church of God, and then how he turns round to comfort the people of God by telling them what great things God is to do for His Church in the last days. The people flow into it like water. You do not need to ask water to flow; it flows naturally and of its own accord quite freely, and this will be the case when the Spirit is poured out from on high, and when the Gospel is preached: sinners will be made willing, nations will be made willing, in the day of His power. A nation shall be born in one day! We would rejoice over one sinner repenting; yea, there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth. But what joy will that be when a whole nation shall be born in one day? Not only do they come willingly, but they exhort one another, saying, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the house of the Lord." It is not of individuals merely, but of nations, that this is spoken. The nations will be exhorting one another. Britain will be exhorting France, France will be exhorting Italy, Italy will be exhorting Spain, and so on from one kingdom to another. No kingdom will refuse to comply with the exhortation. Ah, what a glorious day! This is promised, and the promise is sure, for God is faithful. We shall not see it, my friends, but in the midst of many discouragements we rejoice to proclaim this message in your ears.

We are told the object for which they come to the mountain of the house of the Lord. They come for instruction, and that not about the things of this life, but regarding the things of eternity – the things that belong to their peace. When the sinner is awakened he begins anew to attend the means of grace. He went before because others went, not because he felt his need; but when awakened he goes to church for the first time for instruction. Now his ears are open he will not lose a word of what he hears; he watches all the time to see if there is any hope for such a sinner as he is. Well, my friends, it will not be one here and there throughout a kingdom of which this will be true, but it will be true of whole nations that they come for instruction. And who is the teacher? It is God. Not but that there will be men employed as His instruments. Ministers were never so numerous as they will be when this promise is fulfilled – "And they shall all be taught of God." It is not likely that there will be even one unconverted minister throughout the world during the millennium. And what is our warrant for that? Read the thirteenth chapter of Zechariah, about the man that was asked to act as a minister. He replies, "I am not a minister. I am an unconverted man. I will not take upon myself to preach. I am no prophet; I am a husbandman." In our day hundreds of unconverted men boldly come forward to the ministry, while those whom God Himself has chosen are often afraid to come forward to that holy office. Ministers are earthen vessels. It is God alone who supports them. The Psalmist says, "Were it not that I believed to see the goodness of the Lord, I would have fainted." Ministers are weak, earthen vessels, but when God speaks through them they are like the box that contained the ointment with which Mary anointed the head of Jesus. When it was broken "the house was filled with the odour of the ointment," and

it is when God's messengers are broken in heart that the savour of the Gospel flows forth from the pulpit.

We will now observe the purpose for which they seek instruction. What do they purpose to do? They purpose, if God will teach them of His ways, through grace, to obey Him. "He will teach us of his ways and we will walk in his paths." What a fine congregation that will be! How desirable for a minister to be ordained over such a congregation! He would be a happy man. He would find it easy to preach, and he would be supported by their prayers. If the fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much, how much more the prayers of hundreds and thousands of God's praying people!

III. – The third thing in our text is the means to accomplish the promise; and what are the means? It is the gospel. "The law shall go forth of Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." This prophecy looked forward to New Testament times, and to the times in which the gospel was to go forth among all the nations after the middle wall of partition had been broken down by the death of Christ. It began at Jerusalem, but it did not stop there. The field was the world: "Go you into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." "Make disciples," Christ said, "of all nations, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." So that Christ's commandment was to be the rule of preaching and the rule of obedience; and what was not done in accordance with that rule was not acceptable to God. Nothing should be done in the worship of God that is not in accordance with that rule. At the time of the Reformation there were many efforts made to put down that glorious movement by the enemies of the gospel. Among them was one great man, called Dr. Eck. At a Council the Protestants were required to make known their views and the doctrines which they professed, and so they formulated a kind of Confession of Faith. There were many Roman Catholic dukes and princes present, and the reading of this Confession had such an effect upon them that they confessed they would not have missed being present for anything in the world. One young prince, the Prince of Bavaria, met Dr. Eck after the meeting and asked him: "Can you now confute the doctrines contained in that Confession?" Dr. Eck answered: "According to the scriptures, no; but, according to the Fathers and the Councils, yes!" "Oh," said the Duke, "I now see where we stand in the Church of Rome: the Lutherans are *in* the Scriptures, but we are *out* of the Scriptures." And the Duke left the Church of Rome and left Dr. Eck. Many more of the leading princes and dukes of Germany also left the Church of Rome and joined the Reformation, after having heard that Confession read at the Council.

The Gospel, then, is the means for the accomplishing of the promise. The Word of the Lord – this book, the Bible – is the means. It is the preaching of the Gospel that the Spirit of God blesses. The Word, of itself, cannot change any sinner, but it is the means in the hands of the Holy Spirit. It has this power, and so the Apostle says "It is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." It is made effectual by the Spirit in convincing and converting sinners, and in building up believers in the faith. Ah, my friends, let us prize this Book – the Bible. There is great enmity against the Bible in our day, but it is the powerful means by which the kingdom of Satan is destroyed and the kingdom of Christ is advanced; and hence the enmity and hatred of Satan to the blessed Word of God. If he had his way there would not be a Bible in the world, and as he is a spirit he cannot destroy the Bible, so he uses as instruments men who can handle material things, and he keeps the Bible from the people, or tears it in pieces, or destroys it in every way he can. Satan is afraid of the Bible. Ah, then, my friends, if you got any good from the Bible, take good care of it. When you find it in leaves you ought to bind it up. Why? Ah, it was the means of bringing you to see your need of Christ, and of leading you to the Saviour. Ah, make good use of your Bibles. If you seek for salvation in the Bible, do not say "There is no hope." It is the means of salvation. Read in it the threatenings against sinners that are under the law, that you may be convinced of your

sins. When you have got that length, do not despair, for there is mercy in God. That mercy flows to sinners through the blood of His Son, and as long as the invitation of the Gospel is to you, do not despair. Ah, is there even one poor soul in my congregation brought to conviction of sin, brought to cry to God for mercy? After preaching to you for some years now, is my labour in vain? If you find out your miserable condition do not despair; remember there is mercy in God for the chief of sinners.

The glorious subject we have been considering is full of hope, and warrants us to sing with the Psalmist: –

His name for ever shall endure;
Last like the sun it shall:
Men shall be bless'd in him, and bless'd
All nations shall him call.

Now blessed be the Lord our God,
The God of Israel,
For he alone doth wondrous works,
In glory that excel.

And blessed be his glorious name
To all eternity
The whole earth let his glory fill.
Amen, so let it be.”

Psalm 72:17-19.

[June 1908]

Notes of a Sermon.

By the late REV. LACHLAN M'PHERSON, East Williams,
Ontario, Canada.

[Rev. L. M'Pherson was one of the two ministers who protested against the Union of the Churches in Canada in 1875.]

Preached, 7th June, 1846.

“As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste” – Song of Solomon 2:3.

These words are spoken by the spouse – the Church – in commendation of her beloved – Christ. They set forth what He is compared with all other subjects, and what she found Him to be to herself. She goes to the forest for a similitude, where she finds one to her purpose. Here were lofty cedars, tall and stately firs, and many others, excellent of their kind, but among them was one superior to them all; this was the apple tree. It possessed attractions which none of the others had. One might stand and admire the stateliness and beauty of the others, but he would find them to be of little benefit to him. They were too tall to afford him that shade from the burning sun so grateful and so necessary in those countries. Besides, they bare no fruit on which he might feed. How delightful to one panting for breath under the scorching rays of the summer sun to discover amongst the trees of the forest a lowly tree spreading out her luxuriant boughs, forming a thick canopy which affords the most refreshing shade, and bearing abundance of the most delicious and wholesome fruit. How readily would he leave the tall and stately trees around and repair with joy to the lowly apple. Here he could find sweet shade and sweet food, and the fruit so near him that he might sit down and pluck it from the boughs which hung themselves on every side so low that the most feeble might enjoy it.

The angels are glorious and shining beings – excellent in themselves – but not to be compared with Christ. He possesses an excellence which none of them possess, and He is to the Christian what these could not be. Angels – those lofty spirits, pure and holy as they are – cannot afford the shade or the fruit which the sinner needs. Christ, although Himself the Lord of angels, yet humbled Himself so far as to become man – a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death. He stooped so low as to meet our need, our wants. He took our nature upon Him, and thus brought Himself to our level. He brought His salvation within our reach. He is, besides, meek and lowly. Christ is also low in the eyes of the world, and none know how to esteem Him but the believer. To others He is as a root out of a dry place, in whom there is no comeliness to the carnal eye.

What could angels do for the soul when he felt the burden of sin, when pursued by the curse of the law, and trembling on the brink of hell? Could angels save him from going down to the pit? No. Although all their shoulders were united into one they could not bear him up. Neither can saints nor angels support the believer in his trials in this world. Often does his soul faint under the burden of trial from within and from without – from the devil, the world, and the flesh. The sun beats hard upon him, and he pants for breath and looks around him, but there is none that can help. The tall cedars and towering pines cannot afford him the shelter and the nourishment and strength he needs. Christian brethren may try to comfort him. They may endeavour to understand and explain his case, but still he pants, he hungers, he doubts, he fears, he cries, and mourns. None can do this but Christ. How joyful is he when he sits down under the shadow of the apple tree and eats its sweet fruit! Then, however highly the Christian may think of the people of God, Christ is in his estimation above them all. “As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons.”

The apple tree represents Christ in His mediatorial character. It was planted by the Father Himself. It came from heaven, and it fills heaven and earth. Christ was elected by the Father and constituted by Him as Mediator. Christ as Mediator affords both fruit and shade to the believing soul.

