

# Notes of a Sermon.

By the late Rev. ARCHIBALD COOK, of Daviot.  
Preached, 13th November, 1845.

“What think ye, that he will not come to the feast?”— John 11:56.

My friends, man is made of two parts, soul and body. What comforts the body will not comfort the soul. It ought to be the one thing needful for us to get acquainted with the Saviour and reconciliation with God, for as the tree falls so it will remain through an endless eternity. In these words we see a doubt and a hope. “What think ye, that he will not come to the feast?” I intend to show: —

- I. Some things that make the gracious soul to doubt that He will not come to the feast.
- II. Some things that make the gracious soul hope that He will come to the feast, and
- III. Some marks or evidences by which it may be known whether He hath been at the feast.

## I. Some things that make the gracious soul to doubt His coming.

### 1. Things in the unregenerate.

(1) The first thing that makes the gracious soul to doubt is the mean and low thoughts regarding the Saviour in the heart of the unregenerate. Hence, some would rather go to hell than to be seen weeping in a corner for their sins. There is also a secret enmity against God in the heart of the unregenerate. “The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Romans 8:7). It is hidden from the creature himself, but that makes no difference. It is eternity alone that will awaken many to its existence in their souls. The Spirit declares it to be like a viper or a serpent. When there is a congregation gathered of such persons, is it any wonder that the poor, gracious soul will doubt that He will not come to the feast? There is no worldly creature but will take up a form of godliness, if he expects to gain a little of the world by it. When the gracious soul sees that, is it any wonder that he doubts He will not come to the feast?

(2) The pollution and uncleanness of the heart. Man was born full of sin, and he comes into the world with the love of sin. Hence he breaks out in cursing, drinking, Sabbath breaking, and other sins. When the soul thinks of this, is it any wonder though he doubts whether He will come to the feast? When we think of the infinite purity of the divine nature so that there is infinite hatred in it to sin, the soul may well be afraid. For, although there is infinite love and compassion in God to sinners, yet, until the love of sin be broken in the soul He can have no fellowship and communion with them.

### 2. Things in the people of God.

But the gracious soul may observe things among the people of God themselves that may create these doubts.

(1) The lack of spiritual discernment. When we see so little discernment between the spiritual approaches of Christ to the soul, and the warm affections of the stony ground hearers, the gracious soul may doubt His coming. When a soul comes a greater sinner from the closet than when he went to it, it is an evidence that the Lord met him.

(2) Coldness. When the gracious soul sees spiritual coldness between the spiritual members of the Saviour, those that he believes will be with Him through endless ages of eternity, the soul doubts He will not come to the feast. There is no communion, unless you

know something of willingness to wash one another's feet. If a gracious soul has anger at a brute beast, even at a fly on the window, it will banish God from his soul.

(3) Little hatred of sin. When we see so little hatred of sin in those that we believe will be happy through eternity the gracious soul doubts He will not come. Look among professors, and see if you observe a wet face on account of seeing and hearing Sabbath breakers, swearers, etc., and when nothing of this is seen, is it any wonder that gracious souls doubt of Christ's coming to the feast? We read of Lot that he was vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked. When a soul sees the unspirituality of those that he believes will be happy through eternity, he is afraid that Christ will not come. For example – when they meet in one another's houses, and then separate more hardened than when they met from the unprofitableness of their conversation, which was neither good for soul or body, time or eternity, the gracious soul fears He will not come. Many will go to eternity with the blood of souls charged to their account.

(4) Worldly conformity. The soul doubts he will not come to the feast when he sees conformity to the world among those that have a drop of spiritual tenderness. Some have a coat and a tongue for every company.

3. Things in the gracious soul himself. The poor soul has things in his own bosom to awaken doubts as to Christ's coming to the feast.

(1) Hardness of heart. Others sit at ordinances like an adamant, but in the soul that knows something of brokenness of spirit, this hardness of heart comes like a mountain between them and the spiritual presence of Christ.

(2) Want of a view of sin as against God. I may see sin in every thought and duty, and yet cannot see it as against God. It is not easy to get such a view of it, so as to enable us to confess it, and mourn for it. This view will make a soul see every favour come from the sovereign grace of God.

(3) A lack of the spirit of wrestling. The gracious soul doubts Christ will not come when the spirit of wrestling is withdrawn. Jacob said, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." But the Lord sometimes takes away this spirit in order to make gracious souls poor and needy. The world have only the form of prayer. Some old men have "the grace" and prayers they learned at school. They go to eternity withered branches for the fire.

(4) The absence of tokens for good. This makes the soul doubt He will not come to the feast. As for a professor who cares not for any token or answer, the Lord may be as careless for his salvation as he is himself. When the soul is looking for tokens, and not getting them, he fears He will not come.

(5) Secret sins. There is a secret sin in the gracious soul that he thinks no soul that received grace ever was troubled with, and which gives him trouble in sleep, in duty, etc. But it is not one sin he has, but millions of sins. Others have whole faith and whole hope, and can confess all their sins on the tip of their tongues. They have long, clever prayers, but the poor soul has broken prayers, broken hearing, etc., and it is of these souls the Lord makes up His jewels.

(6) Broken vows, engagements, and backslidings. These may awaken doubts that He will not come to the feast. Yea, after the soul enjoys drops of the divine love and favour he cannot get rid of the corruption of his own heart. You worldlings can speak about the world on Sabbath, and go to the Lord's table on Sabbath without fear. But it is the nature of love to create doubt. Love takes in fear, is afraid Christ will not come. Love also will enjoy the spiritual presence of the Lord. Separation from God is my terror, not my punishment, says the child of God. May He bless His word, and to His name be the praise. Amen.

*(Subject resumed.)*

“What think ye, will he not come to the feast?” If this question were in truth upon souls this afternoon, it would do them eternal good, but woe to that soul that can spend his days in vanity. When he will come to grapple with eternity he will reap the fruit of his vanity. There will then be millions of devils waiting to take away his soul to hell.

II. Some things that make the gracious soul hope that He will come to the feast.

1. The first thing that encourages the gracious soul that the Saviour will come to the feast is the representation of Himself in the ordinance of the Supper. “Take, eat: this is my body which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till he come” (1 Corinthians 11:24,26). This gives the encouragement that the spiritual presence of Christ may be looked for in the ordinance by the gracious soul. As one said, the ordinance is like a ring given to a spouse, every time she looks at it she remembers the person who gave it. Thus ordinances in the Church are emblems of Christ’s death, and many a poor broken soul got an earnest of eternal glory in them.

2. The soul may look for Christ’s presence in the ordinance, because that for His own name’s sake He has purposed to come to the soul in His own appointed means. In this way the greatest sinner may expect Him, as well as His own people. He can come to the greatest sinner in His own means.

3. Further, He has given his own promise: “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:20). This is the fruit of infinite love. He bound Himself in promise to His own people, and it exalts His own glory to come over mountains of provocations into their midst.

4. The soul may expect Christ’s presence in His own ordinances where His people are. He must be where the objects of His love are. Indeed, we may say, that His delights were with them from eternity. “My delights were with the sons of men” (Proverbs 8:31).

5. The soul may hope for Christ’s presence, because of the intimate relation between the Saviour and the objects of His love. Hence, they are called His spouse, wife, sister, mother, etc. Can He forget these souls, notwithstanding their shortcomings and sins?

6. Where there is something of repentance for sin, as it grieves God, the soul may hope for something of the spiritual presence of Christ at the feast. “To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word” (Isaiah 66:2).

7. Longing for Christ’s presence. Where there is something of longing for the presence of Christ the gracious soul may hope that He will come to the feast. He promises to fill the hungry with good things, while He sends the rich empty away. What will fill the soul but the Three-One God?

8. Mortification of sin. Where there is something of the spirit of mortification the soul may hope for Christ’s coming to the feast. To such persons the ordinance, the Sabbath, and the Bible are empty without Christ.

9. Spiritual union among Christ’s members. Where this union is the soul has reason to hope for His presence. It was when they were of one mind that the Spirit came with power. O back-and-belly self has eaten up this world!

10. The presence of the poor and needy. Where these are, the soul may hope that Christ will come to the feast. At the great day Christ will say to many, I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat; thirsty, and ye gave me no drink.” Get a rich professor into your houses at the sacrament times and you would be happy. There is none in heaven or earth who can

handle the wounds of an outcast but the Saviour Himself. If we knew the value of a poor castaway we would prize them more. Two or three of them may bring the blessing to a whole congregation, when the poor creature thinks there is no Achan there but himself.

