

Now, you know the use of ordinances. Did you come here to see, or to be seen, or because it is the general practice, just as the door upon its hinges moves as it is moved? Are you just as hardened to-day as ever you were? Care you no more about a soul than the bird that flies over the house? "O! I have made use of sacraments and prayers, and have gone to the Lord's Table"! Yes, and go perhaps to hell at last, unless you have your eye on the Chief Corner Stone. Every builder must have his eye on the corner stone else the building will not be straight. So must you have your eye chiefly set on Jesus Christ, the great Corner Stone. Jesus said, "I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture." O! well did David know this, when he said, "This is the gate of God; by it the just shall enter in." Many are professing to seek this door, who will be struck blind for their hypocrisy. But be you seeking in sincerity and truth; it is well worth seeking to get into such a house as this. The top thereof is gold; and if you fall on the pavement, it will not hurt you, for the pavement thereof is love. O seek, then, to get a place in this house. But you who are in will be longing to be with Christ in the house not made with hands. You must remain, however, for a season in the house on earth, and you will not be without sorrows. The people of God have their sorrows. You will have many trials, but "be of good cheer," Christ says, "you will overcome the world, even as also I overcame it." You must carry "the cross of Christ" with you. He will keep you in this house, until He prepares a place for you, for He says, "I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there you may be also." Some children are taken away soon out of this world; they cannot be taken away too soon. "Come out from among them, and be ye separate; and I will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters."

This house was not only a chosen but also a *purchased* house. Christ "gave himself for it" – more than heaven and earth could give. The blood of bulls and goats would not do, nor an angel from heaven. Christ Himself was the great ransom given that alone could suffice. Then justice was fully satisfied; the demands were all paid. Thus the Church of God was purchased with His own blood – the blood of Jesus Christ. You cost Him much. He sent His Son – "made of a woman, made under the law" – to die for you, to be despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He had a crown of thorns put upon His precious head, and was spit upon and buffeted; all manner of despite was done unto Him. Yet He bore it all patiently for your and my sake. Look, then, O flock, at Jesus as the door and chief corner stone, you that were at His holy ordinance and table, and give yourselves wholly up to Him – to that dear Saviour who suffered so much for you. His people are made willing in the day of His power. In the former dispensation there were only types and figures of good things to come, but now you have the unction from the Holy One. Will merely hearing about Him satisfy you? No; you must be brought into the banquetting house to enjoy divine fellowship, and have "the flesh and blood" of the Son of God as your spiritual food. "Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able" to separate you from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. O! then give yourselves up to Him. This is the house of God – where He dwells – made up of those who say, "Whatever others do, as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." They have the spirit of adoption, and desire to be in their Father's house. The strong man will be cast out. The Lord says, "I will take possession where the devil was wont to be, for I am stronger than man or devil." And He takes with Him new furniture for the house, for the house must be newly furnished. The cry of the spouse in the Song of Songs was, "Let my beloved come into his garden"; and His answer was, "I have come into my garden, my sister, my spouse; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey. . . . Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." Jesus stood for you; He will not come empty-handed. This is Jesus and His spouse meeting – the Son of God meeting with poor sinners. The carnal affections are being crushed. "Ye were once darkness, but now are ye

light in the Lord.” He came in and wrote the law on the heart, not on tables of stone, but with His own finger on the fleshy tables of the heart. When He comes in, “the old man” is cast out and you are made new creatures. When He comes He will make people lively hearers. “The unction from the Holy One” will teach us all things. I am not able to go further at present. We will sing a verse or two. May God bless what has been spoken, to your souls!

[A few verses of a Psalm were sung.]

The members of God’s spiritual house are not mere servants; they are made sons and daughters. Jesus is all you want; seek then to lay hold of Him, so that when you leave this house below, you may enter the mansions above, the Paradise He has prepared for His own people. All this should be matter of anxiety to us – it should be a concern to each of us. You see the anxiety of David:

One thing I of the Lord desired,
And will seek to obtain
That all days of my life I may
Within God’s house remain
“That I the beauty of the Lord
Behold may and admire,
And that I in his holy place
May reverently enquire.”

The beauty of the only-begotten and well-beloved Son of the Father is what he desired to behold. O sinner, is this your desire? David’s chief desire was to dwell in the house of God, to see the beauty of the only-begotten and well-beloved Son. He got riches and honours, but his chief desire was to dwell in “the house of the Lord.” This desire is begotten by the Holy Spirit in the soul, to dwell forever in God’s house. Job had this desire, even when he thought he was far from God, when he cried, “O that I knew where I might find Him.” “We shall be saved,” says the sinner, “for we attend the Sacrament and have the Bible.” Having the form of godliness without the power, “from such turn away.” The men of the world have a desire for the world. “Who will show us any good? is that which many say.” But David said, “Lord, lift on us the light of thy countenance; I have more joy in my heart than they when their corn and wine do most abound. And I will not give sleep to my eyes nor slumber to my eyelids, until I have found a place for the Lord.” The hungry have a desire for food. “Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness.” Who begot that desire in your souls? Jesus Christ. The sorrowful cry of those who are seeking the Lord is, “I go to bed without Christ, go to Church without Christ, go home without Christ.” Well, the whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick, like the poor woman who was going to all the physicians, and none of them could cure her, until she came to Christ, and we might hear her then say, “O when I saw Jesus, and but touched the hem of His garment, I was cured at once.” Go to the God of Israel; He will make up all your wants for time and eternity. “Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him, while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”

Perhaps you will not get Him to-day or to-morrow, but persevere in seeking Him. David here sets us an example, and says in effect, “I will seek Him until I find Him.” If you seek Him from the heart, be assured He sendeth none empty away. He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. There are many who have been (professedly) seeking Him all their life, and have never found Him. They have had a form of prayer all their life, and have never got Him. Pray with the heart. The Lord cares not for lip service. “They draw near me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.” Where the spirit of prayer is, the desire

rises from the soul. When the child seeks its mother's breast, give it gold or silver and it will care nothing for it. So with you who are truly seeking Christ; you will be satisfied with nothing else. But when Christ puts the breast of "the word" in your mouth, how happy you will be!

[December 1914]

A Sermon.

By the REV. D, MACFARLANE, Dingwall.

“Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my Spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law” – Isaiah 42:1-4.

In the preceding chapter God shows the vanity of idols, and the folly and sinfulness of those who trust in them. “Behold, they are all vanity: their works are nothing: their molten images are wind and confusion” (Isaiah 41:29). In the forty-second chapter He calls the attention of poor deluded sinners to Christ the only but all-sufficient Saviour of sinners – able to save to the uttermost those coming to God by Him. That it is of the Messiah the words of our text speak is evident from Matthew 12:17-21. In endeavouring to speak from this precious portion of God’s Word, as the Holy Spirit may enable, I shall direct your attention to four particulars, viz.: –

- I. – The Servant spoken of in the text;
- II. – His work;
- III. – The effect of His work; and
- IV. – The call to behold Him.

I. – The Servant – the Son of God, and the Second person of the glorious Trinity.

It is of this person God the Father says “My Servant.” The name *servant* is suggestive of the following things: –

(1) That the master is greater than his servant, so Christ says, “My Father is greater than I” (John 14:28). This does not mean that Christ is a mere man, as those who deny His godhead hold, for He is the same in essence or nature with the Father, and equal with Him in power and glory (John 1:1; Hebrews 1:3), so that He said, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father” (John 14:9). The inferiority spoken of has respect to the state of humiliation to which Christ came to do the work the Father gave Him to do, and to that only. In that state He veiled His glory, but at His ascension to heaven the veil was removed, and He was glorified with the glory which He had with the Father before the world was (John 17:5).

(2) *Engagement.* – No one can be a servant among men without being engaged by a master. God the Father engaged His Son Jesus Christ from all eternity and entered into an everlasting covenant with Him, to the terms of which both parties agreed.

(3) *Work.* – When a master engages a servant he has work for him to do. The Father gave work to Christ to do, which no mere creature – man or angel – could do. Of this work Christ speaks “I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do” (John 17:4).

(4) *Term of service.* – A servant among men is engaged for a certain period of time – for six months, a year, or a longer period, and when the term day comes the servant is under no obligation to serve longer, nor has the master any further claim on his service. In the case of Christ the term day shall never come. He is the Father’s Servant for ever. This is true also of men, who are His ministering servants in the Church. The time of their death is not the term day. When they cease their work on earth they begin their work in heaven. They are only transferred from one department of service to a more glorious one, and they shall perform it perfectly, which they could not do on earth, because they were not perfect themselves.

(5) *Reward.* – Every master who engages a servant promises him wages or reward for his work, “The servant is worthy of his hire.” What was the reward the Father promised to His Servant, Jesus Christ? He promised

(1) to exalt Him at His own right hand in heaven, and to give Him a name which is above every name. Because Christ humbled Himself God hath highly exalted Him (Philippians 2:9).

(2) To give Him to see of the travail of His soul in the conversion, sanctification, and glorification of a great multitude of sinners, which no man can number (Isaiah 53:11). With this reward He shall be fully satisfied.

Let us now observe how the Father speaks of His Servant.

(1) He calls Him "Mine elect." Every master has the right to choose his servant: God the Father elected His eternally-begotten Son as His Servant. There are some who deny the doctrine of *election*, although it is clearly revealed in the Word of God. Christ was elected, and all of the human race that the Father gave Him in the everlasting covenant were elected, not separate from Him, but "in Him" before the foundation of the world.

(2) He speaks of Him as He in whom His soul delights, "In whom my soul delighteth." He delights in Him with complacency, not only as He is the Son of His love, but also as His Servant.

(3) He promises to uphold Him in the performance of His arduous work. As to His human nature He needed to be supported. Could not His divine person support His human nature? Yes, but it was the Father's part to supply His Servant with all needed support in doing the work He had given Him to do. If Christ needed to be supported, how much more we, who are frail creatures, need to be strengthened and upheld by the power of God in our weak endeavours to do His work! Well, He promised to do that, and He is faithful to fulfil His word of promise, "I will uphold thee by the right hand of my righteousness."

(4) He says, "I have put my Spirit upon him." The Holy Spirit was given to Christ to qualify Him for the great work the Father gave Him to do. It was by the Spirit He cast devils out of men; it was by the Spirit He performed all parts of His undertaking as the Father's Servant till He cried triumphantly on the cross, "It is finished." The Spirit was given to Him, not according to measure, but above measure, in order that His people might receive the Spirit out of His fulness.

II. – His work.

Although Christ as Mediator had to make atonement as Priest, it is His work as Prophet and King that is spoken of in our text.

(1) His work as Prophet, "He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles." That is, He shall reveal the Gospel to the Gentiles. Till Christ came to the world in human nature, and died in that nature, the Gospel was confined to the Jewish nation, while all the other nations of the world were left in spiritual darkness. There was a middle wall of partition separating Jews and Gentiles. By His death Christ broke down that middle wall, and opened a way for the Gospel to the Gentiles, of which are we. Of this work of mercy there was a visible sign given from heaven by the rending of the vail separating between the Holy and the Most Holy in the temple at the death of Him who is now the Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world. The ceremonial law, which has no place now in the Christian Church, was the middle wall of partition. Christ removed it once for all, and woe be to any that will restore it to the Church of Christ! As the Gospel was now to be preached to the poor Gentiles, Christ said to His Gospel messengers, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."