I. – *Shade.*

(1) Christ’s righteousness is the believer’s covering. By nature he is exposed without any covering to the pure eye of Jehovah, who can see nothing in him but sin. His own filthy

rag only render him more hateful to God. He cannot throw them off. He is condemned. Sinners cannot stand in the sight of God. His holiness, justice, and truth would burn them like a worm in the sun. Their being in God's presence would annihilate them. Little do sinners think that without holiness they could not endure the sight of God. He would be to them a consuming fire. He would not require to put forth any effort to destroy. They could not live near Him. The bright shining of His glory would scorch them. O how sweet to the soul who has seen his own nakedness before God, to sit down under the shade of Christ's righteousness. Christ's righteousness is a shield to the believer from the wrath of God. The believer is covered by this tree; he conceals himself under it. His soul was once scorched and parched. He had no peace – "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." All his efforts to help himself were of no avail. He could find no rest in his duties; however well performed God was displeased with them. The covering was too narrow to wrap himself in it, and the bed too short to stretch himself thereon. All his righteousness was but filthy rags after all; "filthy garments," with which he could not stand accepted before God (Zechariah 3:3). God's law was broken, and the sinner could never heal the breach. While he wore this garment he could never look up to God as his Father; guilt made him afraid. He would rather look in any other direction than to God. He found that he was born in sin, conceived in sin. What joy must the soul have felt when sitting down under the shadow of the apple tree! It was said, "Take away the filthy garments." "Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment" (Zechariah 3:4). How fair now does the soul appear when clothed with Christ's righteousness! God looks upon him with delight. "He is well pleased for his righteousness' sake." When Christ found His spouse He found her a filthy slave, clothed in rags, but still He loved her. He wooed her, and at length won her heart. She then felt she was poor and naked, and unfit to appear in the King's court. Christ clothed her with His own robe; He threw over her His skirt and covered her nakedness. Christ's righteousness is a thick covering; not a ray of God's wrath will ever pierce through it. It is a garment that will never grow old. O, sinner, will you not flee to the apple tree and hide yourself under it? This Man – Christ – "shall be as a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land" (Isaiah 32:2).

(2) Christ's love is a shade to cover the believer. "He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love" (Song 2:4). His love is strong as death, and many waters cannot quench, neither can the floods drown it (Song 8:6). All the floods that roared against Christ and went over His soul could not drown it – the floods of ungodly men, floods from hell, and the floods of God's wrath. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" (Romans 8:35). His love is unchangeable, and it is so great that it hides a multitude of sins (1 Peter 4:8). Yea, all their sins, which is a great multitude. His love is always awake; it is an everlasting love. Those whom He loved, He loved unto the end. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Christ spreads the wings of His love over His people to shield them from the storm – all storms and dangers from heaven, earth, or hell. O, believing Christian and mourning Christian, Christ is spreading over you at this moment the wings of His love. His love will come between you and all danger.

(3) His providence is a shield or covering with which the believer is shielded. Believers seem sometimes as if Christ had no power on earth at all. He is the Ruler and Governor, and none can injure His people. The heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord (Proverbs 21:1). Neither kings nor rulers can injure them or move against them without His permission. He giveth His angels charge concerning them. His angel encamps round about them (Psalm 34:7). The minutest circumstances of their condition in the world are ordered and adjusted by Him, and He will make all things work together for their good.

They that fear the Lord shall want no good thing. They need never be alarmed at anything which happens to them, let it be ever so adverse, since all comes from Him, and He intends it for some important good for them. How wretched must they be who would make all things depend on chance or accident! They are continually exposed without a protecting hand to accidents which they cannot foresee, and therefore cannot control. Not so the believer; his God is the Governor who notices and controls the least things as well as the greatest. At home and abroad – on sea and on land – among friends or among foes – in plenty or in poverty – in prosperity and in adversity – in health and in sickness – rejoicing or mourning – in life and in death – He is with them and will keep them. He is their Shepherd and will keep them from harm. “Behold, he that keeps Israel slumbers not nor sleeps.” The sun shall not smite them by day nor the moon by night. The Lord is their keeper: He is their shade on their right hand. The Lord shall preserve them from all evil: He shall preserve their soul, etc. (Psalm 121). “As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth, even for ever” (Psalm 125). “When the enemy shall come in as a flood the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him” (Isaiah 59 19). His providence rules over them in spiritual things.

II. – *Fruit*. “His fruit was sweet to my taste.” This tree is a fruitful tree, this that is spoken of (Revelation 22:2), which yielded twelve kinds of fruit, and twelve times in the year – every month – summer and winter, in the time of dark desertion as well as in the sunshine of spiritual prosperity. There is on this tree fruit to suit the believer at all seasons and on all occasions. It is the tree of life, and all its fruits are life-giving fruits, wholesome fruits. Adam shut the way upon himself and his posterity so that he could not come at the tree of life. The flaming sword guarded the way on every side; it turned every way. But Christ opened it up again. The sword of justice exhausted its fury upon Him, and it no longer stands in the way. Since Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, by which they and their posterity were poisoned, all seek after forbidden fruit; the taste is corrupted with the first poisoned fruit, so that they relish no other fruit but that which is deadly. They love to sit under the tree of death – the reptile whose poisonous breath causes death to all who go near it. Let us notice the fruit of the Apple tree.

1. *Mediator* – God-man. This is a precious fruit to the soul in Christ. “For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5). He is the Mediator of the new covenant – the peacemaker. One who could lay His hand upon both and reconcile them. As such He is God-man; He is the Kinsman Redeemer. They are made heirs of Christ and heirs of God. From Him they receive that precious fruit of being brought in relation to God – their nature exalted to a union with the Divine nature. They are by this means brought nearer to God than the angels – they stand nearer the throne in heaven than they – they stand round about the throne – and they have a song to sing peculiar to themselves – it is salvation – a song which angels can only sing in the way of sympathy. Angels like to hear it sung, and try to sing with the redeemed, to strike in with them; but they cannot sing it like them, they cannot sing it for themselves. In His mediatorial character Christ unites the offices of prophet, priest, and king. These are sweet fruits to the believer: –

(1) Prophet: to enlighten him; all his knowledge, light, and wisdom come from Him. The spiritual illumination of his understanding – this is a precious fruit.

(2) Priest: to atone and intercede for him. “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous.”

(3) King: to subdue, govern, and defend him. All these are precious fruits.

2. *Pardon*. This is, of course, flowing, as all others also do, from His mediatorial character – sweet fruit this to the soul and the first which he can relish. This is the first thing which the awakened sinner feels he needs. O, how joyful would it be for him to know that his

sins are all forgiven! The believer is permitted to take this fruit too. Let him not be afraid to take it – it is freely given to him of God. Christ is the propitiation for our sins (1 John 2:2).

3. *Reconciliation*, and peace with God. “Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1). O, how sweet to be at peace with God to the soul in whom the arrows of the Almighty have stuck fast; to the soul continually pursued and haunted with the fear of hell! Christ is our peace. He made peace. He is the Prince of peace. “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.” And being reconciled and at peace with God, they are accepted, their persons and services. They are always welcome to His presence – their prayers are heard and their suits granted.

4. *Adoption*. “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know, etc.” (1 John 3:2). They are brought into the family of God, and made His sons and daughters, and consequently heirs – heirs of God and joint heirs of Jesus Christ. They have the spirit of His Son; they have the spirit of adoption whereby they cry, “Abba, Father.” The spirit of bondage, of slavish fear, is taken away. They are not servants but sons – the servant abideth not always in the house, “but the son abideth ever.” Sweet privilege! Which of you, my friends, can say, “Abba, Father?” Have you the Spirit of the Son, or are you afraid to say this? Very few there are who can say “Abba, Father.”

5. *Sanctification*. Believers receive their sanctification from Christ. He is made of God unto them sanctification (1 Corinthians 1:30). They are chosen in Him unto holiness – they, being united to Him, derive it from Him as their head of spiritual influence. All who are implanted in Him become like Him. This makes them meet for the inheritance of saints in light. This they need, and this is provided.

6. *The Fruits of the Spirit*. “From me is thy fruit found” (Hosea 14:8). These are peculiarly valuable, and sweet to the taste. Let believers but sit down under the apple tree and then they may have their hearts’ desire of them. Let them seek them from Christ and not in themselves.

(1) Humility; how becoming and also how sweet to the Christian. There is no fruit that grows on the tree more disagreeable to the world than humility: the Christian is never happy until he is humble. Christ was meek and lowly in spirit; He giveth grace to the humble. How difficult to learn the lesson; but O, how sweet the fruit when once learned! To the humble Christian nothing can come amiss; he is happy in all circumstances. How safe! “Be not high-minded, but fear.”

(2) Godly sorrow: a valuable and sweet fruit to the new creature. “They shall look upon me, etc.” This fruit is excellent for cleansing out the bad and unhealthy humours of the soul.

(3) Repentance: He is exalted a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance unto Israel and remission of sins. The Christian often laments his hard heart, his obstinate will, his impenitence; on this tree grows the cure; let him come and sit down under it and eat abundantly. In a word, all the fruits of the Spirit are here, for time would fail us if we should speak of meekness, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, love, faith, hope, perseverance, holy zeal, goodness, temperance, etc. Come, then, ye who are weary and heavy laden, and here you will find rest.

7. *Afflictions*. These are all sanctified afflictions – covenant blessings these. “In the world ye shall have tribulation.” All who stand around the throne clothed in white with palms in their hands “are they who have come out of great tribulations.” Wherever they come from – east, west, north, or south – this is common to them all; none ever got there without tasting this fruit. Medicines are needful; some bitter drops are often added to the sweetest cup. They serve many good purposes, and are to the humbled soul great blessings and even sweet fruit; they bring forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness in them that are exercised thereby (Hebrews 12:11). Unconverted sinner, you have afflictions too. Are you not conscious

yourself that in bearing them you are alone? You have no comforter. They come to you as the bitter fruit of sin without being qualified with the virtues of Christ's blood. To you they possess no healing quality; instead of being medicines they are poisons – they do you no good. If you die in your sins, they will prove to have been only foretastes of anguish and tribulation which shall have no end.