11. When the spiritual fellowship between the soul and God is broken. You, world, never felt this. The soul's iniquities have separated between him and his God, and his sins have hid the Lord's face from him. He has now lost his boldness. Formerly he could make long prayers, saying, Glory to Thee, now he would be content with crumbs. He is now willing to cast himself on Christ's hand to save him from sin and hell. Will you go to the table of the Lord and never shed a tear for sin? You may go, but you will be seven times more the child of the devil than before. You will be as carnal and worldly as ever. Is this the fruit of communion with Christ? Will you continue in this state until you land in eternity? Is it all your enjoyment to have collected a little money to leave it to your friends rejoicing at your death, when you are burning in hell? Oh, eternity, eternity, eternity! Oh, believer, be about Christ's hands. A drop of communion with Christ is the earnest of eternal glory. "Look unto me, and be ye saved," saith the Lord. Oh, be praying for His presence. He pours oil and wine into the wounds of the broken heart and contrite spirit, "I am Joseph your brother," He says, "notwithstanding your shortcomings, failings, and sins." "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament," as the sun in the kingdom of their Father for ever and ever.

[November 1897]

## A Sermon

By the Rev. SAMUEL RUTHERFORD.  
Preached at a Communion in Anwoth, in 1634.

“Then said I, I will not feed you: that that dieth, let it die; and that that is to be cut off, let it be cut off; and let the rest eat every one the flesh of another. And I took my staff, even Beauty, and cut it asunder, that I might break my covenant which I had made with all the people. And it was broken in that day: and so the poor of the flock that waited upon me knew that it was the word of the Lord,” &c. – Zechariah 11:9-13.

Beloved in our Lord, this text is Christ’s farewell to the Church of the Jews. He is, as it were, half out at the door, leaving His harlot wife; and saying to her, Seek ye another husband, and I will seek another wife: and so He bids her adieu. The words contain,

I. Christ’s good-night: “*I will not feed you.*”

II. A fruit of His farewell: “*That that dieth, let it die.*”

III. The manner of His departing from them: “*I took My staff, and cut it asunder.*”

IV. What followed upon that: “*The poor of the flock that waited upon Me knew that it was the word of the Lord.*”

V. Ere He go clean away, and give over His calling, He says, Pay me my by-gones [What is due to Me for the past]: “*Give me my price.*”

VI. They gave Him for His price, thirty pieces of silver to buy Him, that they might get Him crucified.

VII. He is sorry, is offended, or grudges the price, and says, “*Cast it into the potter: a goodly price that I was prized at of them.*” As if He had said, Give it to your beggars and strangers, to buy a burial place for them: for I will have none of your wages, if that be all you will give Me. And so the Lord’s wages was casten back again into the potter’s field, to buy it.

I. “*Then said I, I will not feed you.*” –

Here is a terrible word, and a hard threatening spoken by Christ, the great Shepherd, sent of the Father, to gather in His own sheep. “I will feed you no more.” Beware, O people of Anwoth, lest He be saying this unto many of you; for your want of love to Him, and slighting. His ordinances with the means of salvation and mercy offered unto you. Hence we may observe, that when Christ has gathered in all His own sheep, all His own elect children and people, He sometimes gives them up for a season. This prophecy has a relation to that time, after Christ’s death and ascension, when the Apostles left the church of the Jews, and turned themselves to seek and suit a young wife for their Master, even the church of the Gentiles.

Even in Abraham’s days, when it was but morning, and the beginning of days, the Lord began to feed His sheep, and sent Moses and Aaron to herd them in the wilderness: and sent prophets and servants to His vineyard, with an order to say, Render fruit; send in the rent of your farm to My Father. But they slew and stoned the prophets (Matthew 23:37). Then He sent other servants unto them, and they beat them. At length He sent the King’s own Son, the Heir and Lord of all, to them; and they slew Him. And He sent the apostles last of all, and they persecuted and killed them (Matthew 21:36-39). All this time Christ was gathering in His own sheep, for Christ will want none of them. And when Christ had gotten in all the lost money, even all to the last farthing; then He blows out the candle, and cares not for the rest, but says, Take ye the sweepings of the house and cast them away; I have got My own. Wherefore holdeth a great man a house? It is not to entertain beggars and strangers: they get a bit, or a meal in the by-going, which is all their errand to the house. But He holds His house to entertain His children and servants in: and were it not for them, He would give up house-keeping. When Christ’s children are grown up, and married to their new husband; and when His sheep are gathered into His fold, sealed and marked; and when there are but

strangers without; then He gives up house-keeping, locks the door, and says, He will feed them no more.

Hence also, here is a spark of hope to those who fear Christ. If He say to this land, I will feed you no more; yet there is in the land children and sheep to be fed. Ye shall aye get your meat of it, go as it will. Though ye should be hounded and scattered from mountain to mountain; and though the dogs should bark at you; yet Christ must feed the poor of the flock, till He get them out from among the rest. And therefore eat ye now, and take the meals that your Lord sends you, with good will: it is for you that God feeds the flock. It is not for the rocks and the mountains, that God sends down rain; it is for the grass and the corn.

II. The fruit of Christ's departure: says He, "*That that dieth, let it die*" –

This, no doubt, is hard. Lord, if you feedest us not, we will die, we will be hounded and slain upon the mountains. Yea, I know, says Christ, it shall be so: but I shall be blameless; I shall give up with you. and lay down My calling.

Hence, we see what follows, when Christ turns His back on the sheep. They die, they perish, they eat one another's flesh for hunger. For not only were those people made vagabonds upon the earth, as they are at this day; but their souls famish, and they are groping in darkness for the coming of another Messiah. So we see when Christ, the Shepherd, goes away, the fox, the lion, the wolf, and all the dogs of hell, come and run away with the flock. For this is Satan's way, when Christ has gone away, pulled down the Shepherd's tents, removed a preaching ministry, and taken His flock with Him. The leavings and the goats must fall to the lion. The devil gets Christ's leavings; what God refuses, by law falls to the devil: when Christ has gotten in His wheat, then Satan comes and takes up the loose sheaf. Woe to you who are not in Christ's bundle, but fall out and lie in the field, and will not be gathered into Christ's barn, for ye are the devil's by law.

Then, ere we proceed further, let every one try whose side they are on. Ye cannot deny that Christ is at His harvest, and gathering in His sheaves in this land. See whose mark and arms you carry: ye must carry either God's or the devil's. See whether ye be in Rome's black camp, wherein the fallen star, the red dragon, and the prince of the bottomless pit, are the captains. For Christ is now mustering His men, and proclaiming, Who is for Me, and who is for battle? Some are saying, God help us, for we know not which of the sides is rightest: ye say one thing, and they say another. If ye say, "I am indifferent" I like not that. Ye will get a master ere long. Satan, by his due, gets the wandered sheep; I mean the indifferent man, or him who is on none of the sides.

Many temporal evils come upon a people, when Christ says, "*I will feed you no more.*" – Multitudes who heard Zechariah, would be glad at this, "*I will feed you no more.*" They would say, We will get the good old lucky world again: when we baked cakes to the queen of heaven we wanted nothing: we will get quit of that which the barking prophets are aye crying: "The burden of the Lord, the burden of the Lord." So say our people, If this religion were away we will get the good old merry, sonsy [plump and thriving] world again, wherein there was much luck and grace.

Then let our text answer you both. So then, would you have the old lucky, sonsy world again? Then take it to you out of God's mouth; "Ye shall eat every one the flesh of another," when the gospel goes away. God said then; Devil, anti-Christ, Jesuite, pestilence, famine, and sword, set on them! I have done with them. The Romans, sword, and famine, did devour them. Will a mother eat her own child of a span long for hunger? yet this was done. That was the old world the Jews got when Christ turned His back upon them. For this, see Jeremiah 25:17. When the people rejected the word of the Lord, and put it from them, as we are doing, the Lord put in Jerusalem's and Judah's hand the cup of the wine of the wrath of

God, and bids them drink, and spue, and fall, and never rise again. Now what think ye of this old sonsy world? See also Psalm 74; when God left feeding His sheep, in came the enemies, warred, burnt the sanctuary, &c. And when God left the flock (Psalm 79:2), the dead bodies of His servants are given for meat to the fowls of heaven. And see what follows on God's departure (Ezekiel 8:9-11; 12:13). The prince shall flee away on his feet, with his flitting upon his back. "I will spread my net upon him, and he shall be taken in my snare: and I will bring him to Babylon." They shall be taken as birds, &c.

III. *"And I took my staff, even beauty, and cut it asunder, that I might break my covenant which I had made with all the people."* – Here there are three things. 1. What the staff is. 2. The name of it, Beauty. 3. The Lord's breaking of it.

