

# A Sermon.

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“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich” – 2 Corinthians 8:9.

To attempt to define the word *grace* were to obscure it. We might call it rich, undeserved mercy, or exceeding great kindness, but the words that follow it are its best definition: “Ye know” what He did, “that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.” The meaning of the word here, then, is something different from its ordinary meaning. It includes that, but it includes something more. It is not only, Ye know that your redemption by Christ is all of pure, free, undeserved mercy; but it is, Ye know what astonishing mercy this is, what surpassing grace – the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the work of redemption we have the most wonderful display of all the divine perfections, but it is grace that shines the brightest. We have the manifold wisdom of God, the exceeding greatness of His power, the untainted purity of His nature, His unalterable and unbending rectitude, His fixed inviolable truth; we have them all displayed, and – what of itself were sufficiently wonderful – displayed in conjunction with grace. But we have also a more marvellous display of them through the exercise of grace. As, therefore, grace is the central and most brilliant star in the constellation, so the display of all the other perfections tends to its still brighter display. They shine forth to invite us to gaze most fixedly upon grace, as that wherein most of the divine character is to be seen.

The grace of God in redemption is sometimes set forth to us by the Father’s giving His only-begotten Son, by His not sparing Him, but delivering Him up for us all; in other places by the Son’s voluntarily undertaking and executing the work of our redemption. The work is all of grace. The character of those who are redeemed shows that it must necessarily be of grace. But it is the worth and the humiliation and the sufferings of the Son of God that teach us the abundance and the altogether unspeakable character of this grace. It is important indeed for us to remember that, while the grace of redemption, in its super-abounding and manifold manifestation, is brought before us thus in order that the poor weak faith of the sinner may find some resting-place while conversing with so sublime a subject, we must not think of it as though the grace of one of the Divine Persons in the glorious Trinity was more wonderful than that of the other two. The grace of the Father is the grace of God manifested to us. It is through the Son, and by the Holy Spirit, that we approach the Father. But the grace of the Father in sending the Son, and of the Son in voluntarily undertaking the work of redemption, and of the Spirit in applying it, are but one and the same abounding grace of God, “reigning through righteousness unto eternal life.” Yet it is in the Lord Jesus that this grace flows forth; it is through His incarnation and death that it reaches sinners; it is in Him that it is made known to them; and it is by Him, as the Mediator, that we approach grace in its fountain, and taste that God is good.

In contemplating this surpassing grace of the Lord Jesus, let us consider four things: –

I. – The pre-existent state of Christ. “He was rich” – rich in all the treasures of divinity. From everlasting He was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God. The self-existence, and eternity, and immensity, and omnipotence, and omnipresence of God – these were His own eternal possessions. The dominion of God was His; the crown of the universe encircled His brow. The uncreated glory, the harmonious and matchless perfections,

the all-sufficiency, and infinite self-delight and blessedness of the Godhead were His. He had a glory with His Father before the world was; dwelling in His bosom, and being with Him; the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person; and enjoyingly unceasingly the expression of the Father's infinite complacency and delight. He was thus, in every possible respect, infinitely and unchangeably rich. It was impossible that through the future eternity His riches could be either increased or diminished. His glory would have been as resplendent though no creature had ever been formed to behold it, and His blessedness as perennial though the redeemed world had been left, with the angels that kept not their first estate, to perish. It is impossible, therefore, that the purpose of redemption can have taken its rise in a desire to increase this glory or this blessedness. Here, indeed, we are to take heed lest we "darken counsel by words without knowledge"; for "who by searching can find out God? who can find out the Almighty unto perfection?" "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world" – from everlasting. But it is essential for us to know and to remember that as our Redeemer is the mighty God, so He was absolutely independent of His creatures, enjoying infinite and perennial blessedness in Himself. It is necessary for us to know and to remember this, that we may trace redemption to its source, as it regards *us* – free and rich grace exercised towards the miserable and the guilty. It is necessary for us also to contemplate fixedly – and to contemplate till we are taught to adore and wonder – the riches and glory of the Redeemer as truly and everlastingly God. Without such a contemplation as this we shall never arrive at a discovery either of the magnitude of redemption in itself, of the grace of the Lord Jesus manifested in it, of the security of the foundation laid in Him, of the splendour of His righteousness, or of the preciousness of His blood as the Son of God. Nor shall we otherwise be taught, in our dealings with this Blessed One, to adore and to tremble while we believe and hope. Our Redeemer is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh; He is the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley; but He is also the brightness of His Father's glory and the express image of His person, in whose presence the seraphim and cherubim cover their faces with their wings, saying, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory."

II. – The objects for whom the Lord Jesus became poor. They were creatures. Had they, as such, been answering the end of their creation, His power would have protected and His goodness would have blessed them; but here would be no call for any new exhibition of His character. They were miserable. Were it possible for misery to exist in the universe of God without sin as the cause of it, there would have been room for the exuberant manifestation of the divine compassion. But they were rebels. They had been created after His own image, they had been placed under His gracious and happy government, and they had rebelled against Him; they had dared to attempt to live without God. They were enemies – haters of God, of His attributes, and of His laws. They were enemies without cause, and yet bitter enemies. Their enmity, too, was of a character that no kindness or grace in itself could overcome or subdue – an increasingly bitter enmity – an enmity unmixed and pure; an enmity that nothing else would satisfy than that God should cease to be God. They were unholy and polluted. Every faculty of their souls was tainted and leprosid with the abominable thing; the very sight could not be borne by infinite purity. Such is our condition, as described in the Word of God, and such is it known and felt to be by all who understand the words, "If when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." Here, then, was room for loathing, for abhorrence, for hatred; but what room was there for love? Could rebellion excite it? Could pollution excite it? Here was room for the manifestation of justice; for manifesting to the universe – as had been done in the case of the angels that kept not their first estate – that God's authority was not to be trifled with. Here was a call for a second and a more appalling exhibition of His hot displeasure against sin. Their eternal misery would not have shaken His happiness; nay, it would have been a standing memorial of His rectitude and

His goodness. And yet grace and mercy towards a portion of these vile traitors began to move in the breast of the everlasting Son, and to sue for exercise. Here we are lost – lost in the attempt to fathom what cannot be fathomed; nay, to understand the possibility of such feelings in any other way than this – that “He is God.”

That this grace of the everlasting Son was sovereign, we know. The angels that sinned did not experience it. But that it is also pure grace and pure surpassing love, we know. It leaped forth from its fathomless depths in the bosom of the Divine Son, and it terminated in electing grace on a portion of Adam’s rebellious and polluted family. Once fixed upon them, the horrors of their condition were brought before its view; the pit, the horrible pit, in which they lay, and the dark and dreary eternity in the distance. It cried for their deliverance; it desired it earnestly. This view of grace, and grace alone as it regards the redeemed, prompting the Son of God to interfere for their redemption, is perhaps too dazzling for the saints in this world; so that they seek to relieve it by contemplating especially the glory redounding, from its exhibition, to the divine perfections. And yet, while the purpose and end of its exhibition must necessarily terminate on God, it is to its objects pure unmixed mercy and grace.

But how *could* this mercy and grace be exercised? Here was rebellion; how could it be forgiven? Here was guilt; how could it be cancelled? Here was pollution – entire and increasingly dark pollution; how could it be approached? How could it be overcome? Was justice to sheathe its sword and withdraw its claims? This were impossible, for where then would be the divine glory, the divine purity, the divine truth, the divine unchangeableness? Where would be the security of protection and blessedness to the loyal subjects of the divine government? Where the equity of the sufferings of the fallen spirits? How again could the infinitely holy God return to the temple whence He had been driven? How could He look to the soul that had dislodged Him, and that had admitted to its throne His archenemy? How could He come forth to it except to consume it? Or if grace sued for its renovation, and if almighty grace could contemplate so marvellous a work, yet where were the security for the divine honour and the divine purity in accomplishing it? Unless justice, then, were satisfied, and the divine honour maintained, it was impossible either that mercy could be exercised towards the rebels, or that almighty power could go forth on the ground of this satisfaction to reconcile and reclaim them. But where was this satisfaction to be sought except from the guilty? And if from them, how could they render it except in suffering the vengeance of eternal fire? Such thoughts as these are not foreign to the subject of our contemplation: “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.” What of the seraphim and cherubim, and all the angelic host, after they had witnessed the casting down of their rebellious brethren and their binding in everlasting chains, had been told that towards another band of traitors mercy was contemplated, and had been told nothing of the plan devised for securing its honourable and triumphant exercise. Would not the subject have been to them utterly dark and incomprehensible? Let us here, then, adore and admire divine and unsearchable wisdom, and especially the exhibition of infinite grace: “He became poor.”

III. – “The Lord Jesus Christ became poor.” While the Scripture warrants, and indeed requires, us to say that in no other way could grace be exercised, yet the Lord Jesus’ undertaking to cast up the highway by which He could reach our world, was a free and voluntary undertaking.

We are not to think of the words, “he became poor,” as though they implied that He ceased to be what He was – very and eternal God; for in Him, when incarnate, “dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” But He came to be that which He had not been; He became the opposite of all that He had been; and to all outward appearance – to the eye of flesh and blood – He was poor. Though unchangeably rich in all the glories of divinity, He emptied Himself of them as to their outward manifestation and cast a veil upon their brightness. It behoved Him, in the wondrous work He meditated, to leave them behind Him. Indeed, had

He appeared with them, they would have consumed sinners, and even His people could not have borne their refulgence. Therefore, in infinite self-humiliation, He cast a veil upon them, and appeared among His creatures and subjects not “in the form of God,” but “in the form of a servant,” and though some rays of His divinity broke forth in His mighty works, though its glory broke forth on the mount of transfiguration, and though the eye of faith “saw his glory,” yet outwardly and to the eye of sense He seemed but as a man – as if He were one of us; and He was content to appear so. To estimate the grace of Christ in this it were necessary for us to know how infinitely worthy that glory which He veiled was to be admired and adored; to know the infinite complacency with which He Himself must have regarded it, and His consciousness of His claims to the admiration and adoration of the universe. We must know it then as “passing knowledge.”

“He became poor” in assuming our nature. He became truly bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. And who can estimate this grace, or fathom this condescension? “Great,” indeed, “is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh.” He took it upon Him, and assumed it into intimate and indissoluble union with His divine Person; and though He took it sinless – as pure from all stain as it was in Adam when he was created – yet He took it after it had become fallen and sinful. He appeared “in the likeness of sinful flesh.” Here, indeed, was poverty and humiliation. This is more a subject for thought and contemplation than for language; but surely the little that many nominal Christians find to wonder at in the incarnation of the Son of God is a proof that they have never fixedly contemplated or rightly understood it. “Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.” Believer, adore that grace that led the Lord Jesus to take on Him not the nature of angels but the seed of Abraham, and that led Him to become your brother, like unto you in all things, yet without sin.