(2) His work as King, "He shall set judgment in the earth." That is, He shall establish the Gospel so firmly in the earth, in this world, that it cannot be removed by any creative power, not even by the gates of hell, but shall remain in the world, steadfastly, till the end of time. Many attempts have been made in the past to overthrow the Gospel, to remove it out of the world, to make room for idolatry, superstition, and other forms of error, but in spite of all these efforts of enemies the Gospel is still in the world, and we are sure that all attempts that

may be made against it in the future shall prove equally unsuccessful. In this connection we may say that the intention of the instigators of the terrible War that is now going on in Europe was to overthrow the Gospel of Christ, and to set up idolatry in its place. But they shall find out before the end of the conflict that Christ shall gain the victory over them; for “He must reign till all His enemies are made His footstool.”

We shall now notice the *manner* in which Christ shall carry on His work. He shall do so:

(1) Without clamour or noise. – “He shall not cry, not lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street.” He sought not His own glory, but the glory of the Father that sent Him.

(2) *Tenderly*. – “A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench.” Those sinners who are bruised under conviction of sin, pressed down by the wheels of a broken law, which denounces a curse on its transgressors are, we think, represented by the bruised reed. A reed is weak at the best, but when bruised, it is weak indeed. In like manner, man is a weak creature, but when bruised in the manner described, he feels very weak, and needs great tenderness in dealing with his case lest he should by the temptations of Satan be driven to despair. The Father commends Christ, His Servant, to those who are thus like a bruised reed. How shall Christ deal with them? If He were to deal with them according to their desert, He would break them with a rod of iron. But He will not deal with them in that way – for He Himself was bruised for their iniquities – but He will, according to His mission to the world, seeking and saving lost sinners, deal tenderly with them. He will not only not break them, as they deserve, but will, as the good Physician, bind them up, and make them strong by speaking peace to their troubled souls through His atoning blood. “By His stripes they are healed,” and made strong as the cedars of Lebanon. “The smoking flax” may represent those who have attained to a more advanced state of experience in seeking the Lord than those bruised under a sense of sin and a lost condition. The smoke issues from a candle that burns dimly. There is some light, and there is darkness, but the darkness predominates. The awakened sinner reading or hearing the Word of the Gospel begins to hope that he may be saved. But the light that begins to dawn on his soul is surrounded with many doubts and fears and misgivings, so that he is afraid that his hope may be extinguished. How is the Father’s Servant to deal with such a case? He will not quench the smoking flax. Very little discouragement would quench it, but Christ, who has the tongue of the learned to know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary, will not quench it. On the contrary, He will blow gently on the smoking flax by His Spirit through the pipe of the Word of the Gospel, so that that which was ready to die begins to blaze, and to shine more and more unto the perfect day. As for God, His work is perfect. He that hath begun the good work in His people will make it perfect.

In the candle that burns dimly there is fire, and there is smoke. In the believer there is life, and there is the manifestation of life. If you see smoke issuing from the chimney of a house you will conclude that there are living persons dwelling in that house. On the other hand, there are other houses and you do not see smoke ascending from them all the year round. If you ask the reason you shall be told that there are no living men dwelling in these houses. In the past men dwelt in them, but these men died, and their houses are now the abodes of cattle. The smoke of prayer and family worship issues from the dwellings of the righteous (Psalm 118:15), but the unrighteous forget God, and neglect to worship Him in their homes. This is very common in the present age.

(3) *Courageously*, and with *determination*. – “He shall not fail nor be discouraged.” It is in setting up and establishing His kingdom in the world the Father

speaks thus of His Son. Many tried to discourage Him, and to frustrate the accomplishment of His undertaking. “The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers took counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed” (Psalm 2:2). But He that sits in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision; He set His King over Sion. Notwithstanding all opposition of enemies Christ shall not fail nor be discouraged till He have set judgment – the Gospel – in the earth. He came to the world to set up His kingdom under a new dispensation, which shall continue without the least change till the heavens and the earth shall pass away. This is the last dispensation, and the most perfect on this side of heaven. Those who think they can improve upon it are fools, and are guilty of daring presumption in thinking that they can excel Him whose wisdom is infinite, and in whom all the treasures of knowledge and wisdom dwell.

III. – The effect and fruit of His work: –

(1) “The Gentiles shall wait for His law.” They wait – attend – on the means of grace, the preaching of the Gospel. This has been verified in the days of the apostles to a large extent, and in subsequent ages since; and it shall be the case more abundantly before the end of the world, especially during the millennium, when the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole world as the waters cover the face of the sea.

(2) “They shall put their trust in His name.” When the gospel is blessed to sinners they shall believe in Christ, receive Him by faith, and rest on Him *alone* for salvation. It is to be observed that sinners cannot put their trust in Christ without first hearing of Him, and knowing Him. There are many teachers in the visible Church at present who teach that the heathen may be saved without the Word of the Gospel. These men are either ignorant of the Bible, or they do not believe the Word of God. For the Apostle Paul settled that question long ago. He said, “How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent?” (Romans 10:14-15); and then in verse 17 he says, “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” The Psalmist says, “And they that know thy name shall put their trust in thee” (Psalm 9:10). Our text follows the same order. The Gentiles wait for God’s law or word, and then when the word is blessed to them by the effectual work of the Holy Spirit they shall put their trust in the name of Christ.

IV. – The call to behold Christ – the Father’s Servant.

The word *behold* is used in scripture to call attention to something great and wonderful. That the Son of God, who is the brightness of the Father’s glory, and the express image of His person, should assume human nature, and humble Himself, and become obedient unto death for hell-deserving sinners is the greatest wonder conceivable. It was such a wonder that no eye of creatures – men or angels – saw it, nor ear of creatures heard it, nor did it enter their thoughts till it was revealed to them by God. When it was revealed, angels desired to enquire into the mystery of it, and men, whose eyes God opened, began to gaze at the most gracious revelation, and the sight affected their hearts to such a degree that they could not contain themselves, but gave vent to their feelings in the language of the Psalmist: “Oh, that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men.” The word means *to look*. It was in this sense John the Baptist used it when he said, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” It means also *to believe*. So Christ says, “Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.” When the jailer at Philippi asked, “What must I do to be saved?” Paul answered, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”

When God says, "Behold my servant," He addresses, among others, those who looked for salvation to idols – gods made of wood, silver, and gold (Isaiah 41:5-7). He says in effect, "Turn away your eyes from looking to these false gods that cannot save. Behold my Servant; look to him, and you – even you – shall be saved."

Let us now enquire *where* and *how* Christ can be seen. We shall answer this twofold question negatively and positively.

First, negatively. Some think that Christ may be seen in a picture of Him made by man. But there is not such a thing in the world as a picture of Christ made by man. He challenges all men to draw His likeness. "To whom then will ye liken God; or what likeness will ye compare unto him?" (Isaiah 40:18). Then He goes on in the following verses to speak of how idolaters presume to make His likeness by making graven images, embellished with silver and gold; and he that is too poor to make such images chooseth a tree that will not rot, and makes an image of God of that material. These idolaters were heathen, without the Word of God, but there are many in the land of the Bible who call themselves Christians that make supposed images of Christ, who is God. These people are worse idolaters, and less excusable, than the poor heathen, who knew nothing better. Christ cannot be seen in these pictures. The only true picture of Christ is that drawn by the pen of inspiration in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

This leads us, *secondly*, to answer the question positively. Christ may be seen in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments – the revelation He gave of Himself. When the Jews denied that He was the Messiah He referred them to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, which testified of Him. In the New Testament Scriptures we have a clearer revelation of Him. The history of His incarnation, life and death, and resurrection is set forth in these Scriptures with such clearness and evidence as not to admit of a shadow of doubt.

Having answered the question as to *where* Christ can be seen, let us proceed to answer the second question as to *how* He may be seen. He is not now to be seen by the bodily eye, as He was seen in the days of His humiliation on earth. He is now hid out of sight. He is within the vail in heaven, and the heavens must contain Him there till He shall be revealed from heaven at the end of the world, to judge the quick and the dead; and then every eye shall see Him. This is what we learn from God's Word, the only and sure source of information. But although Christ is not now to be seen by the eye of the body, yet He may be seen by the eye of the soul – the eye of *faith*. It was the want of that spiritual eye that was the origin of making pictures of Christ. Man, by nature being spiritually blind, cannot transact with a God he cannot see with the eye of the body. Hence the need of the eye of faith. Those who see Christ by the eye of faith were by nature as blind as others. But God opened their eyes, enlightened their minds in the knowledge of Christ, and they beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. They beheld His glory, not in a picture, but in the Word of the Gospel. It was by the eye of faith the Old Testament saints saw Him, except when He appeared to some of them in the form of man, before He actually assumed human nature; and since He went to heaven after finishing the work of redemption, till He come again, it is by the eye of faith believers under the New Testament shall see Him. "We walk by faith, not by sight."

In conclusion, the call to behold Christ is to all in the land of the Gospel, who are still in the land of the living. After men pass from time to eternity the call does not follow them. There is no salvation after death for those who refused to comply with the call during their life-time. In the present European War many hundreds and thousands of our fellow-creatures are being cut down to enter eternity whether they closed with the Gospel call or not. But there is hope for those who are still spared, if they listen to God, who says, "Behold my Servant." We have reason to believe that many of our soldiers on sea and land are seeking preparation

for death, reading the Bible and crying to God for mercy; and it is a good sign that friends supply them with copies of God's Word, wherein they may see the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, the way, the truth, and the life, and no sinner can come to God, to peace, and to heaven but by Him alone. We hear that the priests of Rome put a *cross* before the eyes of dying soldiers, thinking that that will save them. But we lift up before the eyes of sinners Jesus Christ in the preaching of Gospel, as God the Father does in our text, when He says, "Behold," not a cross, but "my Servant." I mention our soldiers in these closing remarks because I feel for them, and pray for them, and seek their salvation. They are defending our country and our lives. They are fighting against ungodly and barbarous enemies, who, like the unjust judge, fear not God, nor regard man. They need, therefore, the sympathy and prayers of God's people, that He may be their shield to protect them, their strength to fight His battles, and to make them victorious over their enemies on sea and land to the praise of His glorious name.

As I have referred to the War, I wish to say, further, that, terrible as the War is, the Father's Servant is by means of it bringing forth judgment to the Gentiles, and preparing a way for the coming of His kingdom throughout the whole world. Some idolaters are, since the War began, throwing away their idols, and, like others of old, "turning from idols to serve the living God." It was the sword that opened the way for the Gospel to Italy in 1870. Dr. Robertson of Venice tells us that "Italy is now putting on biblical Christianity." The Christianity they had for centuries in the past was a Christianity without the Word of God, which was no Christianity at all, but paganism under the name of Christianity. He tells, also, that between twenty and twenty-five millions of the people are thirsting to hear the Word of God read and preached. "This the doing of the Lord, and wondrous in our eyes." If this War is the Armageddon predicted in the book of Revelation, as probably it is, we may say with certainty, on the authority of God's Word, that, however long it may last, it shall ultimately put an end to idolatry, not only in Europe, but also throughout the whole world, and introduce the glorious period of the millennium foretold in the Scriptures.