I shall go no further to seek the meaning of it. The breaking of the staff is the breaking of the covenant: the staff itself is the word of God and covenant. And indeed the word of God is Christ's shepherd's staff, whereby He driveth His sheep to heaven, and awakes the conscience. For Christ has no rod over the neck of His sheep but His word; it is His sceptre. Christ's strength, in bringing in His sheep is in His word, for it is His sceptre; and therefore it is called, The Lord's arm (Isaiah 53:1). And an arm must have a hand and fingers. It is even that, whereby He wrestles with His enemies, with sinners, when He makes them saints: and no man dare separate them. The devil would fain separate Christ and the soul, when they are wrestling a fall; but Christ gives him a back-stroke, and with His staff can wound the conscience of one who has seven devils, and can cause them fall under Him. But know, our Lord useth this sort of staff against several sorts of men, wherein ye shall see the use of it.

a. Christ casts His staff at many, and it misses them, for the pikes of it go no more in the conscience of some men than a pointless arrow in a wall of brass (Ezekiel 5:7). Are there not many who are no more moved, nor touched with the sharp point of Christ's staff than a dead man is with the sound of a trumpet blown in his ear? The word never draws blood in their consciences, they can fence and ward their souls from a stroke.

b. Some get a blad [a blow] and a blea [A stroke that makes them black and blue. Old Gawin Douglas uses this expression] stroke in their conscience, as trembling Felix did, and despairing Cain, and others got. But the devil heals their wounds; as Cain got a plaster on his wound, and went and built a city. See, for this, Hosea 6. There ye see how our Lord blads and strikes with His staff. In verse 5, He says, "I have hewed them in pieces by My prophets, and slain them by the words of My mouth." There was blea wounds in their conscience made by Christ's staff. But what then? In verse 7 – "But they like men have transgressed the covenant." They mended again, after Christ's staff had wounded their conscience.

c. Some get a dead stroke with Christ's staff. It is a dead trumpet to them, and cries nothing to them but God's curse and malediction; "Christ is to them a stone of stumbling and rock of offence, even to them that stumble at the word, being disobedient thereunto" (1 Peter 2:8; 2 Corinthians 10:6). Christ strikes with the rod and strength of His power: "He strikes through kings, and fills the high-ways with dead bodies" (Psalm 110).

d. The Lord's own sheep get a wound in their consciences with the staff, Beauty, as when He cries, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" Saul bled with the pikes of the staff, so that the law, and the curses and terrors of it drew him off his high horse, and made him lie on the breadth of his back; so that he cried, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Christ, with His staff, struck three thousand at once, until they were pricked in their hearts (Acts 2:37). And they cried, for their consciences were driven all to flinders, saying, "Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved?" Lydia got such a back-stroke with the pikes of this staff, that Christ, with infinite power, brake up all the locks of her heart, till it was made to receive the word. Then know ye when God's word strikes the conscience? If ye

did, ye would say, Lord, strike on! ye would wish that Christ's staff, Beauty, laid you in a swoon. Many of you are angry when it touches you. Ye are not wise; it is but Christ's staff knocking your crown (Romans 5:10,11). He made Paul's head bleed: "the law (says he) slew me." He gave to David, by Nathan, so many strokes with the word, that his bones were broken (Psalm 51:8). Better get a broken head, than get leave, with the silly, foolish sheep, to slip into a pit-hole, or ditch, for a little green grass, and be drowned there.

It is called *Beauty* because the word of God is purer than gold tried in the fire seven times. And what a sweet sight it is to see Him, who is the fairest of men, the fairest among the sons of men, standing in all His beauty, in the midst of His flock, with His staff, Beauty, in His hand.

e. The breaking of this staff is of the greatest weight and concernment. And this our Lord speaketh as a shepherd tired of his part of it; and threateneth to go away. So, as it were in a passion, our Lord speaketh thus, I will go seek a new master, and seek ye a new servant. Nay, He was both angry and sorry; so that He shed tears at His flitting, "If thou hadst known in this thy day," Sic. (Matthew 23: 37,38; Luke 19:42).

*Doctrine.* Then Christ has a term day with a particular church; and when He is ill used He may go where He may do better.

But let us see whether Christ had good cause or not to break His staff and leave His flock to the foxes.

*Answer.* He had; because He was true and faithful in His service, and was aye seeking out the wandering sheep; soon up and late up, with many a sore heart, seeking them: and He lost none, but made an account of them all to His Father. What were all these? "If I had sent thee to a nation of a strange language" &c. (Ezekiel 3:6), "The men of Nineveh shall rise up in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it" (Matthew 12:41), "Woe unto thee, Chorazin," &c. (Chapter 9:21). These show that Christ had but a hard life when He fed them.

But to come nearer yet. What causes a servant tire of his services? The ruler of the house changes his wages, and strikes him, howbeit he do his duty: and the rest of the servants mock him; he is set at the board foot [foot of the table] and matched [put on a level with] with every running beggar that comes to the house. Few give him good words: they all look down upon him with contempt and scorn. Just so was Christ handled; the rulers, Pharisees, and priests, did not pay Him His wages; they smote Him. Every lown in the house made a fool of the honest servant; yea, the high priest's servants smote Him on the face, and spat upon Him. Indeed, they set Him to the by-board, yea, to the foot of the board, "I am a worm, and no man" (Psalm 22:7). They matched Him with every vagabond that came to the house, and put Him in the midst, between two thieves. They gave Christ the thief's seat, and Barabbas was thought better than He.

Might not Christ break His heart for all these things, and say, What ails ye at Me? Might He not break His Shepherd's staff, put up His wares, and flit? Might He not say, It's time for Me to pack [bundle up and go] to the gate, they are tired of My service. And yet I have gotten many a wet foot in seeking these sheep? Yea, He may say, they are ill worthy of Him.

All that is true. But to come to ourselves. In His members He is ill used: banished, silenced, and treated worse than Barabbas. He gets no justice in our Parliaments; Papists, Arminians, and Atheists, get favour, honour, and court preferment; but an honest professor is counted an ill subject, a seditious man, and an enemy to authority. But see how God has met us, He has broken His staff, Beauty: the purity, power, and life of doctrine is away. The word of God is not sharp from preachers' mouths: it draws no blood in men's consciences. Nay, we wield not the staff with force, until the fire fly from the pikes of it. We cast [fling it about]



and handle it, as if our arm was broken! We see the sheep gone out of the way, and over the march, in the Lord's forbidden pasture. We see every man out of his place, and everything wrong in the Kirk. We see the sheep devoured and poisoned with Popery and false doctrine in colleges and pulpits. The staff is not drawn; and why? Because it is broken; and ye will yet see it worse broken. Think ye that a pair of organs, and an ill said mass (as King James the VI. termed it), and a busking of dirty ceremonies, the whore's abominations, which we once spued out, think ye that ever this staff will draw blood of a man's conscience? Nay, ere this staff break, or blood [make to bleed] a proud hard heart that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, ye may as soon essay to break a man's head with a straw, or a rush. The Lord says this is a broken staff, and we see it not.

*"That I might break my covenant."* – Because of the doctrine of the pestilent enemies of grace, I will crave leave to free this place, and to prove, 1. That the covenant of grace with the elect cannot be broken. 2. Show in what sense the Lord says, He will break His covenant.

For the first of these, see Jeremiah 31:36,37; Isaiah 54:10, "For the mountains shall depart," &c. I intend, at another occasion, to prove that the covenant is made fast with Christ, and so stands not in our free will (See Jeremiah 32:40; 31:32-35; Luke 6:13). God's oath and promise is a sure thing. "Aye sure," say they. What then? "Sure and sealed on God's part, providing we sin not, for God swears that believers shall be saved." Nay, but the Lord made the covenant with Adam everlasting; for if Adam had stood, the Lord would have done His part. Nay, the law of nature, given to the reprobate angels, in their creation, should have been as stable as the new covenant: for will any call in question, that God would have rewarded the apostate angels, providing they had continued in their obedience. "Nay," say they, "the covenant keeps not men from sinning against the covenant; but sinning against the covenant breaks the covenant."

*Answer.* Sin on the elect's part breaks not the new covenant (Psalm 89:33).

But the question is: If the elect can sin against the covenant? If that were objected,

*I answer.* They may sin, and sin against the doctrine of the covenant, and against the articles of the contract of marriage, as a wife may take another lover. But if this be in the contract, "She shall be my wife, howbeit she take another lover," then her harlotry by no law, destroys the marriage contract. Now, when Christ marries His church, He says He will forgive her sins, and swears He will forgive her harlotry.

But I ask, What makes a man to be within the covenant?

*Answer.* Not faith nor obedience. What then? God's free love. "Thy time was the time of love, – I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee" (Ezekiel 16:8). Then how long is a contract valid? So long as the chief clause is kept. Now, the chief head of the contract is God's eternal love, and all here is fastened on God's free promise; and this is surer than mountains of brass. As long as the foundation and corner-stone is firm, the wall standeth. Now, in all the sins of the elect, the unchangeable love of God standeth still. And let Papists, Arminians, and Socinians, come and loose this corner-stone if they can: it will break all their backs to aim at it, and has clouded their wits already.