8. *Promises of grace here and glory hereafter.* These are delicious fruits. They remind you of heaven. Like the grapes of Eshcol, they are fitted to cheer you up with a view of what grows on the other side Jordan – in the heavenly Canaan.

These, then, are some of the apples which grow on this goodly tree. In another place it is said to yield twelve kinds of fruit, signifying not a definite number but the great variety which it affords; and it bears fruit at all seasons of the year, for the young, for the middle aged, and for old people – for every age of the world, and for every state in which the Christian may be.

III. – “I sat down under his shadow with great delight.” Christ's shade and fruit will not benefit unless the soul come to them and sit down. This implies the exercise of faith upon Christ by the Christian. Observe the phraseology. It implies that the soul is well pleased with the shade and fruit it has found, which is further acknowledged when she says, “His fruit was sweet to my taste.” It was just such as she wanted; it agreed with her taste. The fruit might be good and yet not agreeable to the taste – a taste must be imparted.

To sit down implies an intention to remain, which, when it is voluntary, shows that the person who sits down is well pleased. Her sitting down implies resting; she had need of rest. “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). Christ is as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land (Isaiah 32:2). The believing soul who comes to Christ need never go away again. He may sit down – take up his abode – under this tree. It will never fail. No winter will strip it of its fruit or leaves; it bears at all seasons. Whatever stage the believer arrives at here, he only stays but to draw breath and refresh himself. The sweetest repast is sometimes scarcely spread when the table is drawn and he must leave. His loins are always girt and his staff always in his hand as a pilgrim. He eats his meals as it were with haste, and standing. He is not allowed to sit down at all; this is not his rest. But not so with regard to coming to Christ – once there he need never depart. Nay, indeed, once in Christ and the believer never more is separated from Him. He has found a resting place not for a day, a month, or a year, but for ever.

Unconverted sinners, let me call upon you to come and hide yourselves under this Shadow, and eat of these fruits of the Tree of Life.

[July 1908]

A Sermon.

By the REV. JOHN R. MACKAY, M.A., Inverness,
Moderator of Synod.

Preached before the Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church,
met at Inverness, on 7th July, 1908.

“From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool” – Hebrews 10:13.

In drawing attention to this portion of God's word, we shall consider: –

I. – The Person who is here presented to us as “expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.”

- II. – The Enemies who are thus to be treated; and
- III. – What is implied in this Person’s “expecting.”

I. – The Person who is here brought before us as “expecting till his enemies be made his footstool,” is evidently none other than the Eternal Son of God, who is Himself God. This epistle to the Hebrews is remarkably rich in giving expression to Christ’s essential glory. He is the Son, who is the Heir of all things, by whom God created the worlds, the brightness of His glory, the express image of His Person, to whose deity the Father bears witness in the forty-fifth Psalm, where He addresses Him as “God, whose throne is for ever and ever;” and in the hundred and second Psalm, where He speaks of Christ as the Creator of heaven and earth. In, however, contemplating Christ as He is brought before us in the words of our text, we must regard Him not merely in what He is in virtue of His essential nature, but also in regard of what He became in assuming a nature which was not His from all eternity. For when, in the fulness of time, God sent forth His own Son made of a woman, made under the law, that Son so laid hold of the seed of Abraham as to have taken up our nature into His own Person; and thus there enters into His self-consciousness, into His Personality, a divine consciousness, and also a human consciousness, for “He is God and man in two distinct natures, and one Person.” He is the God-man who now “expects till all his enemies be made his footstool.” In this connection, it is all-important that we should be impressed with the honour and dignity which it has pleased God in this way to confer upon our, (that is human), nature. God at the beginning created man in His own image, and when man thus created dishonoured God and His law, man might justly have been left to occupy the lowest place in the scale of being. Yet was it the good pleasure of Him who doeth all things according to the counsel of His own will, to raise up human nature from this low place, and to exalt it above every created nature. The first step of this exaltation consists in the act of the Eternal Son in taking up that nature into His own Person, so that in Christ the human is not less truly now a nature of the Son of God than is that essential divine nature which is His from everlasting to everlasting. And still further, in regard of this exaltation of our nature in the Person of the Son of God, be it noted that, albeit that it is the sad fact that our Maker was grievously wronged by mankind, it is now the case that in human nature God’s law, in respect of precept and penalty, has been honoured as it could not be in any other created nature. All the obedience rendered by elect angels in heaven, all the sufferings endured by the damned in hell, all the obedience of which the whole human race, supposing none of them ever to have sinned, was capable, could not put so much honour on the law of God, in regard of both precept and penalty, as has now been put upon that law in human nature in the Person of the Son of God. And because of all this, God has highly exalted Christ, and every creature in existence has been made subordinate and subject to our nature in the Person of the Son of God.

Our text, as we shall afterwards have occasion to note, speaks of enemies of Christ, but meanwhile, in connection with Christ’s exaltation – in connection with this “expecting” – we have to note that Christ had to meet with an enemy which is not among the enemies who are to be made His footstool, but which, notwithstanding, was for Him the most awful enemy of any; I mean the wrath of an offended God. It was the fact of His having had to confront that enemy that made His sweat in Gethsemane to be drops of blood. It was this that caused Him, according to Psalm 69:15, to pray, “Let not the water-flood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.” It was the sorrow which the awakening of the sword of divine justice (Zechariah 13:7) against Him brought upon Him, that found expression in the first twenty-one verses of the twenty-second Psalm. But Christ was such a Person as that the curse of the law could and did exhaust itself in the stroke of justice which alighted upon Him, and He, having drunk the cup of wrath to its bitterest and last dregs, has had now a cup of salvation given Him to drink. Just as, in the justification of

the ungodly, there is bestowed upon sinners not only pardon of sins but also acceptance of their person, so similarly, in regard of Christ, the Scriptures teach us that when He had finished the arduous work given Him to do, not only was there a cessation of punishment and pain, but there was the positive experience of the highest conceivable felicity, yea, of felicity beyond finite conception. In the words of the twenty-first Psalm, we say of Him: "In thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice. Thou hast made him most blessed for ever: thou hast made him exceeding glad with the light of thy countenance." Christ will never again meet with God as with an enemy; He will never again mourn the absence of the Father's countenance. On the contrary, God in His justice is for Him, and with the light of God's countenance as with the countenance of His own God in an everlasting covenant, He is for evermore made exceedingly glad. And it is no little part of this gladness that, in connection with this salvation in which His glory is made great, He is exalted above every other possible enemy, and that He has a promise given Him that His foes must be made His footstool.

II. – And yet Christ has enemies. He is not without friends. The Father, not only as the Son is and has ever been the object of His necessary unchangeable love, the Father, as the representative of Godhead in the everlasting Covenant, as God the Judge of all who, as such, bruised His own Son, is now, as the God of peace, for Him, and crowns Him with glory, and honour, and love ineffable. The Holy Spirit as He has been given to Christ of the Father upon His ascension is His friend. Elect angels are His friends. And stranger still, Christ has some men and women of our rebel race who are His friends. This fact is matter of surprise. For since through the fall the whole human race came into alliance with Satan, Christ's arch-enemy, the question arises, how has He come to have friends from among the human race? We answer: –

(1) To begin with, it was the good pleasure of Him who doeth all things after the counsel of His own will that a certain number of our race, an innumerable number indeed of our race should be, when they were still enemies, the objects of the Father's unmerited love; a people for whom Christ purposed to lay down His life. It was the fact of His having, according to the divine purpose, taken these "enemies" of the human race as friends, that made Him so many other enemies. For these "enemies" whom He loved, because He would love them, had made themselves many enemies, and there was not an enemy of His people but Christ took as His own enemy. It was thus that in the sense in which we have explained, He had to meet with God Himself as an enemy.

(2) But again, Christ has had and will have, while sun and moon endure, friends from among sinners of the human race, who through grace and by actual choice have been, or shall be, won over to Him. These realise that there is a God to whom they are necessarily under obligations, they are taught that they owe a duty to God, to their neighbour, and to themselves, and that in failing to fulfil that duty they have become debtors to divine justice in the matter of a debt which would be required of them, but which they could not render. And Christ is revealed to them and in them as He that came forth from God and assumed their nature and came under the law which they broke on very purpose to satisfy divine justice. It was the claims of an offended God which Christ primarily came to meet, and because He met them, He becomes for this among other reasons exceedingly precious to His people. And this people who thus make choice of Him become to Christ as the apple of His eye. In coming to Christ they pass from death to life, for God is pacified towards them. But they have innumerable enemies notwithstanding, and all these enemies are in our text reckoned as Christ's enemies. They are to be made Christ's footstool, and in this victory His people will participate.

Satan and his hosts are Christ's arch-enemies. "The god of this world," we are told, works even now in every child of disobedience. And that evil spirit is not satisfied with the

unorganised opposition of many individuals. Satan believes in organising his forces, and thus forms his army into systems wherewith he may be the better able to oppose the advancement of Christ's kingdom. The Roman Empire, in the days immediately before the times of Constantine, became, as a whole, an instrument in the hands of Satan, wherewith He sought to crush Christ's cause in the world. Afterwards Papal Rome, and, more emphatically than even before, Papal Rome, since 1870 became a willing instrument in Satan's hands to thwart, either by force or deceit, Christ's cause and kingdom. Infidelity, and very especially that form of rationalism that seeks to throw discredit on the oracles of God, is another enemy to Christ, and although infidelity as rationalism opposed to the Scriptures, has not proved so plastic in its being adjusted into a system, as has priestcraft, still is it the case that certain churches in this and in other lands have become the means through which rationalism too has assumed the form of an organised power inimical to Christ. Spiritual death in sinners of mankind is regarded by Christ as an enemy. Temporal death, as it holds His people's bodies in possession, is another enemy, and the very last to be destroyed. A believer has not so much as a headache, but Christ regards that as His own enemy. But all these and other enemies which we cannot now name must be made Christ's footstool. How that is to be accomplished may be touched upon as we proceed to notice our third head.