Though Britain shall suffer in the conflict inasmuch as a great deal of idolatry exists in the Empire, yet it shall ultimately gain the victory over Germany, Austria, and Turkey, and all other enemies. In this connection we may quote what the late Rev. Lachlan Mackenzie, Lochcarron, said, with prophetic force, in the year 1805, in the course of a sermon on Nelson's victory off Trafalgar: "Britain," he said, "will pray, and the temple of Dagon will fall. Britain is certainly destined by God to do some great and astonishing thing upon the theatre of the world. What it will be, we cannot take upon us to foretell. As mistress of the sea, she is destined to break the heads of the dragons in the waters, and the head of Leviathan in pieces. Leviathan is the monster of the deep, a power in enmity to the people of God, and breathing vengeance to Britain in particular. But God will put His hook in his nose, and Britain will bring the monster dead to shore, Amen, Alleluia!" Then near the end of the sermon he said, "I said, and I abide by what I have said, that Britain will strike some great stroke upon the theatre of Europe. Is it because we have our Nelsons, our Duncans, our Abercrombies, our Smiths, and our Calders, etc.? This was not the language of David. Himself was a hero, and he had many heroes in his army; and does he trust in them? No, but he encouraged himself in the Lord his God."

The Lord add His blessing, and to His name be the praise. Amen.

[January 1915]

Notes of a Sermon.

By the REV. EWEN MACQUEEN, Kames.

“They looked unto him and were lightened; and their faces were not ashamed” – Psalm 34:5.

The Psalmist is speaking here as a man who got a great deliverance from the Lord. He had been in distress, and felt that none could help him except the One who said, “Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee.” And now that he is delivered he vows to bless the Lord, and calls others to assist him in doing so, from the first to the third verses.

And from the fourth to the seventh he relates his experience in the words that we have taken as the basis of our remarks. You can see that he looks and sees that his case is not at all peculiar to himself, and that there are others who had a similar experience. We are all too ready when in trouble to think that our case is singular, and Satan is ever ready to suggest it; but David had to see that he had companions in tribulation and in liberty as well. The flock are brought home by the Good Shepherd by the same road. “In the world ye shall have tribulation”; and as these troubles will abound, so will their joy in the Lord. He will not always be chiding them; He will give them a ray of His blessed countenance after the storm. Even in nature we see the sun brighter after a storm, and we seem to value it more. It is so with God’s children. They value the Lord’s visits more after they are in trouble. “The flesh” will soon get proud. We need the frost of trouble to keep down the old man. In this nation we have been getting proud, and the Lord is dealing with us now, to see if we will look to Himself, who helped and exalted us in the past. Oh, that it could be said of us as a nation what is said of those in our text: “They looked to him.” The verb used here has several meanings – to scan, to look intently at, to regard with pleasure, look, etc., which are all true of those who are enlightened in the knowledge of Christ. The next verb, “and were lightened,” means, to begin with, to sparkle, i.e., figuratively, to be cheerful, to flow (from the sheen of a running stream), figuratively, to assemble, flow together, to be lightened.

The doctrine we desire to notice from these words is that the Lord enables His people in the midst of their trouble to look to Himself, to whom they flow, and that they are not put to shame, as God’s people are never put to shame when they flow to Him in understanding, in desire, in faith, in love. Unbelief makes ashamed; faith is flowing to Him and resting on Him, which takes away shame.

- I. – The persons of whom the Psalmist here speaks;
- II. – The things they are said to have done: “they looked unto Him, and were lightened” or, as it may be translated, “they flowed”; and
- III. – The reception they met with: and “their faces were not ashamed.”

I. – The persons of whom the Psalmist here speaks.

You may see from the title that this Psalm was composed by David after he got free from the hand of Achish, King of Gath. He now calls upon all to extol the Lord along with him for the great deliverance he had obtained. It is not likely that his prayer was a great one, when he had “changed his behaviour” before Achish. But it is a mercy that it is not according to our ability in asking that the Lord answers our prayers. He was afraid, when he prayed – afraid of his life – but his fear sent him to the Lord, and the Lord delivered him from all his fears.

At times the Lord gives great deliverances to His people. He did that to David, and to many before him and after him. And such deliverances will be matter of wonder and praise to them to all eternity. In this Psalm, David begins with his own experience, and from this sweet moment he has himself, he casts forth his eye and sees that he is “compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses,” and he changes writing from the first person singular to the third person plural. “They looked unto Him, and flowed.” We have here to notice three points in particular.

1. The Person to whom they looked. According to the context, it is plain that this Person was Jehovah, the God of Israel. As David was before Achish, so it was with the children of God in general; they were surrounded by enemies. In vain may they expect “salvation from the hills, or from the multitude of mountains.”

“I looked on my right hand, and viewed
 But none to know me were
 All refuge failed me; no man
 Did for my soul to take care.”

We must be shut out from every creature, if ever we will be made to look to Jehovah. He manifested Himself as the Lord God merciful and gracious, and taught the saints in those days by types and shadows such as the cities of refuge and the paschal lamb that such as were in distress of soul were welcome to Him. He manifested Himself as having the hearts of kings and of all men in His hands, and able to turn them whither He would. To Him they looked in the day of trouble, and they were not put to shame.

2. Let us now notice the persons who “looked unto Him.”

(1) They were such as felt themselves in danger. Although we have natural eyes and natural understanding, we do not as fallen creatures see or understand our spiritual danger. The language of our heart is, “As to-day is, so will be the morrow, and much more abundant.” Hence we say to God, “Depart from us.” That is our deplorable condition by nature. But when the Holy Spirit comes, He opens the eyes of the understanding to the danger into which sin has brought us. It has exposed us to all miseries in this life and to the pains of hell for ever. They are convinced that they are their own enemies, and that sin is a deadly enemy, for its wages is death. They see that God as a righteous judge is their enemy and that His law is their enemy. David at this time was hated by Saul, King of Israel, and had to flee from him for his life. Now he finds Achish his enemy. Hence God’s people are humbled within them when they are taught that “by the deeds of the law” to which they flee for help, “no flesh shall be justified” in God’s sight. When Saul of Tarsus found that Jesus, whom he persecuted, was Jehovah the God of Israel in our nature, it brought him down, and scattered his high thoughts of himself to the four winds of heaven. The lion became a lamb.

(2) Again, they are such as are enlightened in the knowledge of the way of salvation through Christ crucified, and are made willing to come as ready sinners to the mercy-seat of Christ for covering in the day of anger.

II. – Let us, in the second place, consider what they are said to have done. In doing so, we are to consider them as changed by the grace of God from a state of nature to a state of grace. “They looked.” The word in the Hebrew means to scan, to look intently at, to look with care at. The word is used in diverse ways in the Scriptures – to behold or see, in Deuteronomy 28:32; to take particular notice of, in Leviticus 13:5; to expect or wait for, in Genesis 13:16; and to believe and trust, in Isaiah 45:22. I feel inclined to take it in the last sense of believe or trust. When the knowledge of the Lord is given by the Spirit through the Word, the soul is enabled to look to – or in other words, to believe in – the Lord Jesus Christ, and to trust in Him as an all-sufficient and all-suitable Saviour.

The next clause justifies us in this view, taking the translation as they “flowed,” or ran as a river. The verb, *nahar*, means to be cheerful, to sparkle, or to flow as a river. In Isaiah 2:2,3 all nations, who are to assemble in the Lord’s house, are said to flow unto it. The enlightened will flow to God in Christ in their understanding, conscience, will, and affections. It is easy for them to do so. They cannot help doing so. They are constrained to do so, as a river is constrained to flow in its channel by what is before and by what is behind it. The open way in front leads the water to flow, and the weight and pressure behind impel the water forward. So there is an open way of access in the gospel which leads God’s children forward, and there is great pressure behind that impels them, namely, from the world, the flesh, and the devil. His own gracious invitations, glorious promises, and love in Christ draw them forward in their souls. “The love of Christ constraineth us,” saith Paul. And sin, Satan, the world, and their own doubts and fears are overruled by the Spirit for good, and made impelling influences in their movement heavenward.

Where do they flow? They flow to His Word as the pasture of their souls, to the public and private ordinances of His worship. When others in a backsliding generation flow with “the times” they flow against “the times.” They flow to the Lord Himself as their all and in

all. You cry, poor soul, "O that I could flow away from myself, and the world, and flow more after holiness, and after communion with the Lord. I see no one like God in Christ. 'Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.' I would like to be swallowed up in Him." It is painful to grace when the soul has no felt desire after Christ. It is painful also for them to see their fellow-sinners careless about salvation. They would desire that others would go along with them. "And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths." This has been the case in days gone by, and it will be the case yet. May the Lord hasten the time!

III. – The reception they met with: "their faces were not ashamed."

The word used in the original language which we have translated "shame" is from a root meaning "to dig, to explore." Hence the result detection, so as to make persons to be ashamed and to blush. Many people say when they are much ashamed, "I could wish the earth had swallowed me." This is described in a lively manner in Revelation 6:15,16. At the coming of the Lord, His enemies will desire that the rocks and the mountains should fall on them and cover them. Shame shall take hold of them. Now, they who "looked unto Him" had the very opposite of that; they were "not ashamed"; they were well received. Yes, they were well received. In past times God's children were not put to shame; they were not disappointed. And even in this dark age, they are not put to shame who are enabled to put their trust in the Lord Jehovah as their almighty deliverer, and they will not be put to shame at death and in eternity.

A word in conclusion. We have seen that those who looked to the Lord and flowed unto Him were not put to shame. Have you, my friends, ever seen your need of looking unto Him? Are you careless as to your eternal destiny? If so, you must lay to heart that, if you continue as you are, you will seek to dig, to hide yourself eternally from the presence of the Lord, but will not be able. Your shame will cover you as a mantle. But you, who have found out that there is no other hiding place but Christ, you will have your trials and shame from sin in you, and sin committed by you, as long as you are here; but when you die, the Lord will wipe away the cause of all your shame eternally, and your everlasting song will be, "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood . . . to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." May He bless His Word!

[January 1915]

A Sermon.

By the REV. ALEXANDER MACKAY, Oban.

(Taken down by a Hearer.)

"Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself, for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended" – Isaiah 60:20.

You will notice that in this chapter the prophet speaks about two things. He speaks, in the first place, about the future glory of the Church of Christ in this world, and he speaks, in the second place, about the glory of the Church in the "better country." God's people in every age have been expecting Christ's cause to prosper in the world in a way in which it has not hitherto done, but it was to heaven – to the "better country" – that their minds were principally directed. We think that the prophet, in this same chapter, makes that clear, for

while his heart rejoices over the fact that the Church is to “rise and shine” in the world, his mind goes beyond the confines of time to that place where her sun “shall no more go down,” and where “the days” of her “mourning shall be ended” for ever. There is a glorious future before the Church in the world, as this chapter brings before us, and we know from what is here said that these days of prosperity have not yet come, but we know that they certainly must come. This world belongs to the Redeemer. He had a kingdom in it from the Fall, and He is to have a kingdom in it, as it is written, “while sun and moon endure.” It is not, however, to the future glory of Christ’s kingdom in this world that I wish to direct your attention this morning, but to the light which the twentieth verse throws on the life of God’s people in the world, and the bright prospects it holds out to them in view of eternity. You will notice that two things are brought before us in the verse.