He humbled Himself even as a man. He was born in a stable and laid in a manger, as though He were unworthy of a house to receive Him. He laboured as a carpenter, as though He needed to make His bread by the sweat of His brow. For the last three years of His life He was often homeless, not knowing where to lay His head, and was indebted for the supply of His wants to the attentions of His followers. And yet He was the King of kings and the Lord of all. Believers, draw near and adore while you hear the joyful sound that to you has been born a Saviour, Christ the Lord; and see here, too, how the ineffable condescension and humiliation of the Son of God has dignified and ennobled poverty, and stamped all the vain pomp and glory of this world with beggary. Are you poor? Remember that Christ was poor.

Not only this, but He submitted to be counted a worm, and no man. “He was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.” He went about exhibiting holiness in its pure and divine beauty, doing good unceasingly, and publishing salvation; proclaiming His own surpassing grace, and inviting the guilty and the miserable to come to Him. And yet slander, contempt, reproach, and persecution were His portion. He, the Holy Lamb of God, was called a glutton and blasphemer. His mighty works of love and mercy were attributed to Belial, and the Gospel of His grace was met by, “He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him?” He submitted to it; He had prepared Himself for it. He submitted to it from vile hypocrites, from a generation of vipers, from those whom He came to save, from those whom in a moment He could have consumed. He submitted to it patiently and meekly. He submitted to it till it broke His heart. He was a man of sorrows. Never had earth such a tenant, and yet never was such reproach the portion of any of its inhabitants. No one welcomed the Son of God or spoke well of Him till He Himself had, by an act of new-creating power, put it into their hearts to do so. Scarcely had He entered the world as the “child born” when His life was sought to be taken away; and almost the first opening of His sacred lips to proclaim His Gospel was met by an attempt to stone Him. He bore it all, for He had set His face as a flint. The exhibition and manifestation of His grace rose and brightened with the calumny and enmity that it excited.

He was at length seized by wicked hands, dragged before an unrighteous tribunal, and there iniquitously condemned, spit upon as the very refuse of all things, scourged, crowned with thorns, and finally, in the most painful, excruciating, and ignominious manner – as though human or diabolical ingenuity could not do enough to testify the feelings of loathing with which He was regarded – put to death between two malefactors, And this Sufferer was the everlasting and ineffably rich and glorious Son of God, the infinitely holy, the all-sufficient and Almighty Creator and Governor of the universe. Surely here was poverty. Believer, sit down at the Cross, look upon Him whom you have pierced, and bemoan yourself as one of that murderous race that killed the Prince of Life. Surely we have here proof enough of the inherent depravity and devilish enmity of the heart. Adore, too, that surpassing grace that led Him to bear this unparalleled and never-to-be-paralleled load of calumny, shame, scorn, reproach, and pain. It was your sorrows that He bore. He has gone before you in the wilderness to take the sting out of your sorrows. But, oh, learn to feel from home in that world where your Lord was crucified.

“He became poor” especially inasmuch as, though the Lord and Giver of the law, He yet became voluntarily subject to it. He placed Himself under the ceremonial law – a law implying in all its injunctions the pollution of its subjects – that He might redeem the Church from it. He placed Himself under the moral law in its requirements and sanctions as a covenant of life, as though He needed to work out life by personal obedience. He yielded obedience to it in a low and mean condition. He yielded it in the midst of rebels. He yielded it amidst unceasing difficulties and temptations. This is a sacred subject; but how gloriously does Christ’s obedience shine forth even in this, that amidst His unparalleled trials – trials differing from all that ever have been or will be endured in this, that He suffered innocently – His Father’s will never ceased for a moment to be regarded by Him with unmixed complacency and resignation. He knew no sin. He was conscious that He knew it not; and yet He was marked out as the alone exception to the rule of the divine government that connects suffering with sin. And how gloriously does His obedience shine forth in this also – that amidst the ingratitude, the sneers, the scorn, the enmity, the malevolence, and finally the murderous assaults of sinners, He yet never ceased to exercise towards them the purest benevolence and love. What mere created excellence could have come forth unsullied from such a trial? Who but the Son of God could have in such circumstances maintained his integrity?

“He became poor,” above all, in being “made a curse” for His people, as though He were a bankrupt, as though He deserved to die for sins that were His own, as though in Him had been concentrated the guilt of hell. He took upon Him the load of His people’s iniquities; and what a fearful load was this! He who knew no sin stood under it, as though He were a sinner – yea, the greatest sinner in the universe; as though He were that which He infinitely abhorred; as though He were the very personification of the evil and accursed thing. He was “made sin.” He submitted to feel the fearfulness of bearing such a burden, to feel the agonies of the punishment of sin, to feel the sharpness of the sword of inflexible justice wielded by almighty power. The wrath that the innumerable sins and incalculable guilt of His people merited fell upon Him, and He submitted to bear it. He submitted to be treated by His Father as though He were a sinner and a rebel – as though, instead of being the Son of His love, He were unworthy of His fellowship. He submitted to feel the hidings of His Father’s countenance, the unutterable – and to all creatures, inconceivable – agonies of His Father’s wrath. And though the contemplation of the cup filled Him with agony, though it forced from Him the cry, “Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me,” yet He went forward to meet it. He bared His breast to His Father’s sword, and drank the cup of His wrath to the very dregs.

Here, indeed, on the Cross it is that we see the poverty of the Son of God. Here let us behold Him enduring at once the greatest contempt and scorn, the most excruciating bodily pains, and the most torturing mental anguish, the hootings of men, the assaults of hell, and the dereliction of His Father – earth disowning Him; hell let loose against Him; heaven shut against Him. No answer to His cry, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Alone, and of the people none with Him; the infinite justice of the Godhead dealing with Him for the sins of an elect world, displaying its glory and concentrating its terrors. And is this indeed He who was in the bosom of God from eternity, and was God? Oh, let us behold the Lamb of God! Believer, draw near, and while you tremble at the sight of eternal, consuming purity, as manifested in His sufferings, adore Him who thus, by the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God. Adore especially that grace which led Him to encounter such untold and never-to-be-told humiliation and agony for such a wretch as you.

Finally, He became poor in giving over His sacred body to the power of the grave, as though it had a right to claim Him as its captive – as though death had come to Him, the Prince of Life, as the wages of sin. He who only is incorruptible submitted to it; He entered its prison. But let us bless God that it was impossible that He should be holden there, but that He rose a triumphant conqueror – the first-fruits and forerunner of a redeemed world – and that He is now exalted as a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. Here, then, tracing the steps of the poverty of God’s everlastingly rich and beloved Son, let us acknowledge that His grace passeth all knowledge.

#### IV. – “That ye through his poverty might be rich.”

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, as it passeth knowledge in its very existence, so it contemplated and craved for its objects a riches corresponding with its own immensity; and this riches His glorious, meritorious poverty procured for them. This grace sought their deliverance from wrath, and His poverty procured it – procured it so truly and so fully that the wrath can never touch them; that neither heaven nor hell can lay anything to their charge; that the law can never sue them for payment, nor justice for punishment. To estimate this riches it were necessary to feel the horrors of this wrath, and to feel it through eternity – which the God of all grace grant that we may not feel. To this unutterable woe they were exposed, and from this bottomless pit His grace rescued them. This grace sought their deliverance from sin, and His poverty procured it so truly that the reign of the tyrant is destroyed here, and its very being in the soul extinguished at death, and extinguished for ever. With this hideous, hellish, and degrading leprosy they were covered, to the utter loss of all dignity, all glory, all blessedness. His poverty procured their deliverance from it – a deliverance begun here and perfected hereafter – so that they shall be faultless, without spot and blemish. This grace sought their deliverance from their outcast and apostate condition, as banished from the divine presence and estranged from the divine fellowship, and His poverty procured it. He brings them nigh by His blood, obtains for them a reception at the hands of the divine majesty corresponding with His own preciousness, procures for them and calls them to the dignity of His joint-heirs, and obtains for them the shining forth in complacency and love of the divine countenance. This grace sought for them a watchful, tender, and gracious guidance through this world, a safe passage through the waters of death, a sure conduct to the gate of heaven, and admission there to His own presence. His grace sought and His poverty procured it. He guides them by His eye through the wilderness of this world; He watches their steps and holds up their goings; He preserves them from falling – from falling away from grace, and from falling into the hand of their spiritual enemies; He administers consolation and strength as they need; He goes with them through fire and through water; and finally presents them before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, that they may behold His glory, that they may be with Him, that they may see His face, that He may lead them unto fountains of living waters, that He may crown them with unfading and everlasting

felicity. To estimate this riches, then, it were necessary to know the extreme of misery and the extreme of felicity – the misery of hell and the happiness of heaven.

Let us then – if we would contemplate this grace, and know it as passing knowledge – seek to perceive the uncreated riches of the Son of God; let us pray for a discovery of it; let us next contemplate the pit in which its objects lay – its misery, its guilt, its hideous foulness and pollution; let us then seek to be conducted along the road of Christ’s humiliation and poverty; and finally, let us – if we have tasted in any measure of this grace – endeavour to bring together and concentrate the rich blessings it procures for its objects, and let us say that the grace of Christ passeth knowledge.

The practical reflections that arise out of this subject are numerous and important. Let us notice a few of them.

1. How is the work of redemption impressed in all its parts with the footsteps of divinity! Here is God becoming poor for vile sinners, to raise them up from a bottomless depth of misery and guilt. It is this great and most wondrous truth that constitutes the glory of redemption, and that gives its divine excellency to our holy religion.

2. Do we know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ? In other words, Are we Christians indeed? As the truth that “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,” is the sum and substance of God’s revelation, it is the one great truth to be believed in. Do we truly believe it? This is not such a very unimportant question, as many would have it to be. Do we believe it so as to rest in it, casting anchor for an eternity upon it, so as to glory in it, so as to experience its power in our hearts – for it is not the bare speculation that will avail us – so as to have our hearts filled with its wonders, so as to have our aims and our end of existence fixed by it. He deserves not the name of a Christian who does not thus know the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose mind has not been filled by it as the noblest of all truths, whose affections have not fixed upon it as the most attractive of all objects, whose soul has not found rest in it, or who would conjoin with it as a ground of dependence any doings, works, duties of his own; in a word, whose mind it has not fixed in contemplation, whose heart it has not claimed and obtained possession of, and whose life is not guided and directed by its holy and sin-overcoming power.