To sin against the covenant is to cast the grace of the covenant fully away, so as if they were without it; so that they are not now within it; as Adam was after the fall. But, by sin, the elect cannot shake off the seed of God, "For His seed remaineth in Him" (1 John 3:9). Here is a special difference betwixt the first and the last covenant that will clear the matter.

In the first covenant, Adam had not a tutor, he was like a daft young heir, who, having gotten infetment of all that his father gave him, he wastes and spends all. But, in the latter covenant, God does with us as a father doth with a bankrupt son: he gives him

little at once, infests him not, but keeps a hank in his own hand [keeps the management], and gives him over to a tutor. Man has cracked his credit with God; and so the Lord will not put a sum in free will's hands again; but He doth two things. 1. He gives little in hand but the end of the covenant, and keeps the body of it in His own. Our writs and charters are in Christ's keeping, we lose aye the thing we get, and therefore God gives us only a copy of the charter; but while here we never get the principal; Christ keeps the great sum and gives us but like a penny to keep our purse. 2. We have not power to cast out the seed again no more than a man child has power to make himself a woman child.

Now, the point is, Wherefore saith God He will break His covenant with His people?

*Answer.* It is not He will break His covenant with these same elect persons, as John, Thomas, Anna, Mary, and all who are elected, or within the covenant: but He breaketh the covenant with a new generation, a generation of castaways, who are their seed, and gloried that the covenant was made with their fathers, and call themselves Abraham's seed and chiefest kindred: their kindred was better than themselves. That particular church, had so many years of Christ for mail [rent] and duty [tax]. The tack [the lease] expires, they sin, and pay not; then Christ warns all the tenants, in His Father's name, to flit. The contract was made with their fathers; they came in their fathers' room, but did not their duty, and God put them away. But as for the true, friendly, and tender believers, He takes some of them to their rest, and some to their kingdom. And if here and there one be left, when the Shepherd's staff is broken, He feeds them secretly; and is a little sanctuary to them, and they shall get crowns immediately from God. And therefore the breaking of the covenant is nothing but the breaking of the staff, and taking away of the word from the people of the Jews.

And therefore we may learn our lesson, if we are good scholars. The Lord has given us summons, and our tacks are worn out. Many are called home who are within the covenant. God can separate His own from the wicked, and then God shall tear the contract of marriage. Therefore try your holding, and look out your papers, and see upon what terms ye brock [broke; transact business with] Christ. I fear some have nothing but profession, empty, windy profession; others have the thoughts of their own head; many have little law or right upon their side for Christ. Therefore see to yourselves; Christ has said He will try your sitting, what shall either be His, or your own. Your rights are growing old, renew them to-day, and make sure work.

*"And it was broken," &c.* – When God will break the staff, who can keep it whole? There can none come after God that can mend the thing that He doeth. When God gives out the doom, it is no empty talk. The thing that God makes crooked no man can set a foot on it and even it (Ecclesiastes 7:13; Job 12:14). He says, Behold He breaketh down, and it cannot be built up again. Then, ere the decreet be given forth, let us return: for who will get a suspension on the Lord's decreet? Nay, "Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, my heart could not be towards this people" (Jeremiah 15:1). And therefore, if He give His church a shake for her sins, it will try all our art to mend her; and if He shall drive our hard hearts all to pieces, then put ye your hands to mend it.

IV. *"And the poor of the flock knew that it was the word of the Lord."* –

Hear how He speaks of the remnant of election. Ask what is the church, and especially after judgment has gone through the land? They are a number of on-waiters. There was nothing left now, when Christ had broken His two staves, Beauty and Bands, but to wait on an absent hidden Christ. For we can all wait on and believe when the Bridegroom fills our eyes with His presence, but see what the prophet Isaiah saith in chapter 8, verse 17, "I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth His face from the house of Jacob, and will look for Him." This is something to wait for a hidden God, and to kiss Christ in the dark night, that is a wonder, "Behold, as the eyes of servants look into the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden into the hand

of her mistress: so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that He have mercy upon us” (Psalm 123). Ken ye not, when a poor servant has gotten a bloody skin, and comes in all bloody to his master, what a look will he let out, even as he would look through him: so are our Lord’s children, when oppressed with bloody faces, looking up to our Lord and waiting on (see Psalm 130:6). As the morning watch waiteth for the morning; so we see the saints holding out their tired arms to God, and longing and looking over the mountains. And they have little or nothing in hand but hope.

Here is a doubt answered. Worldlings say, What have ye that we have not? Ye are a sick, poor, oppressed, banished, and mocked people; and where is your happiness. We have here an answer to such; we are on-waiters on God. Ken ye not some are very rich, and have thousands in this man’s hand, and thousands in that man’s hand. If ye ask them where their riches is, and bid them let you see what they are worth; they can let you see nothing but a number of papers, and bonds; even so, heaven is the land of promise, and the land of hope to believers. Let the apostle answer in this, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him” (1 John 3:2). We are the poor of the flock, and the nothings of the world (1 Corinthians 1:21). We are nothing, that is, but little less than a straw, or a feather. But stay, I pray you, our stock is in God’s hand. Wait ye on until yonder day, until the fair, clear, and bright heartsome morning of your long summer day, when Christ shall take His weeping bride in His arms, kiss her and wipe her face, and say, “My dear sister, hold thy tongue,” and shall busk her with His own hand.

Will ye let this foul black shower blow by; die not for sorrow. Wait on; now stir about Christ’s door, cry over the wall, Lord, Jesus, take in a begging brother. Cry and wait, and I can assure you Christ Jesus is cautioner, and the Holy Spirit notary, who writes it, and takes heaven and earth, sun and moon, to be witnesses, that ye shall laugh and rejoice, and be forced to say, Believers indeed have a great to-look [prospect of things to come], and are very happy.

“*Then I knew it was the word of the Lord*” – So soon as the staff is broken, and the Lord flitted: the Lord’s poor on-waiters miss Christ, they begin to clap their hands, and to say, Alas! He is away. And the rest know not what that means; they remember not that, though it was written as Zechariah had prophesied.

So the *Doctrine* is, That Christ cannot steal away from His own, and beguile them, but they miss Him, and know that He is away. The faithful know when He goes, and when He comes. If not so, what means that of the spouse? “Saw ye him whom my soul loveth? And I charge you by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye tell him when ye find him that I am sick of love” (Song 2). The Church sees Him on the mountains, standing behind the wall; she misses Him (Song 3), and cannot find Him with the watchmen. But on the contrary, you see the wicked never miss Him; they know not what God is doing when the staff is broken. Nay, “Strangers have devoured Him, and He knows it not” (Hosea 7:9). And even when our church is falling there are men who say she is rising, and that the staff is as whole as ever it was, and more so: and say our church was under beggary and misery before. And why? They would have a kirk, conscience, and religion made of gold, silks, and velvets, and foot-mantles, and high horses, and much court. But this text says, the poor of the flock are the only on-waiters on Christ.

5. But to proceed to verse 12, “*And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price.*”

*Doctrine.* A good servant, such as Christ was, should get His hire uncraved: but Christ gets leave to crave His hire thrice over, ere He get it: yea, and to seek His own by law. Now, I think, I recollect to have heard of a humble meek Steward, speaking very modestly to his

master, and saying, If it please you, I would have the thing I have wrought for. Even so (to speak with reverence), it is here.

*Doctrine.* Hence we see where Christ has laboured, He will seek fruit, “I looked for grapes, and behold wild grapes” (Isaiah 5). He will not work for nothing. He bade John Baptist make ready His way, ere He came. In Matthew 3:8, says John, Bring forth fruit worthy of amendment of life. And in all His doctrine, He urged the bringing forth of fruit. And as for the Jews’ waste, He cursed the fig-tree, because it had leaves, and no fruit; therefore every one in Christ’s house, seeing Christ served you in hard service, and gave His life in ransom for you, pay Him. Remember Christ is a hard craver, and will seek His own, especially His wages from you, even obedience, and newness of life. O then! See that ye bear not bulk [quantity; mere body] in His garden, and no more; but do good for fear He pull you up and cast you over the dyke. When men are redeemed, and have gotten forgiveness, they are ready to sit down and do no more; just as if a drink of the well in David’s house had made them drunken, and laid them over to sleep. Nay, but when ye have gotten mercy, ye must up the brae [press onward]. For know ye, that when Christ saves you, as your Shepherd, and gives His life for you, see that you bargain, or change with Him, to give Him yourself for His wages. When an honest man bargains with another, he says to him, Ye shall be no loser: I shall lose ere ye lose. So should ye, when Christ bargains with you; let Him not be behind, but rather lose yourselves, ere Christ want a penny of His wages. Woe’s me, to hear that professors, in buying or selling, will, for five or six shillings more of a price, let Christ’s glory get a blot. Is this to pay Him His wages? It were something to be a servant, would ye pay Him for by-gones [past kindness]. In this ye may learn a doctrine.