I. – A state that is going to end, and that is described as “days of mourning,” “the sun going down,” and “the moon withdrawing itself.”

II. – A state that is not going to end, which is described by the words, “thy sun shall *no more* go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself,” and “the Lord shall be thine everlasting light.”

I. – We see that the state of God’s people in this world is described as “days of mourning,” “the sun going down,” “the moon withdrawing itself.” God’s people are a mourning people. “Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.”

Mourning is a characteristic of the people of God, and whoever may be without mourning in this life, God’s people will not be without it. You notice that the prophet says here “days of mourning,” not “one day.” This means that it is not one day of mourning they have, but many days of mourning. We would be equally wrong if we would say that the life of God’s people is one long day of mourning while they are in the world, for they have days of joy as well as days of mourning, although they might often say about their days of joy, that they are like Pharaoh’s fat kine, eaten up by the lean ones that follow, so that no trace of them remains except in the memory. But “days of mourning” describes their whole life.

Now let us consider, first, *the time* when this mourning began. For you must remember that there was no difference between God’s people and others by nature. They came into this world “the children of wrath, even as others,” and many of them lived for many years in the world proving the truth of this to themselves and to others. But there came a time in their history when they were arrested, and that by the Word and by the Spirit of God, and it was then that “the days of their mourning” began. Now, there are some persons, and they have “days of mourning” which only last for a short time. Perhaps at a Communion time some will have what might be called religious fits, and one would be inclined to think that the “good work” was begun in them. They will be thoughtful; they will be praying and shedding tears; but in a little time their goodness proves to be like the morning cloud and the early dew, which only disappoint. That is the way with many. But that is not the mourning that is brought before us here. This is a mourning that began and will continue till the day arrives when they shall bid good-bye to the world and everything in it.

Let us enquire now as to *the nature* of this mourning. There is such a thing as “the sorrow of the world, which worketh death.” But this sorrow is godly sorrow, which “worketh repentance unto salvation,” and is not to be repented of. We believe, however, that when this mourning began, it was the consequences and the guilt of sin that was the chief source of their mourning; or in other words, this mourning began when they apprehended that hell was the wages they had earned for themselves, that they were on the way thither, and that they had so destroyed themselves that they could never do anything to deliver themselves from the wrath they had incurred by their sins. You see, my friends, that person is to be pitied indeed who is confronted in his own mind with the solemn fact that he has earned hell for himself by

his evil doing. It was then that the days of their mourning began, when it was brought home to their souls, to their consciences, to their minds, that they had ruined themselves, and that God, the righteous Judge, would by no means clear the guilty. When this mourning began the people of God thought that it was mourning that would never end, that their portion would be in outer darkness, where there is weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth. For when they were at this stage they had no light as to the way of deliverance. Darkness reigned in their minds. The light that was in them was darkness. Have you ever discovered that the light that is in you naturally is darkness; that it does not lead you to the right source of deliverance, but that, on the contrary, it turns you away to other channels, to other cisterns – “broken cisterns that can hold no water,” and that can afford you no relief? Well, that was what this people found out. They did not believe that there could be such a thing as deliverance for them when their own helplessness and guilt were brought home to their minds. But it is said here that the sun arose upon them, for when it is said that their sun “goes down,” that means that their sun arose. You never heard of the sun going down till it had first arisen. We believe that it was when this people were at a loss to know what was going to happen to them that “the Sun of Righteousness” arose upon their hearts. You have often heard the proverb: “The darkest hour is just before the dawn.” Well, it was the darkest hour spiritually when “the Sun of Righteousness” arose upon God’s people.

You know yourselves that when the sun rises things will look very different from what they did in the night. If, for instance, you were out upon the mountains on a dark night, when neither moon nor stars appeared and when the sky would be overcast, everything would appear very dismal to you then. You would not know which way to turn. But if the sun began to rise suddenly, and the clouds began to roll away, oh, what a change the rising of the sun would bring about! Well, it was something similar to this that happened to God’s people when “the Sun of Righteousness,” which is brought before us here, arose upon their souls. When they thought that they were undone for ever, then the darkness fled away and the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ shined into their hearts, and in that day “old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” God was made new to them; Christ was made new to them; the Word of God was made new to them; the new birth was made new to them; the world itself was made new to them; the natural sun, the moon, and the stars were made new to them; yea, the very birds of the air were made new to them when “the Sun of Righteousness” arose. They thought in that day that “the days of their mourning were ended.” They thought when they got the first glimpse of Jesus Christ as the way to the Father – when they were enabled to close in with Him as He is freely offered in the Gospel – that “sorrow and sighing had fled away” for ever on that day. Was that the case? Ah! no. As I already said, it does not say here the *day* of thy mourning but “the *days* of thy mourning.”

The day of conviction was one day of mourning which this people had, and that day terminated in the dawning of the day of gospel deliverance. But that day of gospel deliverance did not continue very long with them, for “the days of their mourning” began in a different way now from what they had formerly experienced. The first cause they had for mourning was sin, as to its guilt and consequences, but now the chief cause of mourning is the corruption of their hearts, or the being of sin in their minds. When “the Sun of Righteousness” arose they thought that they were to have no more experience of sin; that they would no more go after sin. They thought that they were to love the Lord and follow Him all the days of their life, but they found out by sad experience that there was a fountain of evil within their hearts, so that when they “would do good, evil was present” with them. We believe also that when “the Sun of Righteousness” went down for the first time after He had arisen upon their hearts, that that was the saddest day that ever they had, for although the day

of conviction was dark, we think it was nothing in comparison with the night that followed the going down of “the Sun” after He had first arisen upon their souls.

You know that literally there are certain signs which indicate the going down of the sun, and the first sign is this – you begin to feel cold. You will hear people remarking in the evening, “It is getting cold.” What is the reason? The reason is that the sun is going down, and the second sign that indicates the going down of the sun is darkness. These two signs follow the going down of “the Sun of Righteousness.” The soul begins to be conscious of *coldness*. It has not at all the same warmth that it had experienced towards God, towards Christ, towards His people, towards holiness. And *darkness* also sets in, God Himself becomes dark to them. His word is not so full of light to them as it used to be. Christ is not the brightness of the Father’s glory that He formerly had been. We believe that when “the Sun of Righteousness” goes down on God’s people for the first time, they do not know what has happened to them. They begin to question whether the experience they went through was the right thing at all.

Now, when the natural sun goes down, what follows is night, and that is what happens in the history of God’s people. It is not better things are becoming with them. The coldness becomes more intense; the darkness becomes more real also, and you know that it is in the night that the wild beasts begin to come forth. This people who thought that they had bid good-bye to sin, who thought they had bid good-bye to lusts, begin to realise that there are wild beasts in their hearts, and that these wild beasts have as keen an appetite as ever they had before. There is nothing heard now in this night that has overtaken them but the roaring of the wild beasts. I heard lately that that eminent man, Archibald Crawford, said about himself that when the wild beasts, at the beginning of his spiritual history, put out their heads, he used to cut off their heads, but “now,” he said, “they have made paths for themselves in my soul, and they will come out of their dens, and stare Archie Crawford in the face.” We believe God’s people will understand this.

Now, it is said here that the moon withdraws itself, which implies that it also had given them light. According to God’s appointment the moon literally rules the night, and God is saying here that He has a moon which rules the spiritual night that comes upon His people. Why has God ordained the natural moon? It is just to give light in the night. Even so, God has placed a moon in the spiritual firmament, and He intends that that moon should give light to His people when the sun goes down. And what is this moon which rises and lightens the spiritual night? You know that the moon literally has no light in itself? that it only reflects the light of the sun, and however brightly the moon may shine, its light does not give out any heat, and this is true spiritually also. The moon spiritually is just the experience of God’s people. The light of “the Sun of Righteousness” is reflected by their experience. When they begin to enquire, after the sun goes down, whether it was the Lord’s dealings with them or not, whether it was really a saving change or not, they see such light in what took place in their minds that they cannot but conclude, although they now feel as cold and as dead and as corrupt as ever they felt – perhaps more so than ever they felt before – yet, they cannot but conclude, that they could never have such thoughts as they had about God; that they could never attain to the knowledge they got of the way of salvation, if it had not been for the work of the Holy Spirit in their hearts through the word of truth. God intends that His people should make use of the moon, for He says about His people of old: –

“They did not call to mind his power,
Nor yet the day when he
Delivered them out of the hand
Of their fierce enemy.”

What does He mean by that? He means that His dealings with them reflected such light that it ought to convince them that it was His work, and that they should take comfort from it in their spiritual night. But it is said here that the moon withdraws itself, and that means that God's people have moments in their life when they have not any light from their own experience to convince them that they are in the right way. They will be on the verge of concluding that all they passed through was a delusion from beginning to end. Do not you be complaining, friend, if you have the light of the moon, cold as it is, if you can say, "Although I feel so dead and so cold and so carnally minded, yet I cannot but believe that God began the good work in my soul." Do not you be complaining if you have light on God's dealings with you, for He brings before us here that His people go lower even than that, even so low that the "moon withdraws itself." Satan has great power, when God gives him permission, to make things dark, and in belittling everything that God does for His people.

What happens now when the "moon withdraws itself." Well, this is what happens – the Sun begins to rise again. God comes to the help of His poor people, and "the Sun of Righteousness" arises upon their souls again, and they again begin to conclude as at the beginning that the "Days of their mourning are ended." But they soon find out that they have to pass through the same experience again, and that the "sun goes down" a second time, and the "moon withdraws itself" a second time, and that day of mourning follows day of mourning as long as they are in this world. And we may say that the longer God's people are in the world, it is not shorter their days of mourning are getting, but "The days of thy mourning shall be ended."

II. – The second state to which our attention is drawn, is the state that shall never end. The first state shall end, but the second shall never end, and what is this second state? It is the state of Glory. When will they enter into this blessed state? They shall enter into it when they draw their last breath in time. It is then and then only that this people shall bid good-bye for ever to sorrow and sighing. "Sorrow and sighing shall flee away," and God shall then "wipe away all tears from their eyes." It is written that there "shall be no night there," and that "The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." It is easier for us, however, to speak of their "days of mourning" in the world than it is to speak about the state of glory, for, "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." It is said here, that the Lord shall be their everlasting light and that the days of their mourning shall be ended. When we see their happy state described as to what they will not have, as well as to that which they shall enjoy. They will not have a cloud there between their souls and their Lord. They will be at home there. They are in the wilderness here. At its best this world is a wilderness to God's people. Here they are weary, but there they shall rest. Here they are sad, but there they shall be glad.

"Then are they glad because at rest,
And quiet now they be;
So to the haven he them brings,
Which they desired to see."

Here they are often questioning whether they are right for eternity or not, but there they shall never have any doubt throughout eternity as to their standing, for they will be perceiving for ever the marks of the fingers of the Almighty upon their souls and their bodies, and just as "their sun" shall no more go down, so also will it be true that "their moon" shall not withdraw itself for ever, for it is written:

"And with Thy likeness, when I wake,

I satisfy'd shall be."