3. How should it enhance, sweeten, and endear the blessings of salvation to poor sinners, that they have been purchased at the expense of Christ’s poverty! Did He become poor that we through His poverty might be rich; did He leave heaven and descend, as it were, into very hell, to snatch you as a brand from the burning and to raise you to heaven; did He endure the full weight of wrath, that you might enjoy the smiles of His Father’s countenance and be comforted with everlasting consolation? Oh, then, let the thought endear to you the blessings of His salvation. Think of them, when they are offered to you and when you taste of them, as dearly bought – as bought with Christ’s blood. Think of them thus, that you may see an inexpressible preciousness in the least drop of mercy. Think of them thus, that you may be taught to love Him who first loved you.

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## A SERMON.

By the REV. JAMES S. SINCLAIR, JOHN KNOX'S, GLASGOW.

“Thou, therefore, endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” – 2 Timothy 2:3.

The Apostle Paul in his Epistles to Timothy, whom he addresses as his dearly beloved son in the faith, gives him many directions and counsels as to how he was to act in his capacity as a minister of the Gospel and as a servant of Jesus Christ. He does not lead Timothy to expect that he will have a smooth time of it in his “work of faith and labour of love.” He gives him clearly to understand that he has a conflict before him in the service of the Gospel – a conflict with lusts in his own heart, and with erroneous men and evil workers

outside. “Fight,” says the Apostle, “the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.”

The words of our text may have a special message to ministers of the Gospel and other public servants of Christ, who would be faithful to the trust committed to their charge. They are exhorted to be soldiers in the discharge of their duty – waging war against all manner of evil – and in this honourable work, to be “good” soldiers, enduring submissively all manner of hardness for the sake of Christ. The text, however, is capable of general application to all who are called out of darkness into the marvellous light of the Gospel. Every truly gracious soul has entered upon a spiritual warfare, and it is the duty of all such to seek grace to behave as good soldiers, and to endure, with patience, hardness in the conflict. We shall, therefore, meditate for a little upon the text, in dependence upon the Spirit of truth, as a word of instruction and exhortation to all the children of God. It may be useful, therefore, to observe:

- I – The Commander that is brought before us, namely, Jesus Christ;
- II. – What it is that constitutes any sinner a “soldier of Jesus Christ”?
- III. – Some of the features or marks of a “good soldier” in this service; and
- IV. – The exhortation to “endure hardness.”

I. – Let us notice, then, in the first place, Christ as the Divine Commander. It is plain that this office stands related to the kingly authority of Christ. Among men, the king of a country is the supreme head of the army that belongs to it, and though he should not act himself in this capacity, as usually happens, still, the chief officer is the king’s direct representative. In the person of Christ the essential authority and the delegated authority of the King of heaven are both wonderfully combined.

It is evident that Christ possesses an essential authority as the co-equal of the Father and the Holy Ghost in the ever-blessed Godhead. He is the King eternal, immortal and invisible, and in His essential deity, is the Commander of all creatures and things, animate and inanimate. He is “Lord of all.” But it is not in relation to His absolute authority and power as the eternal Son that He is brought before us in the text, though all that He essentially is in His own person, is certainly included.

The Lord Jesus stands before us here as Commander in His mediatorial capacity, and as the mediator between God and men, under the covenant of grace, He sustains the three offices of Prophet, Priest, and King. The Father has appointed Him King of Zion and King of Nations (Psalm 2). In this office He is the Captain of the Lord’s hosts. “Behold,” says the Father, “I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people” (Isaiah 55:4). In the Epistle to the Hebrews, He is described as the Captain of salvation, who was made “perfect through sufferings.” There is a battle to be fought with the powers of darkness, and the mediatorial King must lead forth judgment unto victory.

Here we go on to notice that this glorious Commander, who is set before us in the Gospel, is not one who has a mere theoretical acquaintance with the art of spiritual warfare, but one who has had a deep experimental knowledge of it. He came into the world in the fulness of the time, and entered into the greatest of all conflicts that have ever been waged with sin, Satan, and evil men. His whole life on earth was a life of warfare. At special seasons, the battle was very hot. Witness His severe temptation by the devil in the wilderness, and the many attacks made upon His character, claims and work by the Scribes and Pharisees, during the years of His public ministry. Towards the end of these years, the prince of darkness marshalled all his forces against the Prince of life, and ultimately secured His condemnation to death at the hands of Herod and Pilate. He was led away to Calvary and was crucified between two thieves upon a cross. He cried, “It is finished,” and gave up the ghost. To the eye of natural sense, He appeared a defeated Messiah, but He was by no means so in reality. In all this suffering, He was doing the will of the Father for the accomplishment of the

redemption of His people. He bore their sins by imputation in His own body on the tree, and by His obedience unto death, spoiled principalities and powers, and “made a show of them openly, triumphing over them” in His cross. His victory was made clearly manifest before men, and angels, and devils on the morning of the resurrection, when He arose in the evident character of a Conqueror over sin, death, and hell. This victory of His is the ground and pledge of every victory that His ransomed ones shall obtain in their own personal conflicts with the forces of darkness during their journey through the world. “They overcome by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.” It is therefore not merely a Captain of experience, but of victory – one who, in the words of a godly minister of the past, “has never lost and will never lose a battle” – whom sinners are invited and encouraged to trust in and enlist under, by the Gospel. This leads us to consider briefly: –

## II. – What it is that constitutes any sinner “a soldier of Jesus Christ.”

1. It is very clear, my friends, from the general teaching of the Scriptures, that none of our fallen race are soldiers of Jesus Christ by nature. All sinned and rebelled against God in the first Adam, and all are by nature under the banner of another captain than Christ, that of “the god of this world,” the Prince of darkness. As unconverted sinners, we are loyal soldiers in the devil’s army – fighting against Christ, and not for Him. May the Spirit of God bring this home with power to many who are still on the broad way that leadeth to destruction! Let us be assured that, if we do not awake to feel and realise in our consciences and hearts that we are serving sin and Satan by nature as lost sinners, we shall never seek in reality to enlist under Christ’s banner. Many, nowadays, seem to imagine that they were born lovers and servants of Christ – persons who give no real evidence of having ever been “born from above.” Natural men may be servants of a false Christ – a Christ of their own devising – but they are not so of the true Christ of God. “Ye are of your father the devil, and his works ye will do.”

2. Who, then, are they that are made soldiers of Jesus Christ? They are such as are described in the 110th Psalm as a people made willing in the day of Christ’s power. “Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning.”

(1) Those who become Christ’s soldiers are made willing to part with the world, the flesh and the devil. They have been awakened by the light and power of the Holy Ghost, to see that they are in the hands of these enemies and that, unless they are delivered from them, they shall carry them away to eternal destruction. After a conflict, they are made willing to be done with these old masters for ever – if by any means they shall escape the worm that dieth not and the fire that is not quenched.”

(2) They are made willing to part company with everything good or bad that comes into competition with Christ – their old religion and righteousness as well as their old sins. They have obtained something of the same spirit that Paul received when he said “Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ and be found in him” (Philippians 3:8).

(3) They are made willing to close with Christ as their King as well as their Prophet and Priest. I do not say that any who ever in reality accept of Christ as their Prophet and Priest refuse Him as their King, for saving faith embraces a whole Christ in His three offices. But some *appear* to make choice of Him as their Prophet and Priest who do not give evidence that they embrace him as a King, and who therefore call in question the reality of their faith altogether. Some profess to believe the word of Christ in the Gospel, and to value Him as Priest for the pardon of their sins, who do not relinquish the service of sin. They still continue obeying the god of this world, and imagine that they can be saved by Christ at the same time.

What a fatal mistake and delusion! Where there is vital union by saving faith to the Son of God, the sinner is made willing to part with all his darling lusts, and to have Christ as King in his affections. "Thou shalt call His name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). And so, where a sinner has truly exercised faith on the name of the Son of God, he has, by divine grace, been saved from the dominion of his sins, and has engaged to obey and follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. Christ now reigns upon the throne of his heart. He hates his former evil ways, and it is his most earnest desire that the old man who is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts, should not only be cast down but cast out for ever.

(4) They are made willing to take the Word of Christ as a light to their feet and a lamp to their path, and as a sword – the sword of the Spirit – to overcome their spiritual foes. Christ's word is the supreme court of appeal with them – not the word of fallen men – as to every question of difficulty. "What saith the Lord?" "To the law and to the testimony."

3. I may notice here *three fields* on which the soldier of Jesus Christ is called to carry on the spiritual warfare.

(1) The first is the field of the Soul. Unless a sinner begins and carries on, by the grace of God, the conflict with sin in his own heart, he shall never be a true soldier of Jesus Christ. It is on the field of his own soul that the battle with every form of evil must first be fought and won. And they who know nothing of soul conflict with corruption and error, are not really out of the devil's service, however fair their profession may be. Certainly it is better that people should have an outward conformity in opinion and practice to the statute book of the kingdom than that they should be wrong in every way. But let none be satisfied with outward conformity, for if the adversary exert all his might, they will be in great danger, unless kept by the restraining power of God, of making a complete surrender to Satan, to their everlasting destruction.

(2) The field of the World. The Captain of salvation in His intercessory prayer said, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil" (John 17:15). The soldiers of Christ are in the world, but not of it. It is theirs to wage war with the sinful habits, practices, and maxims of the world. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." True, Jesus recommends them to be "wise as serpents, and harmless as doves," but this is evidently not in any way that will compromise the commandments of God, and bring dishonour on the name of Christ. "Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." He has left us an example that we should walk in His steps (1 Peter 2:21). And let everyone study this example so as to follow it in thought, speech, and behaviour. Thus only we shall war a good warfare, and obtain the crown at last.

(3) The field of the visible Church. It is clear from these Epistles that Paul expected Timothy to have much conflict in this field. Men of erroneous views about the things of God's kingdom had already risen in the Church, and had departed seriously from the faith, and the Apostle, the inspired ambassador of Christ, exhorts Timothy as follows: "This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which wert before on thee, that thou mightest war a good warfare: holding faith and a good conscience, which some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwreck; of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme." How clear it is from these words that it is the duty of the faithful soldier of Christ, whether in pulpit or in pew, to bear testimony against error in Christian doctrine! And how mistaken they are, surely blinded with a white mist from hell, who decry all controversy in the visible Church! They generally say that controversy is incompatible with the spirit of the love of Christ. Were Paul and Timothy not animated by the love of Christ? And what of the most eminent saints and witnesses in subsequent ages? Athanasius, Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Knox, Samuel Rutherford, Donald Cargill, Owen, Goodwin, and many more. Were these defenders of the

faith ignorant of the love of Christ? If they were ignorant of it, we may well wonder who has known anything about it.

Let no one think that I imply that every person who enters into controversy on the sound side of a question is necessarily animated by the love of Christ – men may take this up in a natural way as well as other things – but it surely tells nothing against public witnesses but rather in their favour, when they add to their other evidences of being new creatures in Christ, zeal for God’s truth in their day and generation. Surely, on the other hand, it tells very seriously against high-flowing professors of religion who make a great cry about the love of Christ and yet will surrender the word of Christ, the very life-blood of the Church, to the presumptuous demands of unbelief. May we get the spirit of the Divine Leader and Commander in all its completeness, who said, “The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up,” and “I lay down my life for the sheep.”