*Doctrine.* Christ is made a servant, and a servant is not his own, but a bond man; an hired servant is his master’s, and all his work is his master’s; and he is bound to serve no other. How is this? Was Christ our servant? Yea, He says, in Matthew 20:28, “The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

But it were well done here to clear the matter to you, and to let you see that Christ was hired, and who hired Him. We hired Him not. Why then should He crave His wages of His church?

*Answer.* His Father hired Him. For understanding of this; – God, our Father, and Christ’s Father, had a necessary piece of service to do: He had His sheep to bring out of hell: sheep that had gone astray, over and beyond the black river of death and hell: and our merciful Lord would fain have them brought home again. The angels could not take the service in hand: they could never have won the hire but in comes Christ, and says, I will win the wages. And He struck hands with the Father: and was booked God’s servant, “Behold My servant, whom I have chosen” (Isaiah 42). At the meeting, Christ said, I will do Your bidding; and so He did, “Then said He, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law is written within My heart” (Psalm 40:7,8). And “The Lord hath opened,” or pierced, “mine ear” (Isaiah 1:5), as the servant under the law, who would not leave his master’s service; so was our Lord. And further, He says, I was not rebellious, neither turned I away My back: and in verse, “I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair.” And, “He made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant” (Philippians 2:7). There is Christ saying, My Father bored My ear, and hired Me as a servant, to suffer shame and death. And says Christ, I did My duty, I played not the truant, I brake not to Him: or I came not back, nor turned to a back-side: I brake not away from My Master, as an ill servant. Now then, ye see, God hired Him to Himself, and God hired Him to us; and Christ was true to His Master, and God trusted all to Him, “Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently” (Isaiah 52:13). And so God gave Him in

hand grace and strength above His fellows for the work; and promised Him a willing people, or a kingdom. And Christ accepted of the condition, and said, Send Me, a bargain be it.

Now, God be thanked for that hired Servant. And God gave to Christ something in hand; even our nature. By taking a body, Christ bound Himself to us, head and foot, as well as He was bound to God. For He, having taken our nature, was sworn to bestow His manhood upon us to redeem us. For had He taken on man's nature, and not saved man, He had not kept the condition as a faithful servant: but now being bound, He then puts His hand to the pen, and says Amen to the bargain. So then, when Christ became man, He said, A bargain be it. It's true, naked manhood was not enough to make Him a sufficient servant; but Christ said, I shall put to that which is wanting. I shall put to My grace to your nature, and My God-head to your manhood, to make the work hold forward. Now know that the Lord was bound to God and to us, not merely to do His best to perfect the service; not to bring our salvation under free communing [leave it as a question to be discussed] betwixt God and us: not as if He had said, I shall do what I can to make the agreement betwixt you, and to save you: I will see if I can please parties; and, if not, I shall leave it no worse than I found it. Nay, but accepting the office of a Mediatorship, He took upon Him an absolute submission to make up the difference, or else to stick by the gate [way]; and that what God had left undone (to speak so) Christ was bound as a Servant to make it up. So God and man made it up; for God had lost the glory, both of His truth and justice: of His active and passive obedience. Man had taken it from Him; and Christ said to His Father, All Thy losses be upon Me, and crave Me for all: and here what man had stolen, Christ gave it again, of the same kind: as if money was stolen, and money was given again to him from whom it was stolen.

Let us learn, then, to bind ourselves to Christ, as He bound Himself to us; for He could not run away when once He was bound. So when once we are His, we may not take the play. Christ once gave in obedience (when we had lost heaven) to justice and truth; and Christ said, My dear brethren, all your losses be on me, Amen. Now, well said, Lord Jesus. Look then now, how Christ was bound for you, and yet ye think much to bind your necks to His service, for thirty or forty years, and then to go to heaven through Him? But he went a rougher gate for you, to hell and the grave. Now, be content to bind yourselves to Him, I pray you.

*“And if not, forbear.”* – As if Christ would say, If ye will not pay Me, I will not break My heart for the matter; keep it to yourselves. I will do My work; My Father will pay Me. He is even speaking as they use to do to dyvours. Either pay Me, or say ye will not: shift [do not put me off] Me not. Give Me either wages, or surety, that I may seek My own by law.

But then I see when all is done, Christ cares not much to want His wages, He resolved to do the work whether He got hire or not. It was another He was looking to than man. He had an earnest desire after the work, howbeit we should pay Him nothing. For the matter stood not upon our will, and our love, so as if Christ had said, I work My work, and die, upon condition they will pay Me. Nay, it was not so; but a reason in His death and mediation was to win our will to obedience, and to purchase grace, whereby we should be made willing to pay Him His wages. And here we see, if a nation refuse Him, as Scotland, He will get others willing to pay Him His wages. He will not want a new master.

6. *“So they weighed for My price thirty pieces of silver.”* –

Consider this answer was neither boasting nor high; but like the meek Lamb of God; like a poor oppressed servant, He craved His wages, and said, Give me My hire for My labour. See the rough answer they gave Him, Give. You Your wages; the carpenter's Son who has a devil? Give Him thirty pieces (say they) to buy Him to the gallows! Hire Judas to put Him out to us, that we may take Him and hang Him, for that is the wages we allow upon Him! Is not this indiscreet talking to the Son of God. They pay the Shepherd His wages with

many a blea stroke [stroke that makes black and blue], saying, Let Him take that for His pains. They answered even as a rough master does to an ill servant, who says, Pay me, and let me go my ways. The master answers, Give you your wages! give you the gallows! So do they answer Christ, as if He were an ill servant. But His Father sent Him with good words, "I am that good Shepherd, come unto Me all ye that are weary, and heavy laden. If any man thirst, let him come to Me, and drink." Then might not the priests have given our Lord a good answer? Nay, see two words in Matthew 21:38,39. The Heir came to seek fruit, of the vineyard they caught Him and cast Him out of the vineyard, and slew Him. Would ye have believed, when Christ came to His own vineyard, that the servants would have slain Him and casten Him over the dyke; denied Him a grave, and let Him borrow another man's! Would ye not wonder to see Him come in to the church, in to the Parliament House, and to see men cast the door in His face, and hold Him out. Yet even so (Acts 4:11), He was the stone set at nought, and thrown over the wall. O! a strange thing! Would they give Him no room in the wall? Might they not have made Him a pinning [a small stone in the wall]? Or was He not fit for the work?

Now ye may say, Foresaw not Christ all this; saw He not, ere He was hired, what wages His master's would give Him? Ay, this text tells, in Zechariah's days He saw it. Wherefore then entered He on the service?

*Answer.* If ye look the text, ye will see He took the hire and would not return it again; but in His providing, He cast it to the Potter's field, and went on in His service for all that. See yet more, what a meek and patient servant Christ was. He cried, Pay Me My wages; but they said, Give You wages! give You thirty pieces of silver to buy You to the gallows. Thus they stormed at Christ's answer, and ran away. Yet indeed He took it, and employed it as he thought good. He calls it His wages; as if He would say, This is even as much as refusing to pay Me. Why not willing, My dear spouse? Thirty pieces of silver to buy Me to the cross! I am even content; a bargain be it. I see it will be so: I foresee and prophesy it will be so.

Then the Lord saw how matters would go, and how He would be handled; but yet He would not repent of the bargain; He would not give it over; He accepted of the money, and goes forward in His service, until He be betrayed, slain, and buried. Ye may see, then Christ had resolved on the worst, to swallow all indignities, and set His face against the stormy blast. Now, see ye, all that Christ got was a hard reward for His service: He had many a wet foot in seeking His sheep; and got but twenty-six pounds Scots [the value of thirty shekels of silver] for His pains. Christ did not stumble on the matter by guess, as one who makes a bargain, and when He sees what it will cost Him, He says, It had been good for Me if I had never seen it. Nay, but Christ saw the worst, and resolved on the worst. Nay, but has He not been serving all along ever since the Reformation? And who can deny that He has been feeding His sheep amongst us, craving His wages, and seeking His fruit? But alas! we have given Him as little as they did before the Reformation? We have sold Him and His truth. What fruits has He gotten? They are worth nothing. Nothing but ignorance of God, idolatry, cursing, lying, and swearing; and on His Sabbath He gets but raw service, an hour and a half, and on some days mickle vanity and pride in apparel, extortion, no justice, but many false laws, incest, and adulteries; many unrevenged bloods, a wicked and windy profession.