III. – We now indicate what is implied in Christ's expectancy.

(1) Although this state of expectation is the condition of one who has sat down having ceased from His work (verse 12), we are not, on this account, to think that Christ is now inactive. On the contrary, as that One upon whose shoulders is the government of the universe, He is most active; active as Head of His Church, active as Head over all things for the benefit of His Church. As Head of His Church His activity may be traced in the equipment wherewith, through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, He furnished His Apostles at Pentecost. It is seen in the success which has attended the spread of His gospel in Asia Minor, in Greece, in Italy, in Britain, in America, in parts of Africa, even to the ends of the earth.

His activity as Head over all things for the benefit of the Church might be illustrated from several sources. I refer now only to one instance. In the sixteenth century the gospel of the grace of God had a resurrection in Europe, so that it was preached with a clearness and power that was not known before since the days of the Apostles. It was Christ's purpose that this resurrected gospel should be sent to the East and to the West Indies, and to many other of the most remote parts of the earth. But at the Reformation the roads by sea and land leading to those heathen nations, were in the power of those countries that had given their strength to the Papacy, very especially in the hands of Spain, which was then the premier power of Europe. But contemplate things for a little. Those nations which accepted the Reformation are seen to be raised up in the scale of nations, a matter especially noteworthy in respect of Great Britain. As a nation identified with Protestantism, it became the head of the nations of Europe. Then those roads which had been formerly in the hands of Spain, because Spain in the just Providence of God was meanwhile becoming as the tail of the nations, fell into the hands of Great Britain. Britain was thus used as an instrument in Christ's hands to send His gospel to the ends of the earth. This fruit of Christ's activity is a matter to which our attention as inhabitants of Great Britain ought to be directed, for it is to be feared that they are comparatively few nowadays who read aright the cause of Britain's elevation in the scale of nations. Britain owes its elevation to one man, and that one man is not a mere man but is the second Adam, the Lord from heaven and a quickening Spirit. We hear much nowadays about Britain's navy, about the new territorial forces, about an imperial sentiment, but very little about Him who must reign until His enemies be made His footstool. But we should not forget that Christ is as able to make Britain the tail of the nations of Europe as in the past He shewed

himself capable of making Britain, as a power advancing His gospel, the head of the nations, and we should fear lest by our forgetfulness, yea, and worse than forgetfulness of His cause, lest by the countenance given to Priestcraft and infidelity among us, such a judgment as I have spoken of may be wrung out of Christ's hands.

(2) Again, this condition of "expecting" – as of one who has sat down after an arduous work – implies a contrast between the nature of Christ's activity now in His exaltation and of His activity in the days of His flesh. His activity now is but reward after, and for, labours performed; it is rest after storm and conflict. For, as we have repeatedly said, Christ took everything that opposed His people's complete salvation as things opposed to Himself. The wrath of an offended God belonged to a kind of opposition that differed entirely from all other enemies that stood in the way of the final triumph of His Church and Cause. In order to overcome the latter, Christ, we may say, was exalted; but in order to overcome the former He must be humbled, He must suffer, He must be brought to the dust of death. To overcome the latter is but comparative rest for Christ; to overcome the former was labour so arduous that His sweat was as drops of blood. To overcome the latter is but Christ's honour; to overcome the former He must Himself be reckoned among transgressors, and be treated by God as though He, and not His people's sins, had caused all God's displeasure and kindled a fire in His wrath. But now that time of strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death is past, and the offended God is the pacified God, the God of peace, who, as He ever – on Calvary as elsewhere – regarded Christ as the necessary object of His essential, infinite, unchangeable love, regards Him now as the Servant who is worthy of glory and honour and power and might and dominion and love. This "sitting down" and "expecting" suggests a profound contrast between Christ's activities now and then.

(3) This "expecting" implies the assured confidence with which Christ carries on the work of redemption in the world. He is able to redeem His Church with a price, since He entered Heaven with His own infinitely precious blood. He is able to redeem them with power, since He has received from the Father the Spirit, the Comforter which is to abide with His Church for ever, and which He poured out on the Day of Pentecost. He thus rests as one that has the assurance that the work committed to Him by God the Father – of bringing in those new heavens and new earth wherein righteousness is to have its dwelling – shall have a sure accomplishment, when God shall be glorified in the highest degree contemplated in the divine decree, when His Church shall be supremely happy and blessed, and every foe shall, either in mercy or in judgment, be brought into subjection.

(4) This "expecting" implies how long-suffering Christ is towards His foes. He shewed great long-suffering towards the Roman Empire ere He at length made it as the chaff of the threshing floor in the summer season. He shewed great long-suffering towards those countries that opposed His cause at the Reformation, if by any means they should repent. He shews much long-suffering at the present moment towards Great Britain, notwithstanding the extent to which Antichrist, and infidelity are being countenanced in it. How great is the long-suffering He shews towards individual sinners that refuse to submit to His sway!

(5) Christ's "expectation" cannot suffer disappointment. The Father promised Him that "His foes should be made his footstool," Psalm 110:1. And the extent to which this expectation has been realised already confirms in our mind the truth of the promise, and the assurance that the consummation referred to in our text will one day be infallibly realised. Although in the beginning of the fourth century Satan could make the whole Roman Empire, with Diocletian at its head, his instrument to utterly crush the Church of Christ in the world, Christ manifested that the Kingdom by right appertained to Him when, ere a quarter of that century had scarcely run, the Empire, with Constantine at its head, itself became Christian. In 1514 the last spark of a public testimony against the Papacy appeared as if about to die in Europe, but Christ, who quenches not the smoking flax, through the instrumentality of Luther

and Calvin and Tindal and Knox, caused Europe to be shaken out of its indifference to His cause, and led some of the, today, leading nations of Europe to throw off the Papal yoke. The just judgments of Him, who must reign until His enemies are made His footstool, ought to be seen in the troubles which have overtaken those nations of Europe which gave at the Reformation their strength to the Beast. Those nations that then despised Him are now lightly esteemed. May not that be in more or less measure said of Austria, Italy, Spain, and Portugal? Upon no country in Europe did heavier judgments fall than upon France, which was at one time as the Papacy's right hand. That country has been in a series of revolutions as a man visited by one stroke of paralysis after another. And there is ground from Scripture to conclude that, as nations that have not repented of their spiritual fornication, those countries will yet be visited with sorer punishments than the world hitherto has at all experienced. For all Christ's enemies are to be brought very low. The Dragon, the Beast, the False Prophet, death and hell, yea and every one whose name is not found written in the Lamb's book of life, are to be cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death. On the other hand, such as rejoice in Christ's exaltation are to be brought into a state of inconceivable felicity. Wander they as far as they choose in search of them, they shall never eternally see the face of an enemy. Not only will they not have cause to dread the wrath of an offended God, the Judge of all, but even the frown of their Father's face will not in chastisement afflict them. For there shall be no more curse, no more mental anguish, no more physical pain, no more corrupt nature to depress them, no more devil to tempt them. Sorrow and sighing shall have fled away, and they shall be made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity.

Application

(a.) Christ, albeit that He is now made exceedingly glad with the light of God's countenance, and has all power in earth and in heaven given Him, has still many enemies. All unregenerate persons are God's enemies. Every one of these enemies Christ must meet with. With some He meets in mercy, with others in judgment. Those whom He meets with in mercy He makes, in a greater or less degree, a comfort to His Church. He met with Saul of Tarsus in mercy, and so turned him from a wolf to a lamb; and from a persecutor to a tender nurse towards the Church of God. And although all converted people are not in the measure of Paul a comfort to the Church of Christ, still all are in some measure made a comfort, for "the remnant of Jacob are in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord" (Micah 5:7).

But it will be terrible for those whom Christ will in judgment meet with as enemies. He was hungry, and they gave Him no meat; He was naked, and they clothed Him not; He was sick and in prison, and they visited Him not; and, therefore, their portion shall be with the devil and with his angels in everlasting fire (Matthew 25:41). Precious souls, seek from God that He would reveal Christ to you in His matchless excellency, that you may believe upon Him and love Him, for if you but truly knew Him you could not but love Him (1 Corinthians 2:8).

(b.) Christ's cause is a winning cause. His cause appears oftentimes weak and contemptible among men. But who laughs last, laughs longest. There be that laugh now who shall mourn then, and there be that mourn now who shall laugh then. Christ's cause is sure to be uppermost in the end. Yea, as to those that oppose Him, whether men whose heart is set upon this world and its vanities, or those that arrange themselves on the side of systematised error, or death, or hell, there shall be no place for them but the blackness of darkness. Christ, and not Satan, is at length to inherit all things. This thought should cheer His drooping people, and should cause them to pray hopefully for the coming of His kingdom, whom nothing can withstand.

(c.) As a Church, although it becomes us to speak with deep humility and self-loathing, we were some fifteen years ago, compelled to dissociate ourselves from many old

associations in order that we might continue loyal to Christ in His word, and in those doctrines dear to the true Church of God throughout the centuries. Especially did we realise that rationalism as it had found footing in the then Free Church was an enemy to Christ. In staking then our all upon Christ as our only Teacher, we felt in our conscience that we had His blessing and the light of His countenance, in what was done to uphold His truth in His name. May it be given us to remain true to Him!

[August 1908]

A Sermon.

By MR. ANDREW CANT, Minister at Pitsligo and Aberdeen.