III. – We now proceed to observe some of the features or marks of “a good soldier of Jesus Christ.”

(1) One of the first requirements of a good soldier in an earthly army is *faith* in his leader. If a man is destitute of this, all his other powers are paralysed. Still more is faith of divine operation necessary in relation to Christ, the heavenly commander. Success entirely depends upon it. “Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?” And the soul must be kept looking to and trusting in Christ as its all and in all, who will prove a good soldier in the spiritual conflict.

(2) A second feature of a good soldier is *strength*. A weak man physically is not capable of much in the ordinary army. The soldier of Christ requires much strength. The Apostle exhorts Timothy: “Thou, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” The common soldier generally looks to himself as the seat of his strength. But it must not be so with the “good soldier of Jesus Christ.” He must be sensible of his own weakness and inability, and look to his Divine Captain for the supply of all his spiritual strength. The Apostle says elsewhere, “When I am weak, then am I strong.” The strength of omnipotence is available to the soul in Christ. But the moment the spiritual soldier becomes self-confident and self-sufficient he loses all his spiritual vigour: he ceases to be a good soldier.”

(3) Another mark of a good soldier is *courage*. A timid or cowardly man will never make an efficient soldier. The children of God who desire to be faithful to Christ must seek to be “strong and of a good courage.” Unbelieving fears suck holy boldness out of the followers of the Redeemer. “The fear of man bringeth a snare.” The Captain Himself feared not the face of man or devil, and every poor soul is directed to look to Him for the courage needed to overcome his spiritual enemies. “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” Many weak creatures in days gone by obtained much gracious boldness to stand fast in the faith, in spite of the most dreadful temptations to the contrary. They were lifted above all fear, and made willing to face the scaffold and the stake and lay down their lives for the sake of Christ. The holy courage of the martyrs came by “looking unto Jesus” – a way that still stands open even to us.

(4) Still another feature of the good soldier is *wisdom*. An unskilful or foolish man, though well equipped with weapons, will not prove a satisfactory warrior. He will come short when he might be victor. Prudence as well as other virtues is needed in fighting. So it is in the Christian warfare. The inspired book of Proverbs dwells with great force and usefulness on the graces of wisdom and prudence. The Apostle Paul was a man of great courage and wisdom combined, and in this very chapter gives several counsels of Christian wisdom. He says to Timothy, “*Flee* youthful lusts.” Sometimes soldiers flee before their enemies at the dictates of prudence, not with a view to yield but with a view to get a better vantage-ground from which they may obtain the victory. So with the Christian. He must, on occasion, flee from the places and circumstances of temptation, to his private place, that he may thence get

the victory over his foes. Again, “And the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men; apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing these that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.” Christian wisdom calls for the exercise of gentleness, patience, and meekness in carrying on the good warfare.

(5) A fifth feature of the good soldier is *self-sacrifice*. A soldier must be willing to sacrifice everything except conscience for the sake of the cause which he serves. And the good soldier of Christ must, like Paul, be willing to suffer the loss of all things – yea, of life itself, if required – in the service of the Gospel. Self must be mortified at every step, and Christ exalted. “If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him.”

(6) A last feature I shall mention is *final perseverance*. There is no discharge in this heavenly warfare – no turning back. The good soldier of Jesus Christ will fight the good fight of faith to the very end; he is invincible. There is to be no surrender to the devil or his suggestions. There *may* be, and there *will* be temporary shortcomings and falls. But the cry of the soul under these is: “Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise: when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me.” He shall get on his feet again, and use greater care and watchfulness in the future. “He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved.”

#### IV. – Let us now notice the exhortation to “endure hardness.”

1. Here we shall observe first, certain *forms of “hardness,”* which the good soldier is called to endure. Some of them have been alluded to in passing already.

(1) He has to endure the hardness of *common affliction*. He is not exempted from the afflictions that are common to the world at large – afflictions in his body, family, or circumstances. “Many are the afflictions of the righteous” (Psalm 34:19).

(2) He has to suffer the hardness of *human opposition*. The Apostle says to Timothy further on in this Epistle: “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (chapter 3:12). Apart from public controversy, everyone who is faithful to Christ and His word, in his daily avocation, will meet with more or less opposition from the carnal, and it may be, the religious world. Persecution does not assume the same form in every age. There are many subtle forms of it in the present day. If a man, for example, will maintain a steadfast regard for the sanctity of the Sabbath, he will find himself exposed to contempt and derision, and may have to suffer the loss of employment on account of his steadfastness. What is this but persecution for the truth? If a man is scrupulously honest in business, he may suffer in the same way. Numerous illustrations might be given of this point, but we must proceed.

(3) The good soldier is exposed to the hardness of *Satan’s temptations*. “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8). He seeks to devour the Christian in a vast variety of ways, and assaults him with many temptations. He knows the good soldier’s weak point or besetting sin – for the most eminent of God’s people have these to more or less extent – and he will do his utmost to cast in his fiery darts there. The soul, however, must seek to be prepared for these assaults of the adversary, and not to be too much discouraged by such difficulties in the way.

(4) The good soldier is called to endure what I shall describe as *spiritual privations*. Temporal privations are well known among the armies of the world, especially when engaged on the field of battle in a long and difficult conflict. It is the lot of the soldiers then to suffer the want of many comforts that they enjoy at other times. They must frequently fight on very short rations, and expose themselves to excessive cold and heat. The Lord, in His holy and wise providence, sometimes tries His people in a similar manner upon the field of spiritual conflict. Perhaps when they set out on their Christian course they enjoyed great spiritual enlargements of soul, and were fed abundantly with the finest of the wheat. They never

seemed to lack any spiritual comfort they desired. “The bread and water of life” were plentifully supplied to them by the Spirit of all grace. Christ in the gospel was brought very near to their souls in all His rich fulness, and they were enabled to eat and drink their fill of Zion’s provision at the gospel and communion tables. But this did not always last. God, in His mysterious providence, withdraws His comfortable presence from their souls, perhaps as a chastisement for an unsteadfast heart, and they are sent out to fight their spiritual enemies, with a few crumbs, if anything, in their wallet. The warm beams of the Sun of Righteousness are denied, and they feel they are walking in an atmosphere of intense spiritual cold. Job knew much of this when he bewailed his desolate condition and cried, “O that I knew where I might find Him that I might come even to His seat!” And if it is not the cold of desertion that they exactly feel, it may be that to which I have already referred – the heat of fiery temptation. Both indeed may be felt together at the same time. Such are some of the spiritual privations that Christ’s soldiers are called to experience at certain times in their history. “I am poor and needy; make haste unto me, O God: thou art my help and my deliverer; O Lord, make no tarrying” (Psalm 70:5).

2. Let us pass on to observe, secondly, *the nature of the endurance* which Christ’s soldier is called to exercise. It is manifestly the endurance of filial submission and patience – not a merely compulsory resignation with rebellion at the heart of it. This principle of filial submission is in the soul of every person in whom there is a real spark of divine life, though they also are deeply conscious of the workings of rebellion in the corrupt heart. But where this life is, there is regeneration; and where regeneration is, there is a nature in agreement with the will of God.

(1) The good soldier is to seek grace to realise that “the hardness” he suffers is the appointment of Him who is holy, just, good – who “doeth all things well,” however trying His dispensations may sometimes be to flesh and blood.

(2) He is to exercise submission and patience in the remembrance of his own sin and unworthiness. If God had dealt with him in accordance with His justice alone, He would have sent him to hell long ago. And his daily shortcomings and provocations are still deserving of God’s displeasure and curse. On the other hand, many mercies are mingled with all the hardness he has to suffer. He must seek, therefore, to feel and say with Jeremiah, “It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed. Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?”

(3) He is to endure hardness in the spirit of one who also remembers that the Lord doth not ordain affliction, because He takes pleasure in the sufferings of His people, but for wise and good ends, for their soul’s good and His own glory. “This is the will of God, even your sanctification.” He will make sin exceeding sinful, holiness desirable, and Christ precious in the eyes of the good soldier. The Lord will also make it plain before men, angels, and devils, that His servants will serve Him for His own sake, and not merely for the benefits they receive from Him. Though He slay them with trials and sufferings, yet they will endeavour to trust Him and follow Him to the end. The excellency of God’s grace and power and faithfulness, yea, of all His attributes, is to be seen in upholding His servants in the fire of tribulation and in enabling them to be “more than conquerors” through the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

3. The exhortation itself. “Thou therefore endure hardness.” Paul is the speaker, but he is the spokesman of the Lord of hosts, and the Most High here exhorts, encourages, and commands His people to endure in the spirit of the gospel all the hardness that falls to them in His service. Thus He sets before them the standard of their Christian obligation, and makes it sinful for them to kick against “the cross” and to endeavour in an unlawful way to get rid of it.

Some poor struggling soul may cry, “Who is sufficient for these things?” Your sufficiency is of God, who is able to make all grace abound toward you for the discharge of every duty. You have no might whatsoever to be a good soldier of Jesus Christ or to endure hardness in His cause; but the Father has placed an infinite fulness of strength in the Captain of salvation, who says to you, “My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness.”

In conclusion, let each one of us examine himself and herself on this great matter. Are we soldiers of Jesus Christ or not? If we are not, then we are soldiers in Satan’s army, and if we continue so to the end we shall have Satan’s reward, “the outer darkness where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth for ever.” Let us seek to lay this dreadful prospect to heart in time. Now, Christ is enlisting soldiers under His heavenly banner. He is willing to receive you, however, unworthy. And happy are they who by grace are made willing to have Him as their Saviour, Lord and Captain. He shall lead them on to eternal victory. Their everlasting song will be: “Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.”

[January 1912]

## Notes of a Sermon.

By the REV. JOHN R. MACKAY, M.A., Inverness.  
*Preached on New Year’s Day.*

“There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust” – Acts 24:15.

To pious minds the beginning of another year will bring serious thoughts. The clock of time seems, at such a season, to strike hard and loud, as if calling us to realise that we are one other stage nearer the most solemn appointments of death and of judgment. The greater number of mankind, however, are very deaf to these loud calls. They are like a company of passengers that had set out from one of our ports on a trans-Atlantic liner having, let me say, New York in view as their first destination on the other side, but who, in the course of the voyage, had become so absorbed with the little life of the ship itself – with the little engagements and little movements backwards and forwards on board ship wherewith passengers usually try to beguile time – that they quite forgot for what purpose they were on the Atlantic at all. They will waken up with surprise, and it may be with consternation, when, notwithstanding their thoughtlessness, their ship shall have brought them into port.