"*A goodly price.*" – "Christ speaks as a man to be pitied or bemoaned; like a poor servant beguiled of his wages. As if he had said, God kens if I wan it not dear. I endured the winter's cold and the summer's heat. Many a weary night was I awake when they were asleep; and look at the hire they have given Me! Indeed, a good price that I the Lord was valued at! These worldlings, like Judas, the Scribes, and Pharisees, who love the world, and never have a right estimation of Christ; for thirty pieces of silver the kirk-men bought and sold Him. If the world be great in your books, Christ has then lost court [favour and influence] in your hearts;

for faith and a good conscience die and live together. Make once a hole in a good conscience, and bring in the world into your hearts, and ye shall see faith sink very soon. I wish men saw with two eyes here, that the world is a golden hammer to break religion in pieces, and that it breaks down the kirk walls. For what has overturned Christ and religion but men's love of the world, court, and honour. Go over to Rome, and see how they love God, who make golden kirks and golden images their religion. They have riches and fat benefices, and therefore they have put a tongue in Purgatory's mouth to cry, Money, Money. They love honour well, and therefore their doctrine cries, A Pope above all kings and emperors in worldly glory. And because the second commandment speaks against their images, they have shut it out as a servant. Men see not their court [interest], and the world can put a lie in their consciences, and cause them to believe black is white, and idolatry is a thing indifferent. Would ye know the cause of it? (but men will not believe it). When once the affections are passionate, and when therefore the truth comes into the soul of men of corrupt minds and affections, it is like good wine put into old bottles: our hearts sour the truth. Or, like a beautiful stranger coming into a very smoky house, who is all bleared and blackened to-morrow. And why? God's truth charges us to bow to it, and to deny our own wills, and lusts; and yield obedience to it. But when men's affections are poisoned with their lusts, they change the law to say as they say, and wrest, patch, and make religion, and the truth, as a wide shoe to suit their foot: or as a coat with a wide bosom, that they may take both religion and their lusts into it. Hence the adulterer will not bow his back to the seventh commandment; he would have it get a back-blow with his hammer, that it might crook and bow to his lusts. And the covetous man, because he will not be reformed, would wish a reformation on the tenth commandment. The fool's poisoned heart says, God will not bow to him, therefore he gives his conscience a back-throw, till it take the cramp again: and then he says in his heart, There is no God. And do we not see it so this day? Religion goes straight, and the truth of God takes even out at the gate: but men's hearts are upon policy, state, benefices, honour, and court; therefore they would cast religion in a pair of moulds and give it a back-throw, to cause it go halting and clinsing [crippling. So used in old Gawin Douglas] after the world. And if Christ would say and do, as the rulers of the people would have Him, He should not be crucified.

*"That I was valued at:"* which I the Lord Jesus, Jehovah, who brake the staves, of beauty and bands, was valued at. – This is clear in the 13th verse, and in Matthew 27:8,9. It is the man, Christ, whom Judas sold, for Matthew cites the text: but he says that it was cited by the prophet Jeremiah. Now, the text is here in Zechariah: and there is not such a place in Jeremiah; therefore it is like that Zechariah was also called Jeremiah. For it was ordinary for the Jews to have two names; and especially because Zechariah and Jeremiah come both from the same fountain in the Hebrew: and they have both one signification; and both in our language signify, a man exalting God.

But here the thing I would be at against the blinded Jews. Zechariah says, Jehovah was valued at thirty pieces of silver. Matthew says, the Son of man was valued at thirty pieces. So these two are one and the same person; which is a clear proof that our Mediator is both Jehovah, God Almighty, and also a betrayed Man, for thirty pieces of silver. The Jews might have remembered this prophecy when they gave thirty pieces of silver for Christ, and before their eyes it was cast down in the Lord's house, and by themselves made use of, to buy the Potter's field. So then, Christ is God and man (the Jews will not have Him, let us take Him); for thus it behoved the work of our redemption to be a mixed work, coming from two natures. Then take Him as sib [closely related] to you: Christ, God-man, is all-beauty and fair to behold.

Two things commend a wife, a sweet smell, and a fair colour. Christ-man smells of love, as sib to us; and Christ-God is all beauty and fairness itself, to behold. A precious stone,

for beauty and colour and also for the rareness of it, most excellent. So then in everything Christ is excellent. For the Godhead and manhood are like two men lifting a dead man out of the water, and each of them lifts to the other's hands. For the manhood draws dead and condemned men from under sin and wrath, and the God-head lends strength, and holds out an arm to the manhood to do it. The manhood prays, is sad, hungry, thirsty, cold, weary, dies, and suffers God's anger. The Godhead stands it out as a back-friend [at his back to help], lifting and bearing up the manhood, under that great work, at that, great day of law, when our action is called. The God-head backed Christ, and convoyed Him to the bar of God's justice, where He answers for it. The God-head cannot suffer: the manhood suffered, the God-head being overclouded, yet so as it broke the force of the stroke, by doing and supporting. As an arrow shot at a brazen wall, the point of it is broken and driven back. So the arrow of God's indignation went through Christ, soul and body, and made Him heavy unto death: but the God-head, like a brazen wall, brake the point of the arrow, and held up the man, Christ.

This was a rare work, strange and uncouth [uncommon; extraordinary] to see! The angels marvelled to see God stand. The God-head stood to ward off the Lord's arrows shot against the holy child Jesus. And never a hole that the arrows had made in Christ-man but the God-head was aye at hand, immediately to pour in balm, and fill it up in the very moment of suffering. And as Christ-man was burnt in His soul, the God-head held a well of faith, comfort, hope and courage to His head to drink His fill. For Christ ever believed, and still hoped, and prayed in faith.

Then, believers, count heaven a precious thing that was so dear bought. Here was an uncouth wonderful yoking [sting to; undertaking] for it! Then fy upon thee, if thou sell it for clay and swinish lusts. The thing that Christ wan with His sweet life, wilt thou slip from it like a knotless thread? Alas! I see men have not the estimation of salvation that Christ had. He gave much for it: they cast it at the cocks for a penny, for a feather. The young heir knows not how hard the conquest [the acquisition of the estate] was to his poor father; who was soon up, and late up, and ventured through the seas, and was shipwrecked thrice, and taken with Turks and Pirates. So we are but young daft heirs, and know not how dear Christ bought our inheritance. He wanted the night's sleep for it; it cost Him many a weary and heavy heart: yea He swimm'd the salt sea of the Lord's wrath for it.

7. *“And I took the thirty pieces, and cast them to the potter”* – To buy a field with, for beggars and strangers; for the Jews would not have the uncircumcised buried with them. See ye not how Satan served Judas. He sought in his heart how to betray Christ. Satan said to him, Thou servest a hungry master. Wilt thou put Him in a purse, and get something from the high priest for Him that will do thee good? Judas does so. And now, when Judas got it, it burns his conscience and he throws it from him, and it is cast to the potters to buy a field. What gets Judas' heirs and executors of his thirty pieces? First, he makes a dog's testament; then he leaves nothing to his heirs. Many a purse gotten with selling Christ is casten to the potters: strangers and beggars get it. Then look to court, honour, and benefices, and estates gotten with the selling of Christ, if they thrive to the third heir. Many earldoms, and lordships that come this way will be casten to the potter's field. Satan filled Judas' head and heart with hope when he tempted him; now when he casts away the money, he gives him the cheat for his bishopric: he would laugh him to scorn. For, when Judas was conscience sick, he would not come and hold his head. I think Satan is like a lown, or sporter, who has put in his finger among ashes, where there is fire, and burneth himself, and, tempting, he says to his neighbour, It is not hot; and makes him put in his hand, till he is burnt, and cries; and then he laughs, and says, Good speed. The devil has burnt his hand with sin, and he says to Judas, and others, It is not hot, put in your hand and feel. And when they are scalded, and cry, and cast away the thirty pieces of silver, he but laughs at them. Nay, I have now mind



how Jacob took Esau at the right time, when he was dying for hunger: he would not give him a soup of his pottage till he sold him his birth-right. Satan, finding men dying for hunger after the world, court, and riches, he makes them trow [suppose; believe] they shall get nothing, unless they sell their birth-right. And when Satan once gets them in a right mood, and to lust after the world; hence, he gets them to sell their birth-right for sin. But, believe me, ye but burn your lips with the devil's pottage; when ye quit Christ and your birth-right for sin. Ye but scrape, and draw together for the potter's field. Ay, but stay till it come to Saul's and Judas' case, in the hinder end of the day. When a house takes fire, it is not long in going to all the corners thereof. So if ye sell your birth-right to Satan, sin, and the world; when death comes, the fire of hell will kindle in your conscience, till all be in a flame; and ye will not get water to quench it. O then, take heed, and beware of Satan's flatteries, sin's vain pleasures, and the world's deceitful allurements: for they are all but empty nothings, a matter of mere moonshine. It is storied of men going over to Italy and selling their goods to wizards, and getting, as they supposed, chest-fulls of gold: and when they came home and opened their chests they had nothing but a number of round slate stones, and were all beguiled. So, in believing the world, Satan, and sin, you can meet with nothing but deception. Ken ye not that the devil, the world, and sin, can all cog [load the dice so as to cheat in playing] the dice, and promise gold, while all is but mere nothings, empty shadows, and worse than slate stones?