Let me now, in conclusion, ask you whether you know anything of these things by personal experience. Mark you this, my friend. You will have mourning for sin, either in time or in eternity. There is not a creature of the human race but will have mourning for sin – that is the inevitable – and if it is in eternity that the days of our mourning for sin will begin, it shall never be said about them, "The days of thy mourning shall be ended." That is a solemn consideration. What, then, do you know of these things? Is it true of you that you have begun to mourn in reality over your sins and that you have realised the awful consequences of sin, and the danger to which you have exposed yourself through having sinned against God? Is it true of you, on the other hand, that you have known in some measure what it means to be delivered "from the wrath to come," through the efficacy of the atonement reaching on your heart? Has "the Sun of Righteousness" risen on your heart, and can you follow the footsteps of the flock, not only by the still waters but through the valley of the shadow of death?

Have you an evil heart of unbelief, where the wild beasts have their lair? Are you often at your wit's end as to how matters stand with you? Is this world a wilderness to you, and are you seeking a better country continually? If you can say that you are familiar with these things – that these things are part of your life – then His Word says, "Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended." But if these things are foreign to your life – if you are a stranger to them – O, then remember this, that the time will surely come when, if you do not become familiar with these matters, it shall be said about you that the days of your mourning have begun but that the day will never come when they will end. If your mourning for sin will begin in eternity, it will mean to you an eternity of weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. There will be no sun there, no moon there, no such thing as tears wiped away there; nothing there but the blackness of darkness, the undying worm, and the unquenchable fire.

Now, dear friends, these are things which concern us more than anything else under the sun. Time is not only short but uncertain, and it is our wisdom to make sure work of being right for eternity. The way of escape is clearly put before us, which is Christ, and we are counselled to flee to Him. We are invited to come to Him; yea, entreated to do so. What, then, are you going to do? Are you going to believe the truth, or are you to continue believing the lie? Millions of gospel hearers are refusing to believe the truth, and are going down in darkness and uncertainty on the broad way that leadeth to destruction. See, O, see to this, that you will not be among them. May the Most High bless to us our consideration of His own Word!

[February 1915]

A Sermon.

By the REV. NEIL CAMERON, St. Jude's, Glasgow.

Preached at Oban on Monday, 2nd November, 1914.

“When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints and to be admired in all them that believe” – 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10.

You will notice that the Word of God – especially Christ in His preaching, as set forth in the four gospels – makes it plain that terrible things were to be on the face of the earth immediately before the day of judgment. There were to be wars, and we have wars now, even the most terrible war that ever has been waged in the history of the world since God created man on the earth. We think it would not only be profitable but dutiful for us to consider such a text as this, as we are confronted with such terrible things.

We shall just now take notice of three things from the words we have read: –

I. – When are we to expect the coming of Christ to judge this world? And we hope that no one doubts the fact that Christ will come to judge the world.

- II. – The manner of His coming. We have it described here and in other places.
- III. – How He shall proceed to deal with two kinds or two classes of the human race that shall be presented before Him.

I. – We shall notice, before we speak of things that are written in God's book that are to precede the coming of Christ, that the day of your death and of mine is the day in which our destiny for eternity shall be fixed. We have such deceitful hearts in us that we think if a thing is far off we have no cause for alarm; but remember that you know not – neither do I – whether we shall ever see the sun rise on the heavens again. We are distinctly told that “As the tree falleth, so shall it lie.”

Now, in regard to the time of His coming, there are several things which I desire to notice. You will see from the Scriptures that,

first of all, before this time will come, the man of sin, or the antichrist, must appear in the world. This apostacy was so clearly delineated by the Holy Ghost in the Word that no one need have any doubt as to its identity. This apostacy was to appear in the city set upon seven hills, and which ruled over the whole earth at the time John wrote the Book of the Revelation. This city was demonstrably Rome. All the predictions of God's truth till now have been fulfilled in the Papacy as to the antichrist predicted. So this has been so far fulfilled as that several steps of its downfall have been already accomplished. It will be destroyed before the beginning of the thousand years during which Satan is to be bound. You will notice that this has partly been fulfilled already, and the rest of God's truth concerning it will be made good in its time.

The *second* thing that must precede the day of judgment is, the Gentiles are to be brought in. The gospel is to be preached to all nations, and we see that that is not accomplished yet. There are many in the world who have not heard the gospel or ever have seen God's Word – more than have seen it; but at the same time that that is so you will notice we are making great progress in this direction. The Word of God, in part or in whole, is now translated into very nearly four hundred and fifty languages, and that is an extraordinary stretch made towards the accomplishment of this: that every sinner in the world should hear of God's provision in the gospel for perishing men, or, in other words, hear of Christ – hear of the salvation He wrought out by His obedience and death – and have that salvation offered to them in the gospel. Now, that is a thing that must take place before the day of judgment.

The *third* thing to be noticed, and that must take place before the day of judgment, is that the Jews must be brought in. As sure as we have it in several places that the gospel is to be preached to all nations, and that then the Son of Man will appear in the clouds of heaven, so sure it is that the Jews are to be brought into the Christian Church. God shall pour His Spirit on the Jews, and they shall see that Jesus of Nazareth, whom they crucified at Jerusalem and whom they refused to acknowledge, not only then but during nearly nineteen hundred years, was the Messiah whom God promised first in the Garden of Eden, and especially to the Jews. This is the third thing, and this has not yet been accomplished. There are about twelve million Jews in the world, and there are only very few of them who believe that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah – the Saviour whom God promised to perishing men – and they are perishing in unbelief, generation after generation. You find Christ saying to them, “If ye will not believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.”

Now, these are three things that must take place before Christ shall come from heaven to judge this world, and these things may take place very quickly. But there is another thing which I desire to notice, and it is this. After these three things which must take place – namely, the man of sin must appear; the gospel must be preached to all nations; the Jewish nation must be brought into the Church and come to acknowledge their own Messiah, and this will be as a resurrection from the dead to the Gentile church – there is to be the period of

time which we call the millennium. Whether that will mean a thousand years, as the word literally means, or a shorter or longer period, no one can definitely state. God alone knows the meaning that He attaches to words that are not yet fulfilled in providence, but whatever the millennium will be, the time of it is after the gospel has been preached to all nations and there shall be one Church of Jews and Gentiles. Now, remember that the millennium does not mean at all that children will be born into the world different from what they are now. They shall be born into the world sinners as they are now, needing to be regenerated, to be born again. The means of grace shall be used in that period as they are now. The Word of God shall be read by all men in their families and in the church, and preached soundly, and so far as we can see, God shall cause His blessing to come down on the Word read and preached in such a way that almost the whole shall be converted in the days of their youth. Otherwise we cannot see how this will be true, that “the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the whole earth as the waters cover the face of the deep,” if it were not true that they were converted when they were young, perhaps when they were going to school. In our day to hear of a young man or a young woman weeping over his or her sins is a very rare thing, but at this time it will be a very common thing not only to see young men and young women but children weeping over their sins, and looking to Christ for mercy – looking to the merit of His blood as their only hope.

Then we are told that after the millennium will have come to an end, there shall be so many enemies of the Church gathered together against it that, if it were not for the intervention of God, they would put an end to the Church in the world. When the people who are living in the world then shall see all nations endeavouring to the utmost of their power to put an end to the Church, they may expect two things:

First, they may expect judgments to come on the world that were never heard of. “Fire shall come down from heaven and devour them.”

And next, they may expect that they shall see the Son of Man appearing in the clouds of heaven.

In a few words, these are the things which we can see in God’s Word that are to be expected before the coming of Christ, and when these things are accomplished Christ shall then appear.

II. – In the second place, we have here the manner in which Christ shall appear, and we have several things brought before us to point out how He shall appear.

(1) “He shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.” An angel is a mighty being, and we are told in another place that their number is not few. Many angels were seen in the world. The Bible speaks – and it never speaks but absolute truth – of angels coming to this world on errands from heaven down from the beginning of the world till after the resurrection of Christ. That does not mean, my friends, that angels have ceased to come to the world. They are in it yet and they shall be in it while God has a people in it. We are told that at the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ the angels of heaven, a great multitude of them, appeared and they sang over the good news that a Saviour was born in the city of David and that was to be to the glory of God and meant peace towards men in the world. There were many angels there, but, when Christ shall appear at this day, all the holy angels shall be there, even “ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands,” as the Scripture says when it speaks of the number of the angels. They shall all come. Christ shall appear on the great white throne and “every eye shall see him.” This, my friends, is not a dream nor a fable. This is a thing that you will have to see. You will have yourself to be a party in this extraordinary transaction.

(2) The second thing we desire to notice is – “He shall appear in flaming fire.” He appeared before, “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,” and men despised and

rejected Him, and they despise Him just as much to-day; but, remember you, our Lord shall come and, when He shall come, we defy any man or woman or devil to despise Him. "He shall come in flaming fire," and we are told in connection with this that the fire in which He shall appear will put an end to the whole material creation. "The elements," said Peter, "shall melt with fervent heat." See, this world is composed of elements – the stones, the earth, the sea – and men can tell you what the elements are, but God's Spirit through the Apostle tells us that these elements shall be burnt up with fervent heat, and that the earth on which we are now shall go back to nothing. That reminds me of a young man I met with about twenty-two years ago. While preaching we happened to say something about the day of judgment, and he said, that surely we had not studied science when we could make such a statement from the pulpit in the name of God as that the earth was to go out of existence when, he said, you know perfectly well, if you study anything at all, that it is impossible to put even a drop of cold water out of existence. It will remain there after everything man can do. We told him that we knew that, but we said, "What power do you exercise?" You only exercise the power of one element upon another and try to destroy the one element by the other. The Scripture nowhere says that this will be the way in which this world shall end, but it says that when He shall appear "the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them." And, you see, anything that has lost place is out of existence, for everything in existence requires a place wherein to exist. We said to the young man that he had not considered in the science which he had learned that that almighty power which had brought all things out of nothing was to come into exercise again. He confessed that he had not, and that he believed almighty power was able to cause all that we see to-day to go back to nothing from whence it came. What the Scriptures claim is that the heavens on which we look, the sun, moon, and stars, the earth and sea and all the creatures which are therein, shall return to nothing, and that by fire "for the world that now is, is reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and the perdition of ungodly men." "The heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up." These are the words used by God the Spirit, and you will notice, my friends, when He brings these things before men, He says – "Seeing then that these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" How ought men to live who are forewarned that such things are undoubtedly before them!