But the call of God’s Word is louder and more distinctly intelligible than that of the seasons of the year. Such a call we have in the words of our text. In meditating on it we shall, in reference to the resurrection spoken of, consider –

- I. – The Fact;
- II. – The Reasons why; and
- III. – The Question suggested.

I. – Our text declares that a general resurrection of the human race is to be certainly looked for. All mankind are here given us in two classes, the just and the unjust. These classes are exhaustive of the race; every man, woman, and child from Adam downwards will find their place in one or other of these two classes. Now concerning the entire number of individuals both of the one class and of the other, the Apostle Paul declares that, so far as before Christ come again they shall have died, they will also experience a rising again from the dead in a bodily sense.

It is the case, as every careful reader of the Scriptures will have noticed, that much more is said in the Word of God concerning the resurrection of the just than is said concerning the resurrection of the unjust. And for that inequality several reasons may be assigned.

(1) The Bible is mainly the record of a gracious revelation on the part of God. Now, the resurrection of the just belongs to the sphere of grace. That can scarcely be said of the resurrection of the wicked.

(2) The doctrine of the resurrection from the dead is in more places than one stated in the Scriptures controversially and the recognised rules of controversy are followed. Christ so states it in Matthew 22:23-33 (Mark 12:18-27; Luke 20: 27-38). Paul so states it in 1 Corinthians 15. Now, in a controversy it is well understood that it is easier to prove a particular proposition than a universal proposition; and that for the purposes of the controversy it may not be always necessary to prove a universal. If any one, *e.g.*, were to say that there was no Roman Catholic in Inverness, one opposing that view, in order to overthrow the assertion, did not need to prove that all the inhabitants of Inverness were Roman Catholics, nor even to prove that one-third of them were Roman Catholics. All that was necessary, in order to completely overthrow the contention of the person who ventured to say that there was no Roman Catholic in Inverness, was that it should be demonstrated that there were some Roman Catholics in Inverness. And we find Christ adopting this, admittedly the wisest and best, method of reasoning with those who opposed themselves against the truth, in His controversy concerning the resurrection – with the Sadducees. The Sadducees denied that any of the dead would rise from the grave. Christ, in order to overthrow their reasonings, showed that some at least must rise from the dead. This He did – one may remark in passing – in a way which showed the profound reverence He had for the Scriptures. His proof rests on the difference between the past and the present tense of the verb “to be.” God, in speaking to Moses at the bush, did not say, “I *was* the God of Abraham,” but, “I *am* the God of Abraham” – the Living, Reviving, Covenant God of Abraham – that is, even after Abraham had been some hundreds of years in his grave. Because Jehovah still continues to be the Covenant God of Abraham – of his entire person, soul, and body – Abraham must rise. Such, I take it, is the nature of Christ’s reasonings against the Sadducees. He proves, that is, from the Scriptures, that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – yea, all whose God Jehovah is – must rise; and if some rise from the dead, the Sadduceen position is overthrown.

(3) The Apostle Paul follows a similarly wise method in 1 Corinthians 15 in controverting the opinion of those who had been saying (verse 12) that there is no resurrection of the dead. The Apostle’s counter argument in that chapter bears directly only on those who are Christ’s. But as the argument is handled by the Apostle Paul, one perceives that over and above the fact that he would not prove a universal when less sufficed to overthrow the arguments of his opponents, the Apostle was led to adopt the exact method followed by him in this remarkable chapter because he felt that as the resurrection of believers followed as a matter of necessity the resurrection of Jesus Christ, so for the resurrection of Jesus Christ, in particular, the proof was overwhelming, so overwhelming indeed that a jury who would not on the evidence affirm the resurrection of Jesus Christ, would perjure themselves.

I have been stating reasons why one should not feel surprised if one finds that the Scriptures say much more concerning the resurrection of the just than they do concerning the resurrection of the unjust. (1) The Bible is the record mainly of a gracious revelation of God; (2) God's witnesses shewed supreme wisdom in their controversial methods; (3) the resurrection of Jesus Christ (which virtually carries with it the resurrection of His people) is capable of the easiest and fullest demonstration. But it were an utterly thoughtless thing from the circumstances now named concerning the greater fulness of testimony to the resurrection of the just, to conclude that the Scriptures leave the subject of the resurrection of the unjust in a measure of dubiety. Not at all.

The doctrine of the resurrection of the wicked is taught, if not so frequently, yet as plainly as that of the resurrection of the just. I am not now dealing with the matter with a view to notice every passage in the Scriptures wherein the doctrine is taught. But I would seek to fix your attention on three passages. The first, which is from the Old Testament, is in Daniel 12:2: "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." The sense in which this passage in Daniel ought to be understood may be gathered from the second passage to which we direct attention, even from the words of our Lord in John 5:28,29, words in which, beyond doubt, the language of Daniel is re-echoed: "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and they shall come forth; they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." Evidently Christ understood Daniel's "many" in the sense of "all," and to His followers it will be an end of controversy, both as to the Divine authorship of Daniel, and as to truth of the doctrine that we are to look forward to a resurrection not of the just only, but of the unjust also – not of those who are Christ's only, but of those also who are not His – that Christ thus re-echoes Daniel.

The third pivotal passage in our text. "There shall be," says the Apostle Paul, "a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." It were easy to show that the doctrine of Daniel on this head was also the doctrine of other Old Testament prophets, and that the doctrine of Paul on this head was also the doctrine of other Apostles, so that one can have no hesitation in saying that we shall not give up the doctrine of a resurrection of the wicked without parting company with Daniel, with Christ Himself, and with the Apostle Paul, or rather with all the prophets of the Old Testament, with Christ Himself the Chief Corner Stone, and with all the Apostles of the New Dispensation.

That is the Fact.

II. – Having said so much with a view to bring home to your minds the Fact, I proceed to treat of the Reasons. For it is not only that the Scriptures teach us the fact of the resurrection of the unjust as well as the just, but the Spirit of God has been pleased for the establishing of our understanding and conscience to tell us the reasons. I say reasons rather than reason, for it does not seem to me that the reason why the just will have a bodily resurrection is one and the same with the reason why the unjust will have a bodily resurrection. In making this distinction, however, I wish to say that by reason I here intend the reason on the part of the people raised. If one were looking to the reason on the part of God, one might well say that His power and His righteousness was the reason in the case of the one as well as in that of the other. But now we are dealing with the reason on the part of those raised from the dead. For it is not without a reason on the part of those raised that either the just or the unjust will shortly be raised from the dead. Nor is the reason in either case one and the same. If you take the case of the righteous, it is in accordance with Scripture for us to say that righteousness on their part is just the reason of their resurrection. Take the case of Christ Himself first. To Him, as to all, the grave was a prison-house. But He was brought forth out of that prison-house because the debt which brought Him to it was fully paid. His resurrection was God's

recognition not only of the fact that He spake truth when He said, "I am the Son of God," but also of the further fact that as He gave His life a ransom for many, so that ransom was accepted, and so the debt, for which He had become obliged, was discharged. And in God's good time they who are Christ's, and who shall have fallen on sleep ere Christ come again, will also as members of Christ's mystical body be brought forth out of their prison-house as a public attestation of the fact that to them there has been no condemnation from that hour in which they became through faith united to precious Christ. Their righteousness, in a word, is the cause of their resurrection; of this they have a pledge even in time. For the Spirit of God has come to make His abode in them. The proof of that also is that through this indwelling they mind the things of the Spirit more than they do the things of the flesh, and they have the assurance that as the Spirit of Christ thus manifestly dwells in them, the Spirit of Him who raised Christ from the dead will one day quicken their mortal bodies. Their going forth from the grave will be a matter of righteousness, as truly as the issuing of Paul and Silas from the prison in Philippi (Acts 16:35) was a matter of righteousness. The righteousness of the saints, primarily imputed righteousness, but corroboratively also inherent righteousness, is the reason why the just rise and appear before the judgment seat of God.

But the case is otherwise with the unjust. Guilt on their part will be the reason of their rising from their graves. Guilt is a terrible power. Guilt will sometimes among men drag a criminal from across the Atlantic and bring him to appear before a Judge in Britain. Or we may put it for purposes of illustration thus: – Ordinarily with ourselves when a culprit is apprehended by the police, he finds lodgment for the first night or two in the lock-up. He is then dragged before the Sheriff or Judge. What is it that brings the culprit rather than any other person before the Judge? It is simply and only guilt, or at least a presumption that there is guilt. So shall it be with the wicked. The grave is their lock-up from the day of death – I speak of the body only here and now – to the day of the resurrection. They shall then have to leave the lock-up, and guilt, and nothing but guilt, will drag them from out their grave up to the bar of God's judgment. What a fearful thing guilt must be! We think it terrible when a would-be fugitive from justice is extradited in order that he may be reckoned with in this country for his crimes. But the sight is not so awful as will be the sight of innumerable graves opening in order that the guilty might be handed over to justice; graves in the case of some that were as prison houses unopened for thousands of years.

But some may think that we are exaggerating here, and claim that, whilst it is conceivable that those who were guilty of outrageous crimes are burdened with such guilt that not even their grave can hold them always, it cannot be guilt that is the reason why all those who are not Christ's will have a resurrection. But what saith the Scripture? "He that believeth on him shall not be confounded" (1 Peter 2:6). If he that believeth shall not be confounded, or shall not be put to shame, but, on the contrary, shall have praise and glory and everlasting honour, that certainly carries with it that everyone that is not a believer will be put to shame. The Scriptures study brevity, and imply more than they directly say. When the Psalmist says (Psalm 95:11), "I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest," an Apostle, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, understood that to imply that some must enter in (Hebrews 4:6). Similarly, when Isaiah or Peter says that no one that putteth his trust in the Foundation laid in Sion will be put to shame, we must conclude that everyone who does not put his trust in the Foundation will be put to shame. Nor need we be at a loss to understand what is meant here by shame. It is just the shame which the wicked will realise when they issue from their graves – the shame that is the concomitant of guilt – the shame and everlasting confusion of which Daniel, under the Old Testament, and Christ, under the New, as we have seen, spake. The teaching of the Bible is that the whole world is brought in guilty before God. As our Shorter Catechism puts it: Some sins in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others. But every sin

deserveth God's wrath and curse, both in this life and in that which is to come. Nor is there a single soul whose guilt is so light that, if that soul have not the conscience purged through the blood of Christ, its guilt will not bring it out of its grave at the time of the Great Assize. It is beyond question that as the reason of the bodily resurrection of the just is righteousness, the reason of the bodily resurrection of the unjust is guilt – guilt not purged off the conscience. To this there will not be a single exception.

III. – These solemn considerations bring us to ask a Question. We ought to have no questions, whosoever we be, as to whether we shall rise after our death out of our graves or not. The testimony of Him who cannot lie assures us that both the just and the unjust shall rise, These categories are exhaustive – we must belong to one or to the other – we must rise. About that there is no question. But the question is, “Why shall I rise? Will righteousness or guilt be the cause of my rising?” It must be on account either of righteousness or of guilt we shall rise.