Now, I pray and beseech you, by the mercies of God, by the blood of the eternal covenant, by the price of your souls' redemption, by the salvation of your immortal souls, and by your compearing naked and bare before the Judge of the quick and the dead; cast this world and sin over behind your backs. Hate and abhor every sin, whether in yourselves or others, and go up through this world leaning upon Christ, keeping your eye fixed upon Him, as your only safety. The Lord bless His word to you. Amen.

[December 1897]

## A Sermon.

By Rev. NEIL CAMERON, St. Jude's, Glasgow.

“Ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” – Jude 3.

There are two important reasons why the Church of God should contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

*First.* – The glory of God, in time, is so intimately connected with the revelation of His mind and name in the word of truth that the one is lost sight of as the other is ignored.

(1) In the work of creation, as the Bible records it, the glory of the infinite wisdom, power and Godhead of the Trinity was made manifest. This is a mirror in which the psalmist saw much of His glory, when he exclaimed in an ecstasy of admiration, “When I consider thy heavens the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that thou visitest him?”

(2) Immediately upon the entrance of sin, the inexorable glory of His justice, holiness, and truth blazed with such effulgence from His throne throughout the whole rational creation, thoroughly convincing the angelic hosts, “that God hath no pleasure in wickedness; neither shall evil dwell with him. The foolish shall not stand in his sight; he hates all workers of iniquity.” They saw all this in “that God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.” The glory of His power and wisdom in creation, and of His justice, holiness, and truthfulness were all displayed anterior to the fall of Adam, and of his posterity in him. Adam yielded to the temptations of Satan, broke the covenant of his God, and thereby, the whole human race immediately fell under the same sentence of condemnation with the angels that sinned. Satan may have thought that he had succeeded in ruining the whole human race, and in despoiling God of His glory in connection with the creation of man, and in destroying the image of God and His likeness in which man was created. The wisdom, power, justice, holiness, and truth of God would have remained impregnable forts defending His glory eternally; but Satan and man had obliterated, through sin, the obedience, reverence, and love due to God from His rational creatures of mankind. The victory seemed to be on the side of Satan. The whole human race were, willingly, his lawful captives, and were already on the way to hell. Who could deliver them? God’s justice demanded their eternal punishment in that everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. “Then thou spakest in vision to thy Holy One, and saidst, I have laid help upon One that is mighty.” “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.”

(3) Therefore a revelation of the free, sovereign love, purposes, mercy and grace of God was made to man, and therein the glory of the grace of God, in connection with the purpose of election, redemption, justification, sanctification, and glorification of sinners by the Mediator, or the seed of the woman held forth. The covenant of redemption or grace was brought to light whereby God should be glorified on earth, the works of the evil one destroyed, and the election of grace saved by Jesus Christ. Thus a glory accrues to God from the work of redemption, and restoration of guilty sinners that exceeds the glory of His justice in their condemnation. Against this glory of the grace of the Most High the adversary and his children have been contending since it has been revealed in this world. All the above facts are set forth in the Word of God, or “the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”

*Second.* – The eternal salvation of perishing and guilty sinners depends upon “this faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man. “Without faith it is impossible to please God.” Again, “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” Therefore salvation is so absolutely connected with the Word of God that none of our lost race, capable of making use of it, can be saved without it. Infatuated he must be who endeavours its destruction, for “where there is no vision, the people perish.” Let us now in humble dependence upon the Spirit of truth, consider the words of the text.

I. – The cause of contention.

II. – The two contending parties.

III. – The method prescribed for the saints in their contending for the faith.

Jude, as a faithful servant of Jesus Christ, seeing the faith attacked, warned the saints of the imminent danger to which they were exposed. He reminded them that they had had warnings in the inspired writings of Christ’s apostles concerning this danger, and that they had much need of holding fast the form of sound words in faith and love which is in Christ

Jesus. This was a duty which they owed to Christ's cause, to some who were led astray by the craftiness of the enemies of the faith, and to mankind down to the end of time.

I. – The cause of contention is “the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”

(1) This embraces the whole Word of God. “The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.” “God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.” Again, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” This word God continued to commit to His own Church from the first promise in the garden of Eden till the record was solemnly closed by the book of Revelation. No book or portion of this heavenly record had to be delivered twice. The saints of the Most High kept this precious deposit most carefully in every generation. Thus was the word of reconciliation committed to and kept by the Church till it has come to our hands, and will be kept by Christ's seed until He shall appear the second time sitting upon the great white throne. The Church is the pillar and ground of truth, and while she keeps lies without her ground, and the truth in its entirety emblazoned on her standards, she is terrible as an army with banners. The Church of Christ, taking her stand upon the rock of truth, overcomes by faith all her enemies. “My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.” Nothing will overcome the devil, the world, and the flesh, but implicit faith in the Word of God. Who are the true Church? And how can they be distinguished? We answer briefly, “Where two or three are met together in my name.” The saints having His Word as a lamp to their feet and a light to their path listened to the voice of God in that word, and refused to be led away by the delusions of Satan. The Bible contained their whole faith regarding spiritual and eternal realities and the purposes of God towards a guilty and perishing world. The word that proceeded from His mouth was of more value to them than thousands of gold and silver.

(2) It is of the utmost importance that the word of the truth of the gospel should be so firmly held by the Church that none could be acknowledged as a member who should doubt any part of it; but it is in the heart that the Lord is delighted with the truth. The faith was once delivered to the saints personally and subjectively. The true nature of saving faith which justifies before God must be held. An error here is certain ruin. “Without faith it is impossible to please God.” Faith without charity or love is nothing.

All sinners are by nature dead in trespasses and in sins. The dead can never awaken themselves. When the Lord asked Ezekiel the question, “Can these bones live?” the prophet replied, “O Lord God, thou knowest.” The Holy Spirit, through the reading but especially the preaching of the Word, awakens the dead faculties of the guilty sinner to realise the wrath and curse of God's law and justice, under which he lies. This is fully demonstrated by the Word of God. The three thousand on the day of Pentecost, and the Philippian jailor are indubitable proofs. Then the sinner begins in agony to ask the question, “What must I do to be saved?” He has got no knowledge of saving faith, however elaborate his knowledge of the letter of the Word of God may have been. The Holy Spirit through the Word quickens the dead soul, regenerating it by the Word, and works faith in the soul, and enables it to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered in the Gospel. Christ by His Spirit comes into the heart, and dwells

there, and the believer by faith enters into Christ – lives and walks in Him. This faith is described in Scripture as “the gift of God,” as “a most holy faith,” and as “a precious faith.” There is more in it than a mere assent to the historical facts and truthfulness of God’s Word, for many can lay claim to that rational faith who are never saved. “The devils believe and tremble.” Saving faith looks unto Christ in His humiliation, obedience, sufferings, and death, and lays hold, by the power of the Holy Ghost, upon Christ in all He did, and in all He now does before the throne of God, as the great High Priest, pleading the merit of His own death and shedding of blood upon Calvary’s cross. The sinner takes Christ as his own. The love of God is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost, and he is made exceeding glad in the reconciled countenance of God the Father in Christ. He calls upon the heavens, seas, earth, and all that they contain to help him to sing of the mercy of God for ever. As he feels himself now taken out of the fearful pit and miry clay, and his feet set upon the rock, he can take a view of the prospect set before his eye in the Word of God. God shines into his heart, giving the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus. Looking backwards, he sees the fountain from which all the grace and mercy flow which are revealed in this world, the electing love of God – Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The covenant of grace is unfolded to his mind, as it stands between the Father and the Son; the heart-melting love of Christ revealed in the pity and compassion of his humiliation, sufferings, and death, for sinners and for himself personally causes him to cry, “Who loved me, and gave himself for me;” the love of the Spirit by which He came to his guilty soul, awakened, quickened, and enlightened him in the knowledge of the fearful disease of sin, and of Jesus Christ, the great Physician; the pardon of sins which God, the Father, the Judge bestowed upon him, justifying him freely by imputing the righteousness of Christ to him, and bestowing faith upon him to receive Christ; the peace with God which flowed into his guilty soul in that moment in which the Spirit purged his guilty conscience from sin, and how this made all things new to him; the proof he had of this, in that the Spirit by the promise of the Word spoke it to his heart in some such words as these – “I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.” He is now amazed why other sinners are not seeing the beauty and the glory in Christ that fills his own soul with such delightful admiration. He cannot pass his fellow sinners on the public road without urging them to believe in Christ and be saved. This is only a new-born babe. “As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby; if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. The Holy Spirit keeps the Word almost without ceasing in the mouth of faith, and the soul drinks in and is “satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory.” Children are not fit for wars and contentions. They must be weaned and made to eat strong food, like men, before they are sent a warfare. “Whom shall he teach knowledge, and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk and drawn from the breasts.” The psalmist knew these things when he said – “Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child.” The weaned child by-and-bye must be sent to school to learn. Into what school must he go? Christ says, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” The Apostle Paul describes what he learned in this school. “I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content. I know how to be abased, and I

know how to abound: everywhere, and in all things, I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” The prophet Isaiah learned a difficult lesson before he became a soldier for Christ. “Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips: and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. Also I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I: send me. And he said, Go.” Though a man had all the learning this world can furnish, and all the faiths imaginable, if he should be ignorant of the learning which can be found only at the feet of Christ, and of the faith which is above the power of man but which is the gift of God, he cannot “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” The weakest saint, who has got Christ dwelling in his heart by faith, will overcome all his enemies, and will come to the joys of eternal glory. “The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.” But, as every inch of that way to Zion must be contended for by the sword of the Spirit, the believer need not expect rest by the way.