(3) We shall notice in the third place in connection with the coming of Christ that it speaks here about His enemies. "Taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ," and this means that those who knew not God and who disobeyed the gospel shall then appear before the bar of this Judge. See, when the great white throne shall appear, we are told that the dead, small and great, shall appear then before God. None shall be overlooked. The child that lived ten minutes, that only drew a breath in the world; Methuselah, the oldest man that ever lived; kings, princes, beggars; all men shall be there, and we are told that the voice of the Son of God shall call them out of their graves. "Marvel not at this," He says, "for the hour cometh in the which all that are in their graves," whether that be in sea or land, "shall hear his voice and come forth; they who have done good shall come forth to the resurrection of life; they who have done evil shall come forth to the resurrection of damnation." Oh! how many will desire to remain in the grave, but remain in the grave they cannot; and God, that is Christ, shall bring all men, not only in one generation but everyone from Adam to the last that shall be born into the world, before His throne and none of them shall be excepted. Little children, young men and young women – and most of the human race, my friends, die in their childhood and youth, very few come to old age – they shall all be there. You will be there and I will be there. Now, this is the third thing that shall take place at the coming of the Son of God, He who is now sitting at the right hand of the Father and who has the promise from the mouth of God, "Sit thou at my right hand until I

make thy foes a stool whereon thy feet may stand.” Do you think that God’s word is not to be fulfilled so that, when you see men trampling God’s law under their feet and despising Christ in the gospel, instead of envying them in their revelry in the world you ought, my friends, to pity them? There is no person in the world who ought to be pitied more than the young man or the young woman who spends his or her time satisfying the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye and the pride of life, for this day is before us and they shall have to appear there and Christ will then have to do with men’s souls and bodies put together again. You see, the soul immediately at death goes to the place for which it was prepared in the world. If the soul of man in the world was regenerated, “born of water and of the Spirit,” it will immediately upon death go to glory as sure as the soul of Lazarus went there. On the other hand, if the soul has not undergone this change, although the man may be clothed in scarlet and fine linen and living sumptuously every day, yet whenever death comes the soul opens its eyes in the flames of hell. These are not conjectures, my friends. These are absolute truths, and you will have to find this out in time or eternity.

(4) We shall notice in the fourth place, in connection with the manner of the coming of Christ, that when the dead, small and great, shall have heard the voice of the Son of God, they shall then be gathered to Christ’s bar. When the soul of the sinner, if he dies in his sins, will come from hell, from the place where it was tormented in the flames, to join the body again, the soul and the body now must endure the punishment that God means to be the cup of the portion of such as live in sin. You will notice, my friends, that when souls will come with God’s curse on them and enter into their cursed bodies, they will then have to be gathered to Christ, to the Judge; and when the souls of the righteous will come from glory and enter into their bodies resurrected from the graves, pure like the body of Christ, they also will have then to come to the throne of judgment, and we are told that this is the work He will give to the angels. “Let all my saints,” He says, “be gathered unto me,” and they will go forth and gather in all that ever lived from the four winds of heaven, every individual, and bring them to the great white throne of judgment. This is how things will be at His coming, as we see them in the Scriptures. Men may go on, my friends, laughing, dancing, and thinking that these things are only the figments of the brains of men, although they see them written in God’s Word; but, remember this, that when this day will come, they will need no one to tell them that they were all true. “Every eye shall see him, and they also that pierced him,” but we are fools in this age who deny eternal punishment altogether. We have noticed that, since this war began, men who used to laugh at eternal punishment have begun now to believe that there is such a thing, but there are others who do not make use of the little reason God has given them and go heedlessly on; but wait, my friends, and the day shall come when such men will have to learn by sad experience that they were deceiving themselves.

III. – Let us notice now, in the last place, a few things in connection with the procedure of this day; how Christ will deal with all that will stand before Him, and that will mean, as I said more than once, the whole Adamic race without one exception, from the child of a minute of age to the oldest man that ever lived. “Every one of us must appear and give an account of ourselves unto God, of all the deeds done in the body.” First of all, then, in connection with this third head, we notice it says here that “when he shall appear in flaming fire,” it will be “to take vengeance on them that know not God.” What do we understand by this? Well, in one sense it is true of all men in their natural state, that they know not God. If men knew Him it would be absolutely impossible for them to live in sin as they do. “The fool says in his heart, there is no God,” and consequently he goes on in sin. But that is not what we understand by knowing not God here, for the Spirit of God divides those who are to be punished into two parties, and these two parties are:

(1) they that know not God, and

(2) they that obey not the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

These are the two divisions, so that “they that know not God” are to be understood here as all the heathen, even the heathen that had not God’s Word or worship set up among them. They will have to appear this day, and Christ will deal with them, not as He will deal with those that know the gospel, but He will deal with them as “those that know not God.” And the reason why they came to this was that they did not like to retain God in their knowledge. See, if you go back to the days of Noah – and that is not at all so long before Abraham, only some four hundred and fifty years – you will find that the whole human race at that time knew God, for Noah was a preacher of righteousness to that generation. How, then, did they get to be in this state? Well, I will tell you what I think took place, and what is actually taking place in our own day. You see, my friends, some of those who came out of the Ark showed what desperately wicked men they were – especially Ham and Canaan – and immediately after, idolatry was set up. The reason was that when young men and women married in those days, and had children, they never said one word to their children about God or that they had souls and that they needed to be saved. Instead of that there was nothing in households but vanity – not a word about their being lost, about their need of mercy, and about the knowledge that God gave of Himself. That was the way by which men lost the knowledge of God, and the poor heathen will curse those parents. In the city in which we are – and we believe Oban is not exempt from the same thing – we have to meet young men and young women, and when we examine them about the things of God, they tell us they never saw God’s Book in the hands of their father or mother at family worship. They never saw them on their knees. They would not even ask a blessing on their food, and they are just as dark as the very heathen. What a scandal to men who have got this favour, which is a greater favour than God ever bestowed on any people – that they should have His Word! And you, unto whom God has given a family, if you bring them up keeping from them the only thing that can make them wise unto salvation, what will it avail them at last that you were kind to them as to their bodies and otherwise, if you neglect to teach them the knowledge of God? Well, this is the way in which the ignorance must have come in at first, for the knowledge was there, and we are told the reason why it came in was that they did not like to retain it; and then they began to worship, first, images made like unto man, afterwards like unto birds, afterwards like unto four-footed beasts, and then it came down to creeping things. These, my friends, might have had, humanly speaking, the knowledge of God among them to this day were it not for those who reared families who never heard a word about it. And, as I said already, we have plenty such in our day. We see fathers and mothers, instead of teaching their children to keep the Sabbath day holy, taking them out in their arms, to show them before they can walk how they can break God’s holy day. But they will have to appear this day. I may mention in connection with this that one Sabbath, a long time past now, we happened to be in a place in the north where we were storm-stayed, and we tried to keep services in the place on the Sabbath. Just as we were coming back from the place of worship a man came out from his own house with his young child in a perambulator, and although this may be a common thing in Oban and perhaps a still more common thing in Glasgow, it was not common in the Highlands, and we said to the man who was with us that we should not wonder if we would hear that God would make an example of this man on account of his Sabbath-breaking; and not long after we were told that that man dropped suddenly dead. See, my friends, God can deal with sinners – let them be as bold as they will – and can strike them dead in an instant, and He is doing it. To go on, however, to speak of the poor heathen “who know not God,” you will notice that some hold – and hold very erroneously – that God will not punish the heathen, because they say “God is merciful.” Well, He says here He will punish them that “know not God,” and tells us that they had a law in their own minds accusing them and also excusing them, and that at the Great Day those who sinned without law, that is, without the written law, shall perish without

law. Men try to twist that to mean “to be judged without law,” but it is impossible to translate the word in that way, for the translation of that word, as everyone knows who knows anything at all about the original language, is that they shall be cut off or destroyed, and it is the same word that was used when, in war, a town and all that were in it were put to the sword. The word “destroy” is used, and that is the word the Spirit of God uses concerning those who have not the law written but who sinned against the light of their consciences. Go you to the heathen and you will see that, instantly you tell them that it is a wrong thing to murder, their consciences at once agree with your statement; and the same applies to the breaking of the other commandments. The consciences of the heathen respond to this more quickly than the consciences of dead sinners in gospel lands; and, indeed, we have more hope of the heathen if the gospel were sent to them. As Christ said to the Jews, “The kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.”

He says to Bethsaida and Corazin that if Sodom and Gomorrha had their privileges, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes, and we believe that if the gospel that is placed before perishing sinners in Oban were placed before the black heathen in the centre of Africa, they would receive it – they would respond to it; but our consciences are, as it were, seared with red-hot iron, so that we remain obdurate as rocks under the hearing of these terrible things. Remember that that does not make the things less terrible.

Well, Christ first of all will deal this day with those that know not God – namely, the heathen; then He takes up those who obey not the gospel. What does the gospel ask? Well, the claim of the gospel wherever it comes is – “Repent and believe the gospel,” and, if you have not repented, if you have not returned from your evil ways unto God by Christ Jesus, if you have not looked to Him by faith, you have not obeyed the gospel. See, the gospel calls you out from the world, from its ways, its habits, its fashions, its pleasures, its wickedness on Sabbaths and week-days. It calls you to holiness in life, in word, and in action. The call of the gospel is, as the Apostle puts it to the Romans, “called to be saints.” That is the meaning of obeying the gospel, and when you find men showing by their conduct from day to day that they are not saints, they certainly have not obeyed the gospel. Prayerless sinners under the hearing of God’s word – sinners who go on in their vanities, in their wickedness, have certainly not obeyed the gospel. Sinners who continue year by year without as much as a thought as to how they are to meet death, judgment, and eternity, are not obeying God in the gospel. No! Well, Christ will deal with them this day. You would think to-day that men are so mighty, and that you should not dare speak to them about these matters, but what will be true of them then? They will be “crying to the mountains and to the rocks to fall upon them and hide them from the face of him who sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the lamb.” That is a thing you will see with your eyes, and, if you continue among them that obey not the gospel, you will yourself be among those mighty men – captains and great men in the world. You will be there, although you are a servant or a slave, and you will then begin to pray to the mountains to hide you. Remember, friend, you cannot get past this. You will have to face it whether you will or whether you will not, whatever other men may say to you, for “not one jot or one tittle of all that is written in this book shall fall to the ground until all be fulfilled.” No. Now, you will notice that it goes on to speak here of how Christ will deal with them that obey not the gospel. Men tell their congregations now that God is merciful. He will not punish any man. Take care, my friend, that you will not be gnashing your teeth at the great day, cursing such a man that you ever saw him or heard a word out of his mouth. We believe that congregations that day will curse their ministers who did not tell them that these things were so, and who led them to everlasting ruin, telling them lies; and ministers will curse their congregations because they followed them when they departed from the truth. You see, flattery will have fled away, and there will be no place for it there. No man can deceive or flatter himself there, and no man can deceive or flatter another there. My friends, I am not

trying to make this message worse than it is in the Bible, but only trying to bring before you what I see there, and, indeed, I am only like a babbling baby when speaking of these things, but you will yet see them with your eyes.