By way of guidance, let it be said that the doctrine which we have been handling under our second head this day, is fitted, if rightly received, to kill self-confidence. We may have been willing to acknowledge in an easy way that we are by nature guilty creatures. But think of what it means, that you are guilty in such a way and to such a degree that if you do not get rid of your guilt in time, that guilt of yours will one day drag you forth out of the lock-up of your grave, and will bring you to the judgment seat of Christ, only to meet there with shame and confusion that will literally be everlasting. Is not this truth, if received as it ought to be, fitted to kill self-confidence in everyone that hears it? For a resurrection on account of the enormity of guilt, a resurrection therefore to everlasting shame, is what everyone without exception deserves. Is not our natural righteousness of little avail seeing that it will not cover our guilt or our shame in that day?

It is not easy to learn the lessons which the law of God is intended and fitted to teach, and it is only in a small measure that we could learn them and live. Nevertheless it is eminently salutary, nay, indispensable, for our salvation that our nakedness should be laid bare. Why? Is it that we should be tormented before our time? Not at all, but in order that sensibly stripped of every confidence in the flesh, we might flee for covering to Him who is ever ready to clothe the naked, clothing them without, if one may say so, with His own righteousness imputed to us, and inwardly with the grace of His blessed Spirit. He is the resurrection and the life. He that believeth upon Him shall never be put to shame; yea, though he were dead yet should he live. If, then, the question be pressed as it ought to be pressed, what shall be the reason of my rising from the dead? The answer will depend on whether we have laid to heart our nakedness, and fled to Christ to cover us, or whether on the other hand, notwithstanding all we have heard of law and gospel, neither the terror of the one nor the kindness of the other has moved us. And in conclusion I would say, although in a sense I have said the same thing already, that, as regards those who will rise to praise and glory and honour, they in time go forth out of the prison house not only of justice and conscience, but also out of the prison house of the flesh, in which by nature they had been corrupting more and more.

May He bless His word!

[February 1912]

## A SERMON.

By the LATE REV. JOHN SINCLAIR, Bruan, Caithness.

(Born in 1801: died in 1843.)

[See "Ministers and Men in the Far North," by the late Rev. A. Auld. The author of this sermon, though not so widely known as some others, was eminent for gifts and grace, a man of deep experience and holy life. He exercised a brief but powerful ministry. The present sermon is one of the best on this particular text that we have ever read – ED.]

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28.

Sin is the cause of all the restlessness in the creation. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." It is true that we often see the wicked enjoy much comfort and worldly ease, and the godly chastened every morning; but this is a dreadful rest to the former, and a blessed chastisement to the latter. This brought the Psalmist to a stand till he went into God's sanctuary, and saw the end of the two states. The rest of the wicked is worse than the rest of a beast. "God has placed him on a slippery place," near to destruction. There is no rest to his soul. "God is angry with him every day." Should his house be full of silver and gold, there is a sad inhabitant along with it. "The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked." God is the source of every drop of true happiness that ever existed. When man forsook that fountain of living waters, he lost his happiness, and none shall ever again taste of that happiness except those who are brought back by the Mediator to take up their begun rest in the Divine attributes by faith on earth, and who shall be in due time made to enter that rest which remains for the people of God.

1. Consider Christ's qualifications to give rest.

*First.* He is God. "Look unto me, all ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved; for I am God, and there is none else." Now, there were several things in the Godhead which pursued the sinner, and required his eternal restlessness, which none but one who is Himself God could remove.

There was (1st) *His justice.* Justice demanded full satisfaction for the injustice which sin had done to God. "His righteousness is like the great mountains." This was a mountain between God and the sinner, which no created arm could remove. But the Son of God, who here invites poor sinners to come to Him, removed this mountain by rendering complete

satisfaction to justice, till it could say, "I am well pleased for His righteousness' sake." So well pleased was He that I may say that justice, which before pleaded against the sinner, now pleads for him who comes to Christ by faith. Viewing the sinner in Christ, justice is so satisfied that it will never rest till the sinner believing in Christ be as sure in rest as He is.

(2nd) *Truth* pleaded against the sinner. "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Now, in the death of Christ this was fulfilled, and truth was vindicated; so that the promise of life implied in the threatening must be fulfilled: and we may say (to speak with reverence) that God would be found a liar if He did not admit to eternal life those for whom Christ died. Hence it is said, "In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie promised before the world began." Oh! get into Christ. Come to Him, and your salvation is as sure as the truth of God can make it.

(3rd) *The holiness* of God was against the sinner. Now, no blood of bulls and of goats could wash away this stain. He gave His own blood to wash the souls and bodies of those for whom He died, that they might wash their robes in it, and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. Now, being God, He could speak to God on their behalf, and that on a footing of equality. Though His Divine glory was veiled on earth in His humanity, He remained equally God in all His attributes as before; so that when you come to Him, and put your poor case in His hands, you may trust His authority and dignity with it as far as you could trust the other persons of the Godhead. While He became the Father's servant as Mediator in the execution of the office, He healed in His own name, cast out devils in His own name, gave pardon of sin in His own name, promised heaven in His own name, and, in short, exerted all the prerogatives of Divinity on earth. And so,

*Second.* "All power is given to Him in heaven and on earth." "All things are delivered to me of my Father" (verse 27). If He promised rest, none may gainsay it in heaven or on earth. Are you afraid that the Father may refuse you though you come to the Son? Oh! no. He does always those things that please His Father. If He had not the authority of His Father for offering rest, you had never heard of such a word as this from His mouth. Whatever things He heard with His Father, He makes known unto poor sinners. He can teach them to know the Father (verse 27). Would you like to know what is in the heart of God? Come to Him, and He will tell you. He reveals the Father, having been in His bosom from eternity.

*Third.* He is the Father's Prophet. "A prophet will the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me: Him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever He shall say unto you." Under Moses, when an enemy invaded the land, they went to the Prophet whom the Lord raised up, and he consulted the Lord, and then told them what means to use to get deliverance from their enemies. He told them what was the controversy for which the Lord was letting their enemies loose upon them, and what means to use to have the controversy removed. Now, my friends, there is a controversy between God and our souls for sin, and this is the only prophet in all the creation that can tell how that controversy can be removed. "No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and He to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." There are some people very anxious to know others' secrets. Oh! were you never anxious to know that great secret – what shall become of your immortal souls through eternity? Well, come to Him, and He can tell you; and, for your encouragement, I tell you that never did any come to Him but they got a good report of their case; never any but found that He had their names in the Book of Life. Perhaps He did not tell them this at first. Perhaps they had an old estate of self-righteousness, like the young man who had great possessions; but come to Him as the poor heavy laden, and as one that has not a crumb, and He will let you see a rich treasury of mercies, of pardons, of peace, of soul-refreshing cordials. And He is no churl over this treasury. Nothing gives Him more pleasure than to be dealing out the finest of the wheat and honey from the rock. You would fain know whether you are elected. Well, come to Him. That is the only way to know it; that is a secret only known by coming to Him. He never bade

any wait till they knew that. Then they never would come. Secret things belong to the Lord; things revealed belong to us. This secret of the Lord is revealed only to them that fear Him, and there is no true fear till one comes to Him. He tells His friends; none are friends till they come to Him. But you think you desired to come, and yet He has never told you. Well, remember He knows best what is good for you, and He is Sovereign – wait upon Him. Have you determined never to go to another? Well, “they that wait for me shall never be ashamed.” He has written one of the names of His elect upon you, and ye did not know it. “Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.” “My sheep hear my voice, and a stranger will they not follow.” They are His sheep, who keep about His fold, and do not follow strangers.

*Fourth.* He is a Priest.

*Fifth.* He is a King.

*Sixth.* He is meek and lowly. Never one so lowly. He has no pride. It never touched His heart. We often cannot get access to one on earth who could give us rest outwardly, on account of his pride. We cannot get a word of him. Now, Christ is never so busy attending the rich but He can speak to the poor. I may say if there is a poor one in the company, He must be there. Did you see Him in the house of Simon, the Pharisee? He is engaged with poor Mary, washing his feet with tears of godly sorrow for sin, Oh! are you poor in spirit? – can get nothing from the sermon, because He is not there? Can you tell to whom He is nearest in the company? To the poorest, most needy. He knows they have most need of rest, and He must be there. It is His office. If you had seen Him with His bowels yearning over Ephraim when he was chastised – behind the door, very dear to Him, though chastised. We may say, He wept most of the two. Ephraim thought his tears very bitter, no doubt, but Christ’s bitter tears were the source of Ephraim’s tears, or he never had shed one drop. Is He not, then, well qualified to give rest? He wove a covering of His own righteousness; He washed sinners in His own blood; He gave them the fine wheat of His promises; He made a bed on His own bosom, and perfumed it with the fragrance of the rose of Sharon; and think you not that they have rest?

2. Consider who are invited to come. “All ye that are weary and heavy laden.”

All are included in this call who have the word of the gospel. “Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; he that hath no money, come; why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not?” Here they are labouring, but have not the proper object in view. Ever since man went out from the bosom of God, he was labouring. “In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat thy bread.” Now He invites all, even those who are seeking in a wrong way. He calls all present here to-day to come to Him. Do you shut yourself out? We offer Him to every individual here, and pray you to come to Him. You came here this day for various reasons, but all are seeking happiness and rest. Some have come from curiosity; some thinking they get good by going to church, but they know not what way; some from superstition; yet He says, “Come unto me, all that are seeking rest,” by whatever means. “Look unto me, all ye ends of the earth.” But now, though all are invited, all are not sensible of burdens, but are dead and feelingless, and therefore do not come. They shall come who are made sensible of their burdens.

Who are labouring? and who heavy laden?

*First.* Those who have got their soul’s salvation for their burden. “What shall we do to be saved?” is their question. They had souls before, but they did not know it. All their care was what we shall eat, etc.? But when they get their souls laid on their back as their burden, I may say their bodies go out of sight. They lose concern about their bodies. Were they in sickness, it is not the pain of the body, but the fear that on its dissolution the soul would enter eternal suffering that makes them distressed. Christ said that one soul was of more value than the whole world. They are taught to be of the same opinion. Oh! have you an immortal soul

laid upon you? Come to Him with it, and He says, "I will give you rest." Are you afraid of hell? Aye, if you seem to be one foot in hell, come to Him. Oh! you cannot come? Well, look to Him. You cannot look? Breathe after Him. "Hold not thy peace at my breathing, at my cry." If you come, the burden of your soul will be taken off your hands.