Delivered at Glasgow in 1638, immediately after the Renovation of the National Covenant and Celebration of the Lord's Supper.

[Part of the inscription on Mr. Cant's tombstone is, "A Boanerges and Barnabas: a Magnet and Adamant." This sermon is taken from "The Covenants and Covenanters," by the late Rev. Dr. Kerr, Glasgow. – ED.]

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, who made a marriage for his son and he sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding; and they would not come," etc. – Matthew 22:2-6.

I purpose not to handle this parable punctually, because it stands not with the nature of a parable, neither will the time suffer me so to do.

The parable runs upon an evident declaration and clear manifestation of God's sweetest mercies, in offering the marriage of His Son, His own Son, His well-beloved Son, the Son of His love, the Son of His bosom, the Son as good as the Father, the Son as great and as glorious as the Father, the Son whose generation none can declare. The Father offers this His Son in marriage:

- (1) to the Jews, as you have in the first seven verses of the parable;
- (2) to the Gentiles, in the rest of the parable.

1. To the Jews, not because of their worthiness, "But even so, O Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." This offer was the effect of no merit, neither of congruity nor of condignity in the Jews; for they were like that wretched and menstruous infant (Ezekiel 16:3,4), unswaddled, unwashen, uncleaned, "lying in its blood, its navel not cut, nor salted at all, nor swaddled at all, cast out in the open field, having no eye to pity it."

2. As for the Gentiles, ye may see what case they were in if ye read this same parable, Luke 14:20, "Go ye out into the streets and lanes of the city, and call the poor, the lame, blind, and maimed," etc. Some were cripple, some poor, and blind, and withered, and miserable, and naked, and leper; unworthy to come to our Lord's gates, let be to have them opened wide to us; unworthy to be set down at His table, let be to be admitted to His royal marriage feast, and to get Christ, our Lord, to be our match, and to be the food and cheer of our souls; and therefore let all souls, let all pulpits, let all schools, let all universities, let all men, let all women, let all Christians cry, Grace, grace, grace, praise, praise, praise, blessing, blessing, for evermore to the Lord's free grace. Fy, fy, upon the man, fy, fy, upon the woman, that is an enemy to the Lord's free grace. The fullest and the fairest and the freest thing in heaven or earth is the free grace of God to our poor souls. "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name be the glory."

At another occasion I handled the parable after a more general manner, and propounded these points unto you:

(1) Who was this great King?

(2) Who was the Son of this great King?

1. This great King is God Himself, "the King of kings, and Lord of lords." Then for the Lord's sake, stand in awe of Him, love Him and fear Him. And I charge you all here before that great and dreadful Lord, that ye humble yourselves under His mighty hand, and that ye prostrate and submit yourselves under His almighty hand, and come away as ye promised. Kiss the Son and embrace Him, and then shall wrath be holden off you, and a shower of God's mercy shall come down upon you. Then the King is God.

2. The King's Son is Christ. Then there follows a dinner: "I have prepared my dinner." Yea, I have a supper also, for Luke says, He "prepared a great supper." I told you in what respects it is great.

(1) I told you it was great in respect of the author of it – God.

(2) I told you it was great in respect of the matter of it. Ye know the matter of it, as holy Scripture tells. Whiles it gets base, silly, simple names, and is delineated and expressed under common terms; but the most common term it gets is so considerable that our case would not be good if it were wanting. Whiles 'tis called "a feast of fat things full of marrow, of wine on the lees well refined." Whiles it is called "gold." Whiles it is called "fatlings, and a fatted and fed calf." Whiles 'tis "honey and milk." Whiles it is called "oil and wine." Whiles it is called the "bread of life." In a word, to tell you what this feast is, it is this Christ and all His saving graces freely given to thy soul. Then

(3) it is great in respect of the manner of its preparation: I confess, this feast, though prepared in silver, is often administered in earthen vessels and clay dishes; and though it be mingled with butter and honey, yet this makes the natural man, when he looks upon it, not to think much of it, because he looks on the outside of it only. But would to God your eyes were opened to see the inside of it, and not to be like proud Naaman, who said, "What better is this water of Jordan than the water of Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus?" As some say, What better is this feast than the feast we have at home? As the man of God prayed for his servant, "Lord, open his eyes, that he may see"; and the Lord opened his eyes, and he saw another sight – even the mountain full of horses and flaming chariots of fire; so I pray, the Lord open all your eyes, that ye may see the many differences between this feast and all other

feasts; for other feasts are but feasts for the body and they are but feasts for the belly. An Esau may have them; a reprobate may feed upon them. These are nothing else but the swine's husks whereon the prodigal fed for a time, and scarce could get them; but when he came back again to his father's house, then he fed upon the fatted calf, and then he got a feast, and then was there plenty. Then did his well run over; then was his cup to the brim, and overflowing. O that ye knew your Father's house, and the fatness, the fulness, the feast, and the plenty that are there, ye would all hunger after it, and would then say, Alas! I have been feeding on husks too long; "now will I arise and go to my father's house, where there is bread enough." All the Lord's steps drop plenty and fatness.

(4) I told you that this supper is a great feast in respect of the great number that are called unto it. The poorest thing in all the land is called unto it. The Jews are called; the Gentiles are called; yea, the poorest thing that is hearing me is called; such as a great man would not look on, but he would close the gates on such an one; a great man would not deign himself to look on them in his kitchen. Yet come ye away to this feast. The King of kings has His house open and His gates patent. He has a ready feast, and a room house, and fair open gates, and everybody shall be welcome that will come. "Whosoever thirsts, let him come, and take of the water of life freely." And now through all the nooks and corners of this kingdom of Scotland Christ is sending out His servants, and I am sent out unto you this day, crying unto you, "Come away; His oxen and fatlings are killed, His wine is drawn, and His table furnished, and all things ready."

(5) I told you it was a great feast in respect of the place where it is kept. There are two dining-rooms –

(1) a dining-room above;

(2) a dining-room below.

A dining-room above – that is, a high dining-room; that is, a fair house; that is, a trim place. O the rivers of the Lord's consolations that run there. I confess, in this lower dining-room of the Church, the waters come first to the ankles, then to the mid-leg, then to the knees, then to the thigh, and then past wading. But then shall ye get fulness when ye come up to that dining-room. And when ye come there, there shall be no more hunger, no more thirst; there shall be no more scant nor want, nor any more sour sauce in your feasts, neither any more sadness nor sorrowful days, but eat your fill and drink your fill. And many shall come from the east and from the west and from the north and from the south, and shall sit down at the royal and rare covered table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and get their fill to their hungered. "When I awake (says David) I shall be filled with thy likeness." Poor soul, thou canst never get thy fill. I wish to God thou got a sop and a drop to set thee by till then. Indeed, if thou hadst a vessel thou shouldst get thy fair fill even in this life. And I dare say, if thou wouldst seek, and seek on and seek instantly, the Lord would one day or other make thee drink of the new wine of the gospel. He would give thee a draught – a fair draught, a fill, a fair fill – of the wine of His consolation; He would make you suck the milk at the breasts of His consolation; but He will aye keep the best wine hindmost, as He did at the marriage of Cana. Therefore, poor thing, lift up thy head and gather thy heart. Ere it be long thou shalt get a draught of the best wine in thy Father's house, where there are many mansions and many dwelling-places. "I go (says Christ) to prepare a place for you." And He will come again and receive you to Himself, where ye shall drink abundantly of the new wine of the gospel.

Lastly, This supper is a great one in respect of the continuance of it – it lasts not for one day, but for ever; it lasts not for a hundred and fourscore days, but for ever and evermore. Poor thing, who possibly gets some blyth morning blinks in upon thy soul, and possibly gets a taste of this cup in the morning, and long ere even thou art hungering and thirsting again, and thou wots not where to meet thy Lord, and all the thing thou hast gotten is forgotten. In the day that He shall come, then thou shalt feast constantly and continually in thy Father's

house, where thou shalt never want thy arms full, thou shalt never want thy Lord out of thy sight, neither shall thy Lord ever want thee, but He shall ever be with thee and thou with Him; thou shalt follow the Lamb whithersoever He goes.

“Behold, I have prepared my dinner.” All this feast was for a marriage. And here is a wonder – a world’s wonder – a behold which denotes divers things.

- (1) Behold it for an admiration.
- (2) Behold it for an excitation.
- (3) Behold it for consolation.
- (4) Behold it for instruction.

Behold, and be awakened; behold, and be excited; behold, and be comforted; behold, and admire; behold, and wonder that the King of heaven’s son will marry your soul! Then behold, and come away to your own marriage; behold, lost man shall get a Saviour; behold, the King’s Son will be a Saviour to a slave; behold, the King’s Son will drink the potion; and the sick shall get health; behold, the King’s Son will marry Himself upon thee! “I will marry thee unto me in faith and in righteousness.” “Thou that was a widow and reproached,” – like a poor widow that has many foes but few friends – yet says the Lord, “thou shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more.” Then behold, and come away to the marriage. Now, “who are these that are invited to the marriage?” “I told you

- (1) the Jews are invited;
- (2) the Gentiles are invited.

Yea, you are invited. I thank the bridegroom you are invited. I shall bear witness of it when I am gone from you, you are invited. And I thank the Lord I have more to bear witness of; yea, that which comforts my soul – by all appearance the greatest part of you are come in, and by all good appearance ye have the wedding garment. I hope God has a people among you. This I shall bear witness of when I am gone from among you – the greatest part has lent an ear; the Lord bear it in upon your hearts with His own blessed preference.

1. “He sent his servants forth.” He gives many a cry Himself and many a shout Himself. Is not that one of God’s cries – “Come unto me, all ye that are weary and laden, and I will ease you”? O but that is a sweet word! Thou art a weary thing, with a sore load of sin upon the neck of thy soul, and thou art like to sink under it, and art crying, What will come of thee? He is bidding thee come away and get a drink of the marriage wine to cheer thy fainting spirit; and if thou be weary, He shall ease thee.