Then the Judge goes on to punish them, to pass sentence, and we think that those on the left hand of Christ will be in two parts – “they that know not God,” and again, “they that obey not the gospel,” and it will be much more terrible on the day of judgment for those who did not obey the gospel than for those who knew not God. We have it from the mouth of Christ. “It will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for Sodom and Gomorrhah” than for the places where the mighty works of Christ were revealed, and that will be true of Oban. The men and the women of the Free Presbyterian Church would that day give much if they will be lost that they were born into the world in the wilds of Africa, and were among them “that knew not God” instead of being among them that “obeyed not the gospel,” for their punishment will be infinitely greater. You will know them when you look at them on the great day. How their agony will be more than the agony of those that will be punished because “they knew not God!” And it is not only what punishment may come from without, but how much punishment will come from your own conscience. You will then say, “What a fool of fools was I that, when God was offering mercy, forgiveness freely and fully through the blood of His own Son, I was going on satisfying the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life.” You see, my friends, these things will come back on that day and men will begin then to feel what a fearful word this will be, “everlasting,” and that they were such fools as to lose their souls for the pleasures of sin which were but for a season. There is a great deal of vain talk to-day about these things, and men are speaking like mad men and deceiving poor, lost sinners, but you will notice here that the punishment, my friend, is to be everlasting. It is not to be for a month, for a year, for a hundred years, for a million of years, but it is to be everlasting. Oh! think of this, my friend! How can you face a punishment, of which you are told that it “will be the worm that dieth not and fire that shall not be quenched,” and that by the mouth of God Himself? How can you face it, and that it will be everlasting? There will be no hope that an end shall ever come. No. And as godly Dr. Duncan more than once stated, “It is a thing of infinite importance that you are a man.” See, a man is a creature that must exist as long as God will exist, even should you die disobeying the gospel of Christ, or without coming to repentance towards God and faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ. Whether you believe it now or not, that does not change the fact that Christ on that day will punish you, and your punishment shall be everlasting. I met that eminently godly man, Archibald Crawford, who was in Tighnabruaich, and had many conversations with him. He told that when God awakened him to what sin was and the punishment due to it and the eternity to which he was going, “I was,” he said, “for three years, and, although I would give the whole world to get my mind out of eternity for a minute, I could not do it.” For three years the man could not take his mind out of eternity, and I tell you, if God were to awaken you and bring before you what the consequences of sin will be at the end and what that eternity will be to which you are going, you would very quickly find that that would swallow up every other thing and you could think of nothing else. Well, this is to be everlasting or eternal punishment and how bitter now will be the pleasures of sin! I warn my young friends in Oban that this will be the end of the pleasures of the sinner – the dance, the vain song, Sabbath desecration and all other sins added – if he will not forsake his ways and his thoughts and turn to the Lord that He may have mercy upon him. He will be destroyed that day from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power. Sinners who disobey the gospel will be conscious of this – and God forbid that you should be, but that you would come to repentance and turn to Him in time – that their punishment now comes from the presence of God, and that it is the glory of His power that deals with them now. Time will not allow me to enlarge on this further.

You will notice that there is brought before us here another thing which Christ will have to do that day. He brings in another “when” here. “Who shall be punished *when* he shall come to be glorified in his saints,” and you will notice how wonderfully these words are stated – “when he shall come to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed).” There is a glory at the great day in connection with believing the gospel of Christ. The saints will have a glory. Christ will be glorified in them and they will be glorified in Christ, and this will take place “when he shall come in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints.” This is the real purpose; this is the great work of that day. To condemn criminals is not a thing in which He has pleasure, but being the Judge – for God appointed Him Judge of the quick and the dead – He will punish sinners that day, but He will that day come on purpose to be glorified in them that believe; come for His own bride to bring her home, those whom He will call “the blessed of His Father,” that they may inherit the kingdom prepared for them before the foundation of the world. How will men look at God’s people that day! They may now be causing suffering to God’s people in many ways and it will be a righteous thing for God on that account itself to punish sinners at last, but you will notice, my friends, this will be the great errand of Christ. He will come to bring home all who repent and believe the gospel in time. “Come, ye blessed of my Father,” and there will be many from Oban there. We miss them out of the pews in Oban to whom Christ will say this day “Come.” There are others in Oban and we are afraid they are going to the other side, but this day shall put all things right. There will not be a sinner among saints nor a saint among sinners that day. In all who repented and believed in Christ, lived a holy life in the fear of God in the world, you will see a difference then, in their faces, in the glory in which they will appear; and you will hear it in the different way in which Christ shall address them, calling them “Blessed,” while he calls those on the left hand “Cursed,” and commands them to depart from Him. That difference will appear at the great day and you and I shall be there, but what are we going to do with these things now?

We have endeavoured to bring before you how sure it is that these things will come – the awful day and the things that will take place on that day; and that it is in time men have to prepare for that day. The gospel is in our hands and in our hearts. It is the gospel that will make the difference, and I beseech you to see to it that you will cease from your ways of sin and begin in real earnest to seek God in Christ, and, if you will not take that advice, not from me but from God, there shall be a day in which you will begin to weep over it and never cease that weeping as long as eternity will last.

May God bless our consideration of His own Word!

[March 1915]

A Sermon.

By the REV. D. MACFARLANE, Dingwall.

“And they said, every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is come upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah” – Jonah 1:7.

We have here an account of Jonah – given by himself – fleeing from the presence of the Lord. But the Lord sent a great storm to arrest the fugitive. Perhaps it was quite calm before the boat left port, but as soon as it left, the wind blew and increased in force, so that the mariners were in danger of being drowned. The circumstances in which they found themselves were so extraordinary that they suspected that Jonah – perhaps the only passenger – committed some great crime, which provoked God to raise the hurricane to punish him by drowning. But in order to be sure of the cause of the storm they cast lots – which was, in doubtful cases, an appeal to God – and the lot fell upon Jonah. When God sends trouble on individuals or nations it is proper to inquire as to the reason why He does so. In view of the present European War, in which our nation is involved, I shall direct your attention to three things, viz.: –

- I. – The evil that is come upon us in this War;
- II. – The cause of the evil; and
- III. – That which is necessary on our part that the evil might be removed and peace restored.

I. – The evil. – Besides other evils connected with war, there are many men killed. In the present war it is computed that about two million Germans have been killed since the war began, five months ago. If we add to this the many thousands of Austrians, British, Belgian, and Turkish that have been killed, the total must be very great. War also causes much suffering to non-combatants. Take Belgium, for instance. The people of that country had to flee for their life to other countries – to Holland, England, Scotland, and other countries – leaving behind them all the goods they possessed; and they are now dependent on the charity

of others for lodgings, food, and clothes. Surely all this is an evil which must be deeply felt. This universal war causes a sense of insecurity to life and property on sea and land which paralyses trade, not knowing what devastation a day may bring about. But as we are more concerned at present about the cause of the war than about the evils it brings on men, I shall proceed to consider:

II. – The cause of the evil, or the reason why God deals with us in this awful manner. – There is a difference of opinion among men as to the cause of the war. Popish writers say that this war is the fruit of the Reformation in the sixteenth century – the evil effect of Luther’s teaching in Germany; that it made the Germans so brutish and cruel, as indeed they now are. But all who know history know that the Reformation is not the cause of the war or of the cruelty of the Germans. The condition of Germany and other countries in Europe – spiritually, morally, and socially – before the Reformation was deplorable. The Reformation made a great change for the better in Germany and in all other countries that came under its benign influence. It is observable that the countries that remained un-reformed, under the domination of the Papacy, are more ignorant, more cruel and criminal, than Protestant countries. Take Spain, for instance, as an example of ignorance. Of a population of nineteen millions, thirteen millions are illiterate – can neither read nor write – and that in the twentieth century! Statistics show that there are, by far, more criminals in Popish countries than in Protestant countries. And as for cruelty, history abundantly testifies that the Papacy was the most cruel religious system that ever appeared in the world. Its history is written in the blood of God’s saints.

So long as Germany adhered to the principles and doctrines of the Reformation the Emperor and people were not cruel. Nor were they aggressors in waging war against their neighbours; but when they were attacked by enemies they, as a matter of duty, defended themselves, and the Lord of hosts made them victorious in the conflict. In 1866 the Church of Rome caused Austria, a Popish country, to wage war against Germany, with a view to crush Protestantism in that country. But because Germany was then Protestant, Austria was defeated. Again, in 1870 the same Church stirred up France to war against Germany, to overthrow Protestantism in that country; but God took the side of Germany and France was defeated, and the Pope lost the temporal power. But Germany is not Protestant now. A large proportion of the people are Papists, others are rationalists or atheists, and the Emperor is in league with the Pope. It is this that accounts for German cruelty and hatred of Britain, and not the Reformation. The Kaiser came under the influence of the Jesuits, who have made a tool of him in order to overthrow Protestantism in Britain – “its stronghold,” as Cardinal Manning called it. The aim of the plot in the war is to restore the temporal power to the Pope, and the Kaiser is employed for this end, and is promised a world-wide empire under the Pope as his reward. There can be no doubt that the Papacy is largely responsible for this great European War, and that it was planned long ago. Cardinal Manning said that “he would be willing to deluge the whole of Europe with blood, in order to destroy the unity of Italy and Germany and to recover the temporal power of the Pope. Protestant England (Britain) is the main hindrance to the Pope’s universal rule.” Therefore the destruction of Britain is the great object in the war, although other nations are allies to Britain in the conflict. But as sin is the deserving cause of the war, the Kaiser is but a rod in God’s hand to chastise and punish the nations of Europe for their iniquities, as Nebuchadnezzar was the rod of God’s anger to punish the people of Israel and Judah for their sins, and especially the sin of idolatry. We shall point out some of the particular reasons why God has brought this evil of war upon us.

First. – Instead of devoting their time, strength, and talent to the seeking of God’s glory and the salvation of their own souls, as their chief end, the people of this nation, particularly the young, with few exceptions, have indulged in all kinds of amusements, plays, and carnal

pleasures. It is computed that thirteen millions of money have been spent annually on amusements, seven millions of which were spent on football. The young men who spent much of their time at football are now called to “the front,” and many of them are killed in action. In the town of Dingwall there used to be, before the war broke out, a dance every week, or oftener, in the winter time and a theatrical performance occasionally. The war put a stop to these vanities, and the halls in which the people used to gather are now residences for soldiers. As these pleasure seekers would not listen to God’s voice in the Bible, they must now listen to His voice in providence.

Second. – A sad departure from the doctrines of God’s Word by many churches in England, Scotland, and Ireland. This departure was caused by the Higher Critics, who cast doubt on the truth of the Bible. The error began in Germany, and was imported to Scotland by the late Professor Robertson Smith and others. As a retribution, Germany is now employed by God to punish our country for adopting the error.

Third. – Non-attendance on the public means of grace. There is a population of one million and a quarter in Glasgow, and it was reported in the newspapers recently that half of the people of that large city never attend church. This is the effect of the preaching of ministers who denied the infallibility of Scripture, and held and taught that there were errors in the Bible. The people said, “If the Bible is not a reliable book, as our ministers tell us, we need not go to hear its doctrines preached; we will stay at home.” This is the main cause of lapsing, of which many ministers complain. They are the cause of it.

Fourth. – Sabbath desecration of various forms – a sin partly for which God sent the people of Israel into a long captivity in Babylon.

Fifth. – Idolatry. To worship the creature is idolatry. The Church of Rome worships the Virgin Mary and other saints. She worships even their pictures. She worships the picture of Christ, and the bread in the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. All this is gross idolatry. God’s command is, “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve” (Luke 4:8). Protestant Churches, that cast off Romish idolatry at the Reformation, are now returning to that abomination again. The late Rev. Lachlan Mackenzie, Lochcarron, predicted that the time was coming when Popery would be taught in Protestant Churches. This prediction has come to pass. In the Church of England there are about thirty-six thousand clergymen, and it is computed that twelve thousand of these are, in their views and practice, Roman priests, doing the work of Rome, and eating the bread of the Protestant Church! In order to convert Protestant England to the idolatrous Church of Rome, they are trying, with the approval of the two Archbishops, to change the doctrine and worship of the Church.