*Second.* They have got a sense of sin upon them. Their sins were formerly light to them as a feather. They would own that they had sin, but it never gave them a heavy heart. Perhaps cheerful company or worldly gain would relieve them of all their trouble for sin; but when the Holy Spirit comes in saving conviction, sin will take such hold that nothing but the gracious communications of the Spirit through the Word, showing Christ in His all-sufficiency and His atoning blood applied to the soul, will ease the burden. Have you seen sin in its vileness? The holy Jonathan Edwards was wont to say that during the revivals of religion in America, some would come and say they were as black as the devil. He would say – "If that be all, you are nothing to me. My sins are infinity added to infinity."

*Third.* Besides old sins, some have burdens of corruptions. "Iniquities prevail against me," says the Psalmist; vain thoughts, foolish thoughts, sinful thoughts, perhaps directly against some one of the commandments, prompting to break it – perhaps blasphemous thoughts. Oh! my friends, there are more murderers than ever hung on a gallows, more unclean persons than ever stood before a congregation, more thieves than ever lay in a jail, more liars than ever were thought so among neighbours, more covetous persons than he who seized Naboth's vineyard. Were the spirituality of the law to search this congregation, I believe there would not one escape the charge of having broken every one of the commandments. Well, come with your heavy burdens to Him, and He will give you rest.

3. What is implied in coming? "Come unto me." This coming and believing are the same thing. "He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Now, in this coming there are several things implied. It is a believing on Him as He is held forth in the gospel, as a Saviour every way suited to our cases, and, as the Catechism expresses it, "a receiving and resting upon Him as He is offered to us in the gospel." It is the motions or movements of the soul quickened by the Holy Ghost, going out after Christ, and of various degrees of strength, according as the Spirit works on the soul to exercise that faith. But since it is represented here as a coming, we may mention a few things which it is a coming from.

*First.* It is a coming from unconcern. You are labouring under the Divine wrath – under the curse of the law. God's arrows are, as it were, set against you – the bow bent, yet nothing moves you. What if He bend the bow? Where will you land?

*Second.* It is a coming from open sin. Oh! give over your drinking, dancing, lewdness, etc. If ever you meet with Him, He will take you out of that mire of sin in which you are. He cannot dwell in such a stable as your heart.

*Third.* It is a coming from worldly company. I think the godly do hurt to themselves and to the world when they court its company for other ends than lawful business or profit to the souls of men. They injure themselves. I am sure they cannot enjoy God in a worldly company into which they enter causelessly. I think if they have not some special call in Providence or from the Word, if they go without an errand, they shall come back with one. They will likely have need enough of the "fountain opened" by the time they return. And they injure the company, by making them think there is little more in godliness than they have themselves.

*Fourth.* It is a coming from sloth. There are some who labour and are heavy laden; yet sloth folds their arms. They cannot move. Now, he will have means honoured as His own appointment. Oh! who can tell but some poor soul would have been delivered long ago by use of the proper means, for they are fitted for the end? Were the ceremonies under the law fit

for their end? Yes, till He that was typified came. And He that appointed the means under the gospel, knew that they were fit under the work of the Holy Spirit.

*Fifth.* It is a coming from self-righteousness. “All our righteousness are as filthy rags.” Prayers, reading, meditation, hearing, are all defiled, and must be given up as ground of justification.

*Sixth.* It is a coming from your own faith. You cannot have belief without the Holy Spirit. Well, despair of self, and seek and cry till He lift you and lay you on Christ’s bosom. In all your reading, and hearing, and praying, remember that there is not a word of it acceptable to God further than as it is moved by the Holy Ghost. This will make you to wait upon Him, and depend upon Him more every day. “Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit.” The prophet saw that nothing would be done till the Spirit should be poured out from on high. No more will it be with us. What is the reason that means and ordinances are so barren among us that scarcely do we hear of a single case of conversion in a year, aye, it may be in many years? Why, we compliment the Spirit with mentioning His name, but we honour Him not in depending upon Him; and we are so untender in our walk that we grieve Him away from our hearts and souls. Oh! mourning, burdened, heavy-laden person, try to wait for the Spirit. Luther says that a cry of “Abba Father” by the Spirit of adoption can go further than all the howlings of despair; and so it can.

4. We remark briefly regarding this rest, that it is,

*First.* Rest with God.

*Second.* Rest of conscience.

*Third.* A sweet rest.

We conclude with a word of *application*. Here is a call to all to come to Christ. There may be some great sinners here, and if we were to ask such of you what is the greatest sin that ever you committed, some would be thinking of one and some of another. Well, I can tell every unbeliever what is his greatest sin. It is his refusing to come to Christ. The work of God is to believe on Him whom He has sent. This is His commandment, that we believe on Him. We lay His invitation before you, and we pray you to be reconciled. We lay His promise before you, and plead that you believe it. We lay His complaint before you – “And ye will not come,” etc. – and beg you to remember it will appear again. We lay His sovereign command upon you, and ask how you shall meet Him with a refusal? You shall be welcomed if you come, however guilty, however polluted.

If you do not come – if you persevere in standing out, the time is coming when you shall no more hear “Come,” but “Depart” – Oh! sad word – who can describe the misery implied in that sentence? He has sent it down that you may study it. “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” I shall not enlarge upon these words, but leave them before you, and beg you never from this day let the sentence out of your view, till this text, or some part of Scripture, deliver you out of that sad number who shall be told to depart. He now says “Come,” and to those who come now He will say at the great day, “Come” – I may say an everlasting “Come.” May He who can open the ears of the deaf make us all to hear His voice, saying, “Come.”

[March 1912]

## Notes of a Sermon.

By the REV. D. MACFARLANE, Dingwall.

*Preached to the Young on Sabbath, 3rd March, 1912.*

“This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat” – Exodus 16:15.

As intimated last Sabbath, the sermon this afternoon is intended chiefly for the young, and I am glad to see so many of them present.

The subject of discourse is the *manna* – the bread by which the Lord fed the people of Israel in the wilderness for the space of forty years. The manna was a type of Christ. In Revelation 2:17 we read of the “hidden manna.” “To him that overcometh I will give to eat of the hidden manna.” In the sixth chapter of John’s Gospel Christ says, “I am the bread of life.” “I am the true bread that came down from heaven.” And in 1 Corinthians 10:3 the Apostle Paul calls the manna “spiritual meat.” It is as a type of Christ I shall speak of the manna, and in doing so I shall make some remarks on three things: –

- I. – The manna as the provision God made for the people in the wilderness;
- II. – The duty of the people in order to partake of that provision – they were to gather it; and
- III. – That a measure of the manna was preserved, that future generations might see the bread by which the Lord fed His people in the wilderness for the space of forty years.

I. – The provision. –

The *first* remark I shall make on this head is this: that the manna was sent to the people in time of need. When they came out of Egypt they took with them provision that lasted for a month. At the end of that period all that provision was consumed; and as they were now in a barren wilderness, where nothing grew to feed men, they would die for want of food had not the Lord made some provision for them to keep them alive. In like manner, Christ, the bread of life, was given by the Father in time of great need. The provision of the covenant of works was exhausted, and had not God revealed the provision of the covenant of grace, all the human race would have perished.

*Secondly*, the people were far from deserving that the Lord should send them the manna. On the contrary, they deserved to be punished. For they were murmuring against the Lord, and blaming Moses for bringing them out of Egypt to die in the wilderness. They much regretted that they left Egypt, where they had plenty of flesh and bread to eat. They were thus ungrateful to the Lord for delivering them from the land of Egypt and from the house of bondage. Besides, they were guilty of the sin of unbelief, which is dishonouring to God. Notwithstanding all the mighty works of God which He did for them in Egypt, and in opening a dry path across the Red Sea for them, they will not trust Him now for their daily

bread. Were we more deserving than they that God should send us the true bread from heaven? By no means. We were deserving of death – eternal death – and that because we had sinned. We deserved to be punished. Those who think that they merit eternal life are ignorant of themselves and of God’s gracious way of salvation. “When we were yet without strength, Christ died for the *ungodly*.” The ungodly do not deserve that God should give them His Son to deliver them from perishing.

*Thirdly*, the provision was abundant. There was enough for each – enough for all. The provision would require to be large; because it was not a few people that were depending upon it, but many. It is supposed that there were upwards of a million of people in the wilderness that needed the manna to keep them alive. Now, think of the quantity of food that such a multitude of people would require in one day. How much more they would need during the space of forty years! But the provision was made not by man but by God, and He made it according to need. Is not this true of the spiritual provision? It is. It pleased the Father that in Christ all fulness should dwell. If you die under the Gospel, it is not because there is not an all-sufficiency in Christ to save you, but because, as He said to the Jews, you *will not* come unto Him that you might have life.

*Fourthly*, the manna was not a product of the earth; it came down from heaven. So did Christ. He says, “I am the true bread that came down from heaven.” Christ existed from all eternity with the Father; and in the fulness of time He came to this earth in human nature. As the manna came down from heaven – the visible heaven – so Christ came down from the invisible heaven, to humble Himself and die, that sinners through Him might live.

*Fifthly*, the manna came down in the *dew*. Christ was anointed by the Spirit; the Word of God, in which He is revealed, is given by the inspiration of God; and when He comes to dwell in a soul it is by the Holy Spirit.

*Sixthly*, the colour of the manna was *white*. Christ is white – fairer than the sons of men, chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. He is holy, perfectly holy; the spotless Lamb of God, holy, harmless, and undefiled; separate from sinners. He is “the brightness of the Father’s glory and the express image of his person.” He is white also in His justice. He is the just One. He is white in every aspect of His character. I read of a little girl to whom Christ was precious, and she would be speaking to other children, telling them what a glorious Person He was, and said, “Christ is white.” Some bad children said, to torment her, “Christ is not white, but He is black.” This caused the good little girl to weep. Is Christ so precious to you, my young friends, that you would weep if you heard anyone speaking disparagingly of Him? If not you are not like that good girl.

*Seventhly*, the taste of the manna was *sweet*. Christ is sweet. The Psalmist, speaking of the word that reveals Christ, said that it was sweeter than honey; yea, sweeter than the honeycomb. If the word is so sweet, how much sweeter is Christ Himself!

*Eighthly*, the word, manna, is a question: “What is this?” When the people saw it, they did not know what it was. They never saw that kind of bread before, and they exclaimed, with wonder, “Manna,” that is, “What is this?” The sinner is ignorant of Christ. He does not know who or what He is. When Christ appeared to Saul of Tarsus he asked, “Who art thou?” And even after the sinner has known Christ in a saving manner, there is room for the question. There is a mystery in Christ that creatures cannot comprehend – a mystery in His Person, in His two natures in one Person; mystery in His threefold office; mystery in His humiliation, death, resurrection, ascension, and exaltation, which no creature can fathom. And even in glory there is room for the question – room to go on to know the Lord. As the manna was a new thing, so Christ is a new and living way to the Father, to holiness, and happiness. This shall be a wonder for ever.