Objection. Alas! sin hinders me, that I cannot come; sin is so black and ugly upon me, and so heavy, that I cannot come.

Answer. “Come (says the Lord), I will reason with you,” that is, I will have your faults discovered, and I will have you convicted of your faults. But when I have reasoned with you, will I cast you away? Nay; but though your sins were red as “crimson, they shall be made white as snow or wool.”

Objection. 2. Alas! but my sins are many. How can the Lord look upon me or pardon me?

Ans. “Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, for he will abundantly pardon; for my ways are not your ways, neither my thoughts your thoughts; but as the heaven is high above the earth, so are my thoughts (in pardoning) higher nor yours (in sinning).” Come away, poor thing, then, and get thy heart full of mercy. And because such a fair offer is hard to be laid hold on, therefore He goes to the market-cross, like an herald with a great “O yes,” that all men there may be awakened. It is not little that will awaken sleeping sinners, therefore He puts, too, an “O yes.” “Ho, come, every one that thirsteth, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do ye spend your money for nought?” Ye have spent your strength too long in vain; ye have been

feeding on husks too long; ye have forsaken mercy and embraced vanity too long. Come away, and He “will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.”

2. “He sent forth his servants.” This is a great wonder – that He calls on His servants and sends them to them. This is wonderful! He stood not on compliments – who should be first in the play. Ye would never have sought Him if He had not sought you; ye would never have loved Him if He had not loved you with the love of Christ. I would say a comfortable word to a poor soul. Is there any soul in this house this day that has chosen the Lord for the love and delight of his soul? Thou wouldst never have chosen Him if that loving and gracious God had not chosen thee. Is there any soul in this house this day that is filled with the love of Christ? Thou wouldst never have loved Him if He had not loved thee first. Is there any soul that is seeking unto Him in earnest? Be comforted; He is seeking thee and hast found thee, and gart thee seek Him. I might produce Scripture for all these, but the points are plain.

3. Lo, a greater wonder! “He sent forth his servants.” Ye would think, if any had wronged you, it were their part to seek you and not yours to seek them; or if any baser than another had done a wrong, it beseemed him to be the most careful to take pains, and seek to him whom he had wronged. But behold here a wonder! The great God seeking base man; the offended God seeking offending man! And is this because He has need of you? Nay; canst thou be a party for Him? Canst thou hold the field against Him? Nay. “Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?” Shall the crawling worm and the pickle of small dust fight against the King of kings? Art thou able to stand out against Him, or pitch any field against Him? Nay. I tell thee, O man, there is not a pickle of hair in thy head but, if God arise in anger, He can cause it seem a devil unto thee, and every nail of thy fingers to be a torment of hell against thee. O Lord of hosts and King of kings, who can stand out against Thee? And yet thou hast offended Him, and run away from Him, and miskent Him, and transgressed all His commandments; and hell and wrath and judgment is thy portion, which thou deservest; and yet the Lord is sending out His servants to see if they can make an agreement. Then, for God’s sake, think on this wonder; for all this text is full of wonders. All God’s works are indeed full of wonders, but this is the wonder of wonders. We then are God’s ambassadors. I beseech you to be reconciled to God. Should not ye have sought unto Him first with ropes about your necks, with sackcloth upon your loins, and with tears in your eyes? Should not ye have lain at His door, and scraped if ye could not knock? And yet the Lord hath sent me to you, and our faithful men about here, crying, Come away to the marriage; come away. I will renew my contract with you; I will not give you a bill of divorcement, but I will give my Son to you; and your souls that are black and blae, I will make them beautiful. Behold yet another wonder! When He has sent out other servants, and they got a nay-say, yet He will not take a nay-say. Ye know a good neighbour, when he has prepared a dinner for another of his neighbours, sends out his servants, intimating that all things are ready, the table is covered, and dishes set on. If once warned, he refuses, he might well send once or twice to him, but at last he would take a displeasure, and not send again. But behold a wonder! He sends out His servants in the plural number. But behold a great wonder! After one servant is abused He sends out others, and when they are slain and spitefully used by these who should have followed their call and come in, what does the Lord? Read the chapter before and ye shall see a great wonder. “He sent out his own SON.” When Moses cannot do it; when the prophets cannot do it; when John the Baptist cannot do it; well, says the Lord, I will see if my Son can do it. I have not a Son but one, and that is the Son of my love, and I will make Him a man and send Him down among them, and see how they will treat Him. And when He comes they cry out, “There is the heir; let us kill him.” But behold a greater wonder! That after these servants are abused and spitefully handled, and after the Son Himself is come and has drunken of the same cup – after He has died a shameful death – and after they had put their hands on the heir, yet, when all is done, the

Lord sends servants upon servants, preachers upon preachers, apostles upon apostles, to call in the people of the Jews, to see if they will marry His Son. Then behold and wonder at all these wonders, and let all knees bow down before God. Lord stamp your hearts with this word of God. God grant you could be kind to Him, as He has been kind to you, and testified the same by putting salve to your soul and bringing it into the wedding.

“He sent forth his servants.” We may learn from this that we, who are the brethren in the ministry, must be servants and not lords. I wish at my heart that we knew what we are, and that we knew our calling and what we have gotten in trust, for we serve the best Master in the world; but I’ll tell you He is the strictest Master that can be. I’ll tell thee, O minister, and I speak it to thee with reverence, and I speak it to myself, there is a day coming when thou must answer to God for what thou hast got in charge. Thou must answer to God for all the talents thou hast got, whether ten or two; for all have not got alike. But, dear brethren, happy is the man, if he had but one talent, that puts it out for his Lord’s use; and the Lord be thanked that He will seek no more of me than He has given me. There are many things to discourage a faithful minister; but yet this may encourage us – that we serve the best Master, and that is a sure recompense of reward that is abiding us. Indeed, He has not sent us out to seek ourselves, or to get gain to ourselves; He has not sent us out to woo a bride to ourselves, or to woo home the lord to our own bosom only, but He has sent us to woo a bride, and to deck and trim a spouse, for our Lord and Master. And ye that are ministers of Glasgow, ye shall all be challenged upon this – whether or not ye have laboured to woo and trim a bride for your Lord. But I know that you will be careful to present your flocks as a chaste spouse to Him. And we also that are ministers in landwart, we are sent out for this errand. It matters not what part of the world we be in if we do our Master’s service; and the day is coming when thou must answer to God for thy parish, whether thou hast laboured to present it as a chaste spouse to Christ. It may gar the soul of the faithful minister leap for joy when he remembers the day of His Majesty’s faithful meeting and his, when he shall give up his accounts, and then it shall be seen who has employed his talent well. Then shall He say, “Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into thy Master’s joy.” Or rather, “Let thy Master’s joy enter into thee, and take and fill thy soul with it.” Many a sad heart has a faithful watchman, but there is a day coming when he shall get a joyful heart. But for whom especially is this joy reserved? It is even for those “who convert many to righteousness; they shall shine like the stars in the firmament in the kingdom of their Father.” It is plain this belongs not to thee, O faithless watchman. What hast thou been doing? Busking a bride for thyself? Busking a bride for the Pope of Rome, the Bishop of Rome, even for antichrist? Becking and binging to this table and that altar, bringing in the tapistry of antichristian hangings, and endeavouring to set the crown on another man’s head, nor Christ’s? But thou that wilt not set on the crown on His head, and labour to hold it on, thou, O preacher, the vengeance of God shall come upon thee; the blood of souls shall be upon thee. Many a kirkman eats blood and drinks blood. Lord, deliver our souls from blood-guiltiness. Dear brethren, let us repent, let us repent. I trow we have been all in the wrong to the Bridegroom. Shame shall be upon thee that thinks shame to repent. I charge you all, before the timber and stones of this house, and before that same daylight that ye behold, and that under no less pain nor the loss of the salvation of your souls, that ye wrong not the Bridegroom nor His bride any more. But we come to our point:

We are servants and not lords. I see never a word in this text – nay, nor in all the Scripture – that the Master of the feast sent out lords to woo home His bride. He “sent out his servants,” but not His lords. Read all the Bible from the beginning to the ending, you shall not find it. Daft men may dispute, and by respect may carry it away; but read all the Old and New Testament, both, and let me see if ever this lord prelate or that lord bishop was sent to woo home His bride.

Objection 1. We have our prerogative from Aaron, from Moses, from the Apostles, from Timothy.

Answer. I trow ye be like bastard bairns that can find no father. So they shall never be able to get a father, for man has set them up and man is their father.

Objection 2. Find we not the name of bishop under the New Testament?

Answer. Yes; but not the bishop of a diocese, such as my Lord Glasgow and my Lord St. Andrews, but we find a pastor or a bishop over a flock. It is a wonderful matter to me that men should think to reason this way. For in the Old Testament there is not an office, nor an office-bearer, but is distinctly determined in the making of the tabernacle; there is not a tackle nor the quantity of it, not a curtain nor the colour thereof, not a snuffer, nor a candlestick, nor a besom that sweeps away the filth; nor an ashpans that keepeth the ashes, but all are particularly set down; yet we will not get a bishop, nor an archbishop, nor this metropolitan, nor that great and cathedral man, no, not within all the Bible. The Lord pity them, for indeed I think them objects of pity rather than of malice. Christ is a perfect king and a perfect prophet. Thou canst never own Him to be a perfect priest and king that denies Him to be perfect prophet; and a perfect prophet He can never be except He has set down all the offices and office-bearers requisite for the government of His house. But so has He done, therefore is He perfect.

Objection 3. But they will call themselves servants.