The same Romanising work is going on in so-called Protestant Churches in Scotland. In 1910 there were five hundred and three ministers, in the Established Church, members of Romanising Societies. There are now, in 1915, we are told by one of themselves, eight hundred members! The same Romanising process is carried on in the United Free Church. It is for the purpose of strengthening them in their idolatrous work that it is proposed that the two Churches should unite. (“Union is strength.”) This is, of course, concealed from the people. Dr. Wallace Williamson, addressing a large gathering at Dingwall on the subject of union, is reported to have said that if the union between the Established Church and the United Free Church took place, they would be the true followers of the Church of the Reformation! Did Dr. Williamson believe his own statement? I do not think that he did. For Dr. Williamson knows the history of the Reformation as well as any minister in Scotland. He knows that the Westminster Confession of Faith was the creed of the Reformed Church in Scotland, and he knows that both the Established Church and the United Free Church disowned the Confession of Faith as the confession of *their faith*. He knows also that there was no organ used in the service of praise in the Reformed Church in Scotland, and that such an instrument is now used in both Churches. He knows, moreover, that there were no

uninspired hymns used in the worship of the Reformed Church in Scotland, and that such hymns are now used in both Churches negotiating for union. Knowing all this, how could he prove his statement that if the two Churches united they would be the true followers of the Church of the Reformation? It was impossible. It would appear that Dr. Williamson took it for granted that his hearers were ignorant of Church history, although there were several ministers among them. (It was reported in a Protestant periodical that Dr. Williamson was responsible to some extent for erecting a picture of the Virgin Mary and a picture of Christ in St. Cuthbert's Church, Edinburgh, when he was assistant in that church. The faithful Protestant, the late Pastor Jacob Primmer, repeatedly brought the matter to the Assembly, in order that these idolatrous pictures might be removed. But the Assembly, by a majority, refused to do so, which shows that the majority of the members were Romanisers.) No wonder, then, although God visits our nation with the evil of war. We should take warning from God's dealings in judgment with the people of Israel. When they turned to idolatry He brought the sword of war upon them, by which many were slain.

III. – That which is necessary on our part that the evil might be removed and peace restored. – Seeing that it was for sin, as already pointed out, God brought the evil of war upon us, there are several duties required of us as necessary in order that the evil may be removed.

1. Repentance. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." The people of Israel were suffering in captivity in Babylon, but they were not delivered from their bondage till they repented. To repent is to turn from sin to God, or at least this is a great element in repentance. They repented of their idolatry, the chief reason for which they were delivered into the hands of their enemies. We hear them say, as with one voice, "What have I to do any more with idols?" They renounced their idolatry; they turned from idols to serve the living God. And no sooner had they come to this state of mind and practice than their deliverance came. Have the idolatrous Ritualists in the Church of England, with the two Archbishops at their head, repented of their idolatry? No, there is not the least sign of it as yet. Therefore God's anger against them shall continue to be manifested till they repent. But if they repent not, they shall be eternally destroyed. Have the so-called Protestant Churches in Scotland that are going back to Popery, repented of their idolatry? No, there is not as yet the least appearance of it. Therefore God shall continue His controversy with them till they repent and renounce their idolatry. But if they repent not, He shall destroy them in eternity, and raise up another generation to serve Him according to the rule of His Word, "in spirit and in truth," as He did at the Reformation.

Father Gavazzi, an Italian converted priest, who was for years in the Church of Rome, gave a faithful and solemn warning to the people of England to stand fast by their glorious Protestantism. We may quote his words: – "Englishmen, remember that your very name is Christian, and therefore, for yourselves, for your children, for your country, and, moreover, for the European nations, stand fast by your glorious Protestantism. If Protestantism is lost in England, which is the bulwark of the European Reformation, Protestantism is lost on the European continent, and our efforts at the evangelization of Italy, Spain, and other parts of the world shall fall to the ground. Let it not be said that when we in Italy are freeing ourselves from the grasp of Popery, England is rushing pell-mell into the embrace of Popery. Let England remain what it has been for more than three centuries: the beacon of pure Christianity – the light of the world. If you have received immaculate the inheritance of your glorious Reformation, it is your duty to transmit that inheritance immaculate to your children and grandchildren. Pray to God that, as He made England what she is – the first nation in the world – through the Reformation, she may remain what she is. Do not encourage, with your presence and your prayers, Popish idolatry in disguise. Be on the alert, because many *bona-fide* churchmen are entrapped gradually into Romanism by ritualistic traitors. Remember, I

am an ex-priest, an ex-monk, and I know more of Romanism than all English Protestants put together, and I tell you that the ritualism which is now a leading feature in some of your places of worship is nothing else than the preparation, the forerunner, of Romanism in your country. Therefore, oppose it by your words and your prayers; refuse to subscribe to it. Beware of Papists in Christian garb and Protestant disguise. If persons wish to turn Roman Catholics they have perfect liberty to do so, but we must condemn those who are not true to their Protestant profession. Stand by the Church of the martyrs; by the Church of Latimer, of Ridley, and of Cranmer; for the purity and simplicity of your Protestantism. Will you save your glorious Reformation, the mother of your civil and religious liberties? Englishmen, the Bible, and the Bible alone; and your Reformation and your country are safe. Stay by the Bible. Shield the Bible with the mightiness of your nationality. Defend the Bible from all attacks, within and without.”

O, that the Romanisers in the Church of England, in the Church of Scotland, in the United Free Church, and in the Scottish Episcopal Church, would take this faithful warning to heart! If they did, they would repent. They would cease to do evil and learn to do well, and the Lord would cease to smite our nation with the sword of war. There can be no doubt that idolatry is the main reason which provoked the Holy One of Israel to command the sword to awake and smite the nations of Europe; and as we are under the seventh vial, it shall put an end to that provoking evil before it is laid aside to rest for a thousand years. If peace shall be concluded before the total destruction of idolatry in Europe, war shall break out soon again, for a complete end must be made of idolatry, as a preparation for the coming of the kingdom of Christ in power and glory throughout the whole world.

Is there any sign to be seen that our nation is repenting of its idolatry? No; but quite the reverse. For since the war began the Government, with the approval of the king, sent a Popish envoy to the Vatican, with full powers, which is contrary to the British Constitution. By doing so the King, according to the Bill of Rights, forfeited his crown, and might be deposed at once. Indeed, it may come to this, unless King George recalls the appointment and expresses repentance for his unwarranted action.

We have been, as yet, speaking of repentance as a duty. But the repentance that is saving is the gift of God – the effect of the work of the Holy Spirit in effectual calling. The description given of this repentance by the Westminster divines in the Shorter Catechism is founded upon Scripture, and is in accordance with the experience of God’s people. It is in the following terms: – “Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of and endeavour after new obedience.”

2. Humiliation is necessary. We find many examples of this in Scripture. When people were suffering for their sins and brought to repentance, they humbled themselves before God, and He delivered them from their distress. Some in our day think that because our part in the war is just – we are defending ourselves – there is no reason that we should humble ourselves. When it was proposed in the Church Courts that a Day of Humiliation should be appointed in connection with the war, a Presbytery of the Established Church in the south objected to the day being named a day of *humiliation*; and when a day was appointed by the king for a national Fast, the king objected to it being called a day of *humiliation*. But those that will not humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, when His hand is lifted up, smiting the nations of Europe for their iniquities, God will humble them and bring them low in time and in eternity. “For everyone that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted” (Luke 18:14).

A day was appointed by the king, but not a day of humiliation, but a day of *prayer* and *intercession*. It was a Sabbath day that was appointed. In the past it was a week day that was appointed to be observed for a National Fast. It seems our king would grudge a week day

being used for the purpose. He had no right to appoint a Sabbath day, for that day was appointed by the Lord of the Sabbath for the public and private worship of God. Another objectionable thing in this connection may be pointed out, viz., *prayer for the dead* was ordered by the king! Some say that it is not prayer for the dead that was meant, because it is *remembrance* of those that had fallen in the war that is mentioned. But the fact that the day was appointed for *prayer* and *intercession* shows that it is prayer for the dead – killed in the war – that was really meant, however Romanisers try to conceal it. Another proof of this is that it was the Archbishop of Canterbury that drew out the programme for the day, and it is well known that he is a Ritualist, and approves of prayer for the dead. He should be in the Church of Rome and not in a Protestant Church. No wonder that God is pouring His judgment upon our nation, when clergymen in high positions in the Church are so unfaithful to their ordination vows. They consider their vows – as the German Chancellor considers binding treaties – a mere “scrap of paper.” But that “scrap of paper” shall rise up as a witness to condemn them when they shall appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. The “scrap of paper” will speak then, and the breakers of solemn vows shall be speechless.

3. Confession of sin is necessary. Sin is the cause of every misery in time and in eternity. Sin is the cause of the great war in which the nations of Europe are now engaged. And in order that sin may be forgiven it must be confessed and forsaken. If sin is confessed and forgiven, misery – the effect of sin – shall be removed. Sin should be confessed to God and not to a priest or minister. It was against Him we sinned; therefore, it is to Him we ought to confess our sins. It is He only whose prerogative it is to forgive sin. Although the Jews were in error on other important doctrines, yet they were correct when they said, “Who can forgive sin but God only?”

In confessing sin we should pray for forgiveness, and we are encouraged to do so, because it is written, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). He is faithful to forgive because He promised it, and He is just in forgiving sin because He does it on the ground of Christ’s atonement, by which satisfaction was rendered to His justice for the sins of all that shall be saved.

We should confess not only our own personal sins, but also the sins of our nation; yea, the sins of all our fellow-sinners throughout the world. Daniel confessed the sins of his nation (Daniel 9). There are national sins as well as individual sins. There can be no doubt that the sins of our nation have caused that so much suffering has been brought upon us by this war. We have already pointed out some of these sins. The words of Daniel are applicable to us as a nation: “Neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants, the prophets; yea, all Israel transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice: therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses, the servant of God, because we have sinned against him.” However others may act in this matter, we know that the Lord’s people throughout the world are confessing their own sins and the sins of others daily before God at the throne of grace, and some of them – perhaps all – have to say, “It is good for me to draw near to God.” Prayer brings them into fellowship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and into fellowship with His people, however scattered they now are in the world.

A word in conclusion. Let us take heed to the Lord’s solemn voice to us in His holy providence, and say, “Come, and let us return unto the Lord; for he hath torn and he will heal us; he hath smitten and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us; in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth” (Hosea 6:1-3) It is to be hoped that the war will have this effect upon many, although it is to be feared that others

– and especially the plotters of the war – shall harden their hearts till they are completely destroyed by the wrath of Almighty God, against whom they fight. He is sure to overcome them, for “Christ must reign till all his enemies are made his footstool.” Christ rules and over-rules the war for His own glory, the salvation of His people, and the destruction of His and their enemies. Amen; so let it be, and so it shall be.

[April 1915]