II. – The duty. – It was the duty of the people to gather the manna. The Lord sent it to their doors. It was rained down on the field around their tents. It was near them. They had not

to travel far for it. In like manner, Christ is near us in His Word. You need not ascend to heaven to bring Him down. The Word is nigh unto you – the Word which we preach. Christ is in His own Word.

1. They were to gather the manna early in the morning. If they neglected to gather it at that time of day, they could not get it afterwards, for when the sun rose the heat of the sun melted it; it would rise up in a vapour to the clouds from which it descended. You are to gather the spiritual manna *early in the morning of life*. You ought to begin now when you are young. The Psalmist said, “I was young, and I am now old.” You children can say that you are young, but you cannot say that you shall be old. You may die in youth. The most of the human race die young. Comparatively few live to old age. Therefore I beseech you to begin now, in the morning of life, to seek Christ, and if you find Him you shall find life – life eternal – “the true bread that came down from heaven.” If you die without Christ, you shall perish for ever. Put not off the salvation of your soul till it is too late. This is the accepted time.

2. The people that went out to gather the manna took with them a vessel to put it in and carry it home. They gathered it with their hand, and put it in that vessel. *Faith* is the hand that gathers the spiritual manna, and the *soul* is the vessel in which it is put. If an Israelite went out with a vessel that was already full of something else, he could not bring home anything of the manna. In like manner, those who come to the means of grace, professing to come to gather the bread of life, while their vessel is full of their own goodness, their own righteousness, cannot bring home anything of the spiritual manna. “The Lord fills the poor with good things, but sends away the rich empty.” If you would find Christ in the means of grace you must come with an empty vessel – emptied of yourselves, having no good thing dwelling in your flesh – so empty that you always need Christ, in all He is and in all He has, to supply your needs. The emptier you are, the more room there is for Christ in His fulness of grace and truth.

3. They were to gather the manna *daily*. The Lord did not give them the whole store. He kept that to Himself, and He sent them a daily supply. This taught them their dependence upon Him. You need food for your body daily, and you need food for your soul daily. Therefore seek Christ daily. I hope you are praying every day, and reading the Bible every day. If not, you are not like the people in the wilderness, who gathered the manna every day of the week.

The people were forbidden to go out to gather the manna on the Sabbath day. They got bread for two days on Saturday, that they might keep the Sabbath day holy. But some of them disobeyed the Lord’s command, and went out to gather manna, but they found none; and the Lord was angry with them. The Lord is angry with those who work on Sabbath for their daily bread or for worldly gain. As the Israelites who went out on Sabbath against the Lord’s command found no manna, so those who work on the Sabbath for worldly gain shall find out in the end that all they gained by breaking God’s holy day was no real gain but loss. There is a great deal of Sabbath-breaking in our time by the running of trains on the Lord’s day, and that for worldly gain. And it is very remarkable that owing to the strike of the miners, railway companies have already lost about half a million of money. Although we do not approve of the strike, yet we believe that this loss is a divine punishment for Sabbath-breaking.

4. They gathered according to need – an *omer* for each person in the family. If there were two persons in a family they would get two omers and no more; and although there would be twenty in another family they would get twenty omers. So that those who gathered most had nothing over – they needed it all – and those who gathered least had no lack. They had enough, and “enough is as good as a feast.” The Lord gives to His people according to their needs. If their needs are few, He will give them few omers of grace to help in the time of need; and although they would have a hundred needs, He will give them a hundred omers,

and yet they have nothing over; they need it all. As they got only a daily supply, when they retired to bed there was not a particle of bread in the house. Let us suppose that a little boy said to his mother before going to bed, "Mother, we shall starve to-morrow." "Why do you say that, child?" replied the mother. "Because," said the boy, "there is no bread in the house; we ate the last morsel of it at supper. The house is now empty of food." "That is true," said the mother, "but although the house is empty, the *store* is not empty. He who sent us bread to-day will send us bread to-morrow too. Go you to bed, rise early tomorrow, and you will see that the manna will be sent to-morrow as usual." This is not an unfounded supposition. How often will the child of God say, "I shall starve to-morrow, because my poor soul is now as empty as if I had never received anything of the bread of life." But, poor soul, it is good for you that the store is not as empty as your soul is. Do not despair as long as there is an abundance in the Father's store. The store is as full as ever. It is inexhaustible. Wait with patience; be diligent in the means of grace; go out to the field where the manna falls from the hand of Him "who giveth liberally and upbraideth not."

5. They were not required to pay anything for the manna. The people had to pay for their food in Egypt, but when they received their daily bread from the Lord there was no payment asked; it was given freely – "without money and without price." When you go to the baker's shop for bread, you will try your purse, to see if you have money to pay for it; and that is right. But when you go to God's shop for the bread of life, you need not be afraid that you shall be refused because you have no money; for it is given freely. The reason why it is given freely is that it has been paid for already. Who paid it? Christ paid it, and paid it dearly. And therefore it is written in God's Book that "eternal life is the gift of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." If one farthing was required of me to pay for salvation, I would lie down in everlasting despair, for I had not that much to give. But blessed for ever be the "God of all grace", that I may get salvation without the least thing in me, or done by me, to merit it. For it is given freely to sinners – even the chief! What a bargain! But this is the Gospel, and I preach it to you to-day. Is not this "glad tidings of great joy"? Certainly it is. O, young and old, come to God's market of free grace. Buy of Him, "without money and without price" – on His own terms. Salvation is as free as the manna was.

6. The use that was to be made of the manna. It was given to be *eaten*. Moses said to the people, "This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat." It was not given to be looked at, or kept as an ornament in their houses, but to be *eaten*. So is Christ – the bread of life – given. It is not enough for you to know that there is such a person as Christ, or to have Him set before you in the Bible, or in the preaching of the Gospel; you need to partake of Him – to eat Him. You are not, however, to eat Him in a literal or carnal manner, as the Church of Rome teaches, but spiritually, by faith. When Christ spoke of "eating his flesh and drinking his blood," the Jews did not understand Him. They thought that He taught cannibalism. And, indeed, the dogma of the Church of Rome on the subject is the most horrible form of cannibalism ever heard of in the history of the human race! The literal manna was food for the body, but Christ – the bread of life – is food for the soul, and is not eaten by the mouth of the body, but by *faith*, the mouth of the soul. If you are true believers, you live on Christ as your spiritual food, as the people in the wilderness lived on the manna to feed their bodies. They did not eat the manna *raw*, as they brought it home. It was prepared for eating; it was ground into meal and then baked in the fire, and being thus prepared, they ate it. Was it in this respect a type of Christ? Yes, for before He could be the bread of life to feed His people He was, so to speak, ground between the two millstones of the law of God and baked in the fire of God's wrath, which they deserved! This accounts for His sufferings, of which we read in the Bible. The manna was wholesome food. So is Christ. Those who live on Him are strong and healthy. It is said of the manna that it had a healing efficacy. This is true of the bread of life. If you were sick in bed and got even a morsel of it, it would heal you,

and you would rise and walk and work with renewed strength. Sometimes even a sight of Christ would have this effect. Thomas was sick, but when he got a sight of Christ he was healed at once. More than that, if you were to eat this bread you would never die, that is, you would not die the eternal death. So Christ says, "If any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever."

III. – A measure of the manna was preserved that future generations might see the bread by which the Lord fed His people in the wilderness for the space of forty years. It was such a marvellous provision worthy of being remembered. The provision of salvation was more marvellous, and shall be remembered by the redeemed in time and eternity. It is said of Christ that "His name shall continue for ever," and that "His name shall be remembered (in the world) as long as the sun." At the command of the Lord, "Aaron put an omer in a golden pot, and laid it up before the testimony to be kept." So is the spiritual manna put, as it were, in a pot that future generations may see and know "the bread of life" by which the Lord fed His people in the past. What is that pot? I shall mention three pots in which it is.

*First, the Bible.* Christ is in the Bible. He is in the Scriptures of the Old Testament. He said to the Jews, "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." After His resurrection, He expounded to His disciples, in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. These Scriptures were those of the Old Testament; and they were divided into three great parts – the books of Moses, the writings of the prophets, and the Psalms. "And He said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you while I was with you that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms (Luke 24:44). If you read the Scriptures of the New Testament, you will see that they are full of Christ. They testify of His birth in human nature, His humiliation, death, resurrection, and ascension to the right hand of the Father in heaven. In short, Christ is the all in all in the Bible, the centre around which all Scripture gathers, and in which all Scripture meets. The Bible is the field in which the spiritual manna is to be found. See then that you will be often in that field, reading and searching it that you may find Christ, and gather food for your souls. The Bible, revealing Christ, was written that future generations might see the provision that God made for the salvation of lost sinners.

*Secondly.* – The Westminster Confession of Faith. – The Reformers framed this document that future generations might have Scriptural views of Christ, and of the doctrines of the Gospel, a knowledge of which is necessary to salvation. It is founded on Scripture, and agreeable thereto.

*Thirdly.* – The Shorter Catechism is another pot. It was intended for the instruction of children in the knowledge of the doctrines of God's Word, and has been blessed to many in Scotland, and the means of keeping the people sound in the faith for several generations.

The golden pot containing the manna was brought to the land of Canaan, and laid up before the Ark of testimony in the Most Holy place. Let us now suppose that an Israelite, who thought it a vain thing to preserve such a memorial, asked permission to see the pot, or rather, in the absence of the high priest, who alone had a right to enter that sacred place, entered the place where the pot was, and when he saw it he broke it in pieces with a small hammer he had in his pocket. What would you say about that man? You would say that he was a very bold and wicked man. So he was. But is there a man bearing the Christian name in our day, one might say, who would do such a wicked thing as that man did? Yes, not only one man, but hundreds and thousands. What are the "Higher Critics" doing? Are they not, so far as they can, tearing the Bible in pieces, denying the inspiration of the sacred volume, calling the first three chapters in Genesis a *myth*, large portions of the prophets *spurious*, and the Gospel narratives *unreliable*? They are. It is notorious that the most of the "Higher Critics" are connected with the United Free Church! A similar attack has been made on the Confession of Faith. This attack has been made for the simple reason that the Confession contains the

doctrines of the Bible; and as the Confession contains these doctrines, that Church repudiated it. Dr. Rainy said that it would be a “wicked thing to bind the people of this generation to a creed that was 250 years old.” But I am afraid it was not because of its antiquity he wished to get rid of the Confession, but because of its *Scripturalness*. The Established Church of Scotland has practically got rid of the Confession for the same reason. The Shorter Catechism is thrown away by many for the same reason. The effect of this will be that coming generations shall not know the “bread of life” by which the Lord fed His people in Scotland in the past. But we will preserve the Memorial, according to the Lord’s command. “This the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat.”

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