Answer 1. The fox may catch a while the sheep, and the Pope may call himself *servus servorum* – the servant of servants, and they will call themselves brethren when they write to us, but they will take it very highly and hardly if we call them brethren when we write back to them again. But men shall be known by their fruits and by their works to be what they are, and not what they call themselves. But if they will be called servants and yet remain lords, let them take heed that they be not such servants as cursed Canaan was – “a servant of servants shall he be.” Take heed that they be not serving men’s wrath and vengeance, and not servants “by the grace of God and by the mercy of God,” as they style themselves.

2. Let them take heed that they be not such servants as Gehazi was. He was a false servant. He ran away after the courtier Naaman, seeking gifts, and said his master sent him, when (God knows) his master sent him not. At the time he should have been praying to the Lord to help his poor Kirk and comfort her. The curse and vengeance of God came upon him, and he was stricken with leprosy for his pains. Such servants are these men who now sit down on their cathedral nests, labouring to make themselves great like Gehazi. Let them take heed that their hinder end be not like his.

3. Let them take heed that they be not such servants as Ziba was to Mephibosheth, who not only took away what was his by right, but also went to the king with ill tales of poor cripple Mephibosheth. Such servants are these who not only rob the Church of her privileges and liberties but also run up to the king with lies and ill tales of poor Mephibosheth, the cripple Kirk of Scotland.

4. Let them take heed that they be not such servants as Judas was – an evil servant indeed. He sold his Master for gain, as ill servants do. Or like these that strike the bairns when they are not doing any fault. And they are ill servants who busk their Master’s spouse with antichrist’s busking. Woe unto them and the man who is the head of their Kirk, whose cross and trumpery they would put on the Lord’s chaste spouse. But if they will call themselves servants and yet remain lords, let them take heed that they be not of this category that I have reckoned up. The Lord make us faithful servants, and the Lord rid His house of them.

Time will not suffer me to go through the rest of the text, only I will take a glance of some things which make for your use at this time.

Question. How are their servants treated?

Answer. Some of them get *nolumus* upon the back of their bill; some of them are beaten, and spitefully used, and slain. Dear heart, know ye not how Moses was used? how Aaron and Jeremiah, etc. were used? how Zechariah was slain between the porch and the altar? how Jeremiah was smitten, and he that did it got his name changed into Magor Missabib, *terror round about*? Know ye not that Zedekiah struck Micaiah, and how his threatenings against him came to pass? Always we may learn from this that the Lord's best servants have been, and will be, abused and spitefully used. This is a great sin lying upon Scotland, England, and Ireland. Many faithful servants in the three kingdoms have been spitefully used – their cheeks burnt, their noses ript up, their faces marked; some of them put into a stinking prison, where they had not an hour's health; and many of them rugged from their flocks and their flocks from them. Look over to the kingdom of Ireland – the many desolate congregations that are there. Many a dear one there that would have had a blythe soul to have had your last Sabbath, or seen it, or to have assurance of such a day before they come into heaven. Pray for the peace of Zion, and pity those poor things who would be content to go from one sea-bank to the other to be in your place today. And truly the blood of these poor things is crying for vengeance to light where it should light; for the blame lies upon none but the proud prelates. If I would pose you with this question, as you will answer to God, who have been the instruments of all this mischief? I am sure the most ignorant among you can answer, None but the proud beasts, the prelates. The Lord give them repentance.

I know not how you have handled your pastors in this town, because I am but a stranger, but trow ye that two silly men that came among you can do anything if your own pastors had not laid the foundations; but, for God's sake, honour and respect your pastors – I mean those of them that keep the covenant of Levi. And ye that have broken it and will not come to renew it again, shame and dishonour will be upon you for evermore. I have my message from the second of Malachi – “I will pour contempt upon them who have broken the covenant of Levi.” Therefore let pastors and people enter both within this covenant; for it is the sweetest thing in the world to see pastors and a people going one way. Therefore come away, all of you, unto the wedding; come and subscribe the contract – put your heart and hand to it. Blessed be God for what already ye have done.

[September 1908]

(Continued.)

Some of the servants got a nay-say, and some of them were beaten. Hence we learn that every minister will not be beaten, nor will get the stroke to keep; but if a minister get a nay-say, it will make him as sad as if he had gotten sore strokes. If a minister get a nay-say that has been travailing these many years in the ministry, and yet cannot get one soul brought unto the Lord, that will make him as sad as sore strokes will do. When an honest minister has laboured many years painfully in the sweat of his brows, and has never had another tune but, Come away, come away unto the marriage; and when he walks among them and sees never one coming in, nor never one that has on the wedding garment, what will be the complaint of the poor man? O then he will cry out with Isaiah, “Lord, who believes my report, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been made naked? Lord, I have laboured in vain, and spent my strength for nought. What will come of me after so many years' travail in the ministry? I have not brought forth one child.” The Lord forbid that ye, our people, break your ministers' hearts. And as for you, brethren, be more watchful over your flocks; be more busy in catechising and exhorting them. And urge the duty of the covenant upon them, and when they are on foot, hold them going. Lead them to the fountain and cock-eye. Lead them to the well-spring, and make meikle of them. Feed the Lord's lambs, as Christ said to Peter, “If thou lovest me, feed my sheep; lovest thou me? I say, feed my sheep.” Minister, lovest thou me?

feed my bairns' sheep; lovest thou me? feed my lambs. You must be feeders and not fleecers, pastors but not wolves, builders but not destroyers; and come away and help up the broken-down wall of Jerusalem. For if one of you can bring timber here, another bring mortar, a third bring stones, and make up a wall in Zion. And I hope we that came here shall go home with blythe news to our congregations – that we cannot say we have got a cold welcome; so I hope ye will think it your greatest comfort and your greatest credit also. Venture in covenant with God, and whosoever thou be that wilt not enter in covenant, we will have thy name, and we will pour out our complaints before God for thee; for we that are ministers must be faithful to our Master. And I take you all to witness that we have discharged our commission faithfully; and I hope the blessing of the Lord shall be upon them that have given us an invitation of this kind. And it may be your greatest comfort that now ye may go homely unto the Lord, being formerly in covenant with Him; and your greatest credit also, for ye never got such a credit as to lend your Master's honour a lift. We come to the excuses.

“But they went their way, one to his farm and another to his merchandise.” Luke is more large in this, and saith, “I have bought a piece of ground and must needs go see it; another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them; and the third said, I have married a wife and therefore I cannot come.”

(1) We learn here that never a man refuses Christ but from some by-respects, such as a farm, oxen, and marriage. I never saw a man staying back from the covenant, but from some by-respects; either some respect to the world, or to men, or to the court, or such bastard by-respects to some statesmen, or to a prelate, or to the king himself, who, we trust, ere it be long, shall think them the honestest men that came in soonest; therefore cast away all by-respects. The apostle John includes their excuses under three different expressions, “*The pride of life*,” including the farm; “*The lust of the heart*,” including the merchandise; and “*The lust of the flesh*,” including the marriage. Therefore let every soul that would love and follow Christ, deny himself, and lay aside excuses. Deny thy own wit, will, and vanities, and lay aside all by-respects, and I shall warrant thou shalt come running, and get Christ in thy arms.

(2) Is it a respect to prelacy that hinders thee, O Scotland? cursed be the day that ever they were born.

(3) Is it a respect to the novations already come into Scotland? I may say cursed be these brats of Babel. It had been best to have rent them at the beginning, for many woful days have they brought on, and woful divisions have they brought in, and woful backslidings have they occasioned. Therefore away with these by-respects.

(4.) Is it a respect to the king? The Lord bless our king. Says not the covenant enough for the maintenance of the king? As for the word which they call combinations, it reserves always the honour of God, and the honour of the king; protesting, that we mind nothing that may tend to the diminution of the king's greatness and authority. Yea, I know no other means under heaven to make many loyal subjects, but by renewing our covenant.

I would have had the men that made these excuses framing them another way. I would have had him that married the wife, saying, My wife has married me; and he that bought his oxen, saying, My oxen have bought me; and he that went to his farm, saying, My farm has bought me. And if ye will mark the words, ye will find them run this way.

(1) Marriage is lawful; but when a man beastes himself in his carnal pleasures, then the wife marries the man; “therefore let them that have wives, be as though they had them not, and them that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not.”

(2) Buying of farms is lawful, but when a man becomes a slave to his own gain, it takes away the soul of him, the farm buys the man; likewise husbandry is lawful, but when a man

yokes his neck under the world, it trails and turmoils him so, that he cannot take on the yoke of Jesus.

(3) Thus also the merchandise buys the man. Then, for Jesus Christ's sake, cast away all excuses, and come away now, and marry Christ.

(1) Away with thy bastard pleasures.

(2) Away with thy bastard cares, and come away to Christ, and He shall season all thy cares.

(3) Away with thy falsehood, thy pride, vanity, etc. Away with thy corn, wine and oil, and come to Christ, and He shall lift up His countenance upon thee. The Lord give thee a blink of that, and then thou wilt come hopping with all thy speed, like unto old Jacob, when he saw the angels ascending and descending, then he ran fast, albeit he was tired, and had got a hard bed, and a far harder bolster the night before, yet he got a glorious sight, and his legs were soupled with consolation, which made him run. Lord blink upon thy lazy soul with His amiable countenance, and then thou shalt rise and run, and thy fainting heart shall receive strength, when the Lord puts in His hand by the key-hole of the door, and leaves drops of myrrh behind Him, then a sleepy bride will rise and seek her Beloved. But to our point.

Marriage is lawful, merchandise is lawful, husbandry is lawful, but never one of these is lawful when they hinder thee from the Lord. Neither credit, pleasure, preferment, houses nor lands are lawful, when they hinder thee from the Lord's sweet presence. Jerome said well, "Though my old father were hanging about my neck, and my sweet mother had me in her arms, and all my dear children were sticking about me, yet when my Lord Jesus called upon me, I would cast off my old father, and throw my sweet mother under foot, and throw away all my dear children, and run away to my Lord Jesus. "Lord grant, my beloved, that what ye have heard of Christ may sink in your souls: and when ye have seen poor things running here and there, to get a prayer here, and a prayer there, and ye wonder what they are seeking, they are seeking their Beloved; and if ye ask, "What is their Beloved more than another?" They will answer, My Beloved is the fairest and trimmest, and the highest and honourablest in the world; He has the sweetest eyes, the sweetest cheeks, the sweetest lips, and trimmest legs and arms, "yea He is altogether lovely;" and then they will be made to cry out, "O thou fairest among women, tell us whither is thy Beloved gone, that we may seek him with thee?" O if we knew Him! Lord work upon you the knowledge of Him. O what a business would you make to be at Him! Lord grant that our ministry may leave a stamp upon your hearts. Then had we gotten a rich purchase. Would to God ye were like that marquis in Italy, who fled from thence to Geneva, being persecuted by the Jesuits; and when they followed him, and offered him sums of gold, he answered, "Let those perish forever who part with an hour's fellowship with Christ, for all the gold under heaven." And sundry of the martyrs being at the stake, having this and that offered to them, they had still this word, None but Christ, none but Christ: and when they were bidden, Have mind of your well-favoured wife, and your poor children; they answered, "If I had all the money and gold in the world, I would give it to stay with my wife and poor children, if it were but in a stinking prison; but sweet Christ is dearer unto me than all." Then cast away all excuse. Would to God we were like that woman when going to the stake – "I have borne many children," says she, "and yet, notwithstanding of all these pains, I would suffer them all over again, for one hour's fellowship with my Lord." Then come away, come away, cast away all excuses, come away; as the Saviour says, "The storm is past and over, the winter is away, the time of singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; arise, my fair one, and come away." God be thanked, there is a sad winter over Scotland's head, and our figs are blossoming, and our trees are budding, and bringing forth fruit, now is the turtle singing, and his voice is heard in our land: now is Christ's voice heard, now is our Bridegroom standing waiting on our way-coming; and here am I in His name, crying unto you, Come away: here am I to honour my Master: all honour

be to him for ever and ever. Come away then, for the winter is going, the summer is approaching, our vines are blossoming, in token of a fair summer: arise, arise, and come away.

Verse 9, "Go ye, therefore, out to the highways:" as if He would say, Well, I see the Jews will not come in; "therefore go your ways and fetch in the Gentiles." Yet I hope in God there shall many of the Jews come in shortly. They spake for you when you could not speak for yourselves; they said, "We have a little sister, and she has no breasts; what shall we do for her in the day she shall be spoken for?" Now pray ye for them. Always they refused to come in, as ye heard; and not being worthy, they would not come to Him to make them worthy. Always, says the Lord, go out and call in the Gentiles to My table, My Son may not want a wife: He is too great a king to want a spouse, and My supper is too good cheer to be lost; therefore go and fetch in the Gentiles. I thank the Lord that ye are come in. I know not a town in the kingdom of Scotland that is not come in, except one, and I am afraid for the wrath of God to light on that shortly. Always God hath his own time. But trow ye, that God will give that honour to everyone? Nay. I protest in my own silly judgment (howbeit I cannot scance upon king's crowns) that it were the greatest honour that ever King Charles got, to subscribe the covenant. But trow ye that every minister and burgh will come in? Nay: if you will read the history (2 Chronicles 30:10) you will see the contrary; when Hezekiah was going to renew the covenant, and to keep the passover, the holy text says that numbers mocked and thought themselves over-jelly to come in; but those whose hearts the Lord had touched, they came in and kept the blythe day. Indeed I was afraid once, that Christ would have left old Scotland, and gone to new Scotland, and that He would have left old England, and gone to new England: and think ye not but He can easily do this? Has He not a famous church in America, where He may go? Indeed I know not a kingdom in all the world, but if their plots had gone on, they had been at antichrist's shore ere now; but all his limbs and liths I hope shall be broken, and then shall our Lord be great: therefore come away in your wedding garment, and ye that have not put it on, now put it on, and come away to the marriage: and I thank the Lord, that ye are prevailed with, by God's assisting of our faithful brethren to bring you in; the Lord grant that ye may come in with your wedding garment. It is but a small matter for you to hold up your hand; and yet, I suspect, some of you when it was in doing took a back-side. I tell you that it is no matter of sport to board with God: therefore come away with your wedding garment: for the Master of the feast sees you, and knows all that are come to the marriage feast. I know you not, but my Master knows you every one: He knows who came in on Sabbath and who came in yesterday, and who will come in today, and who are going to put on their wedding garment and cast away their duds. Away with your duds of pride, your duds of greed and of malice; away with all these duds, and be like the poor blind man in the gospel, who when he knew that Christ called him, he cast his old cloak from him, and came away; so do ye, cast aside all excuses and come to the wedding. And now with a word of the wedding garment I will end.

This wedding garment consists of three pieces:

(1) There is one piece of it looks to God, and that is holiness. (2) There is another piece of it looks to ourselves, and that is sobriety. (3) Another piece of it looks to our neighbour, and that is righteousness.

The first is holiness. I charge you to put it on; ye that are the provost and bailies, I love you dearly, and all the members of the town; gentlemen, and all gentlewomen, and all of you I love you dearly; and therefore I charge you all before God, in my last farewell unto you, to be holy, according as ye have sworn in your covenant.

2. Be sober. Howbeit I be a stranger, yet I like brotherly love and Christian fellowship well; but drunkenness and gluttony, feasting and carousing, I hate, especially now when the Kirk of Scotland is going in dool-weed. Therefore be sober. (1) Be sober in your apparel. I

think there is too much of gaudy apparel among you. (2) Be sober in your conceits. (3) Be sober in your judgments. (4) Be sober in your self-conceiting. (5) Be sober in your speaking. (6) Be sober in your sleeping. (7) Be sober in your lawful recreations. (8) Be sober in your lawful pleasures. And finally, be sober in all respects, that it may be seen ye are the people that have renewed your covenant.

3. Be righteous. I know not if ye have false weights and balances among you; but whether there be or not, I give you all charge who have sworn the covenant, to be righteous.

In a word, this wedding garment is Jesus Christ. "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." I cannot give you a better counsel nor Christ gave to Martha – forget the many things and choose that one thing which is needful; and with David, still desire that one thing – "To behold the beauty of the Lord in his temple"; and with Paul – "Forget the things that are behind, and press forward to the prize of the high calling through Jesus Christ." The Lord fill your hearts with the love of Christ.

If thou askest what will this garment do to thee, I answer, This garment serves (1) for necessity; (2) for ornament; (3) for distinction.

1. For necessity. And this is threefold. (1) To cover thy nakedness and hide thy shame. (2) To defend thy body from the cold of winter and heat of summer. (3) For necessity to hold in the life of the body. So put on Jesus Christ, this wedding garment, and (1) He shall cover the shame of thy nakedness with the white linen of His righteousness; (2) He shall defend thee when the wind of trial begins to blow rough and hard, and when the blast of the Terrible One is arising to rain fire and brimstone upon the world. "Then he shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and a place of refuge for a covert from storm and from rain." "A refuge from the storm and shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall." When men are pursuing, He shall be a brazen wall about thee, and when they pursue thee, He shall keep thee in His bosom.

2. A garment is for an ornament. Who is the best favoured body and the trimmest soul? Even the poor soul that has put on the bridegroom Jesus: that soul is fair and white, and altogether lovely. "There is no spot in it," because the Lord hath put upon it "brodered work, bracelets, and ornaments."

3. A garment is for distinction. There must be a distinction among you – between you and the wicked world – because ye have renewed your covenant with God; and this distinction must not only be outwardly (for an hypocrite may seem indeed very fair), but it must be by inward application. I desire you all that are hearing me not only to put it on but to hold it on; put it on and hold it on, for it is not like another garment, neither in matter nor shape, nor in use nor in durance. I may not insist to handle it; but it is not like other garments – especially it is not like a bridegroom's garment, which he has on today and off to-morrow.

Therefore I charge you all your days to hold it on. Ay, that which ye had on upon Sabbath last, and yesterday, and which you have on this day, see that ye cast it not off to-morrow. What heard you cried on Sabbath last and yesterday and this day? Hosanna, hosanna! And wherefore cried ye yesterday and this day, Hosanna, hosanna? Look that when we are away, and your ministers not preaching to you, that ye cry not, "Crucify Him, crucify Him." I fear that many who, last Sabbath, yesterday, and this day, have been crying Hosanna, hosanna, shall, long ere the next Sabbath, cry "Crucify Him and hang Him up." But I charge you, O sons of Zion and ye daughters of Jerusalem, that your tongues never cease in crying Hosanna till Christ come and dwell in your soul.

Ye that are masters of this college, if ye count me worthy to speak to you, I would have you keep your garments clean, and take heed that ye be not spotted with uncovenanted spots. Ye that are scholars, take heed what sort of learning and traditions ye drink in, and hold your garments clean. We hear of too many colleges in the land that are spotted, but we hope in

God that ye are yet clean. And young and old of you, take all heed to your garments, that they be white and clean and beautiful.

For the Lord's sake, all ye that are hearing me take heed to your garments; but especially ye that have subscribed your covenant, take heed to your garments; for blythe will your adversaries be to see any spot on them. And, therefore, for the Lord's sake, study to be holy. Otherwise Papists will rejoice at it, and the weak will stumble at it; and so ye will wound and bore the sweet side of Christ. And therefore put on your wedding garment, hold it on, and hold it clean; walk wisely and before the world.

Now I commend you to Him who is able to strengthen, stablish, and settle you. To Him be glory, honour, and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen.

[October 1908]