II. – Let us therefore review the contending parties.

1. The party against whom the contention must be sustained. Satan has kept up a continual warfare with the seed of the woman since God revealed His purpose of mercy contained in the first promise, “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” As the servant of the Lord must not contend without the direct command of the Captain of the Lord’s hosts, he must carefully read his orders. Were he to take as his enemies such as might be called bigots, narrow-minded, and infatuated men, he might be, all the while, slaying his best friends. Therefore the enemies are brought into the field in their true colours. “By their fruits ye shall know them.” They are such as have crept into the church unawares, and were not detected until they began to air their thievish propensities. They vowed to assert, maintain, and defend her doctrines and principles, and to follow no divisive courses contrary to these, but their entire destruction was their intention. This is what we understand by their having “crept in unawares.” Are there not many who make this their boast, that though they bound themselves by the most solemn vows, both to the Most High and to their fellow-sinners, to contend for the faith, they had in their hearts a secret purpose to destroy the whole work of Reformation in Scotland? “The Confession of Faith,” which, by the “ Questions and Formula,” they have avowed to be based upon the infallible Word of God, and to be the confession of their faith, they scout as a thing which none ought to hold or believe. Is it against the Confession alone they contend? No, for all their complaints are clearly against the Word of God, but they endeavour to screen their impiety from the eyes of the people. Some have been so bold as to have distinctly stated that the most of the works of both the Old and New Testaments are writings of doubtful human authorship. This is perjury of the deepest dye, and will not escape its due punishment from the Judge of all. The Spirit distinctly states in the words before us, in the context, that “they were before of old ordained to this condemnation.” “Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!” They are further characterised as “ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness.” What are the most of the office-bearers of the churches in this land doing but this? Churches are almost converted into theatres. Concerts, soirees, vain

songs, and dancing are carried on under the guise of religion. Instrumental music, secular hymns, and lectures upon profane subjects on the Sabbath day, and in the place where they pretend to worship God, have driven the Word of God out of both pulpit and pew. The poor, deluded people are lulled asleep with false prophesyings. They are taught that man is not the lost, dead, guilty, and wretched sinner the Word of God declares him to be; that God is nothing but love and mercy; and therefore that they have nothing to fear. These spiritual thieves still go further, “they deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.” Many hold the doctrine of the Socinians – “That Jesus Christ is only a creature, and therefore is not God.” Did not some affirm that one might be a good Christian, and not believe in the divinity of Christ? Is that the doctrine of the Church of Scotland or of the Word of God on the most essential tenet of our faith? The Word of God reveals the great mystery of the incarnation, “God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” In our context Jude says of them, “But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.” How different their views of the person of Christ are from those held by the apostles! Let us turn to the Epistle to the Hebrews, and look at the first chapter, and listen to the voice of God’s Spirit as to who Christ is “Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” Again, “Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.” And again, “I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son. But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thy hands; they shall perish, but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture thou shalt fold them up, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.” This is the Christ that was born in Bethlehem of Judah, and laid in a manger there. From the stable of Bethlehem to Calvary’s Cross the Son of God, in human nature, was under the law, its curse, and the penalty due to the sins of the elect. The obedience and sufferings were not that of a creature, but that of the Second Person of the Godhead. There never was such a sight as God veiled in flesh to obey His own law, and to make it honourable; and to atone for the guilt of sinners who had rebelled against Him, ruined themselves, and could never have saved themselves. His sacrifice is all-sufficient to satisfy divine justice, and to cleanse the sinner from the guilt and corruption of sin. This is the Christ held forth by our godly fathers in this land. This is the Christ of the Confession of Faith, because He is the Christ of the Word of God. If any other Christ be preached or declared in the confessions of men and churches he is only an idol of their own making. One thing is clear, that when men change their God they must of necessity change their creed to suit their new god. But as the Holy Ghost gives us three examples taken from the Old Testament Scriptures, we shall briefly consider them in, their order.

(1) “Woe unto them! for they have gone the way of Cain.” What way did Cain go in worshipping God? “Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering; but unto Cain, and to his offering, he had no respect. And Cain was very wroth and his countenance fell.” Abel worshipped God by offering a sacrifice and shedding of blood. This mode of worship was instituted by God in the garden of Eden, before he drove our sinful parents out. Therefore Abel worshipped in accordance with “the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” “Cain brought of the

fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord.” He did not worship God in accordance with the revelation He had given as to the worship He would accept, and therefore the Lord had no respect unto the inventions of Cain’s wisdom. He came to God, not looking by faith unto the one sacrifice and shedding of the blood of the Son of God on Calvary’s Cross, as godly Abel did. “By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and by it he, being dead, yet speaketh.” Cain thought he had a right to bring innovations into the worship of God. As God had respect unto Abel, and unto his offering, but had no respect unto him, nor unto his offering, he immediately began to premeditate murder. He found fault with Abel for worshipping differently from him, and as Abel earnestly contended for the faith, he rose up and slew him. Many worship nowadays after Cain’s fashion. They worship God by hymns of human composition and human authorship, instead of the inspired psalms of David. They may be coming with the best of the fruit of the earth (in their hymns), but they are only the fruit of that which is earthly. Let them consider Cain. “Is any merry? let him sing psalms.” They worship with organs, instead of “By him (Christ), therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name.” They deny man’s total depravity, and, therefore, have no need of the atonement made upon the cross. Cain-like those who will not submit to their unscriptural mode of worship, and declarations of faith, are made the objects of their hatred and envy. Were the law of the land favourable to their projects, the blood of their brother would have fouled their hands before this time. “For this is the message that ye have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.” No works are more wicked, in the sight of God, than those which lead immortal souls away from worshipping God as He has appointed in His own Word. Satan’s aims are to get this nation to disbelieve the truth of God, to pull down that which our godly fathers built upon Christ, the rock, and to set up idolatrous worship, and he finds too many Cains willing to assist him.

(2) The next class composing the enemies’ forces are described – “Woe unto them! for they ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward.” The error of Balaam is recorded in the Word of God. Balak, king of Moab, sent elders to Balaam to come to curse Israel, so that he might destroy them. “And God said to Balaam, Thou shalt not go with them: thou shalt not curse the people; for they are blessed. And Balaam rose up in the morning, and said unto the princes of Balak, Get you into your land; for the Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you.” Balaam refused to go with idolaters to curse the people of God, but hints that had God allowed, him he should go. It does not appear that he abhorred the very idea of complying with Balak’s request. So Balak sent him princes more honourable than the first, saying – “Let nothing hinder thee from coming unto me; for I will promote thee unto very great honour. . . . And Balaam answered, and said unto the servants of Balak, If Balak should give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more.” How many are there in Scotland who said the same words? When the Moabites of this land desired to unite with a body who hold doctrines and principles antagonistic to the crown rights of the King of kings and Lord of lords, and to the teaching of the Bible and the Confession of Faith about the atonement, many said – “My congregation and others will not allow me to go with you.” Others said – “We cannot commit so terrible a crime against God, His Word and people, and our own consciences, as to go with you.” The latter stood boldly till death removed them one by one. The Moabites came back again with a Declaratory Act to sweep away, by one stroke, all the blessings of the true Israel of God. At first, men declared that this Act meant “Bible or no

Bible, atonement or no atonement,” and that nothing could ever prevail upon them to go with these men in their accursed work of destruction. When the time came to act, they – like Balaam – went with the Moabites to take part in their idolatrous worship, and to curse Israel. Who could believe a few years ago that the men who lectured to the people, in towns and country throughout Scotland, against such sacrilege, should be now fighting against the Word of God, the subordinate standards of the Church, their own statements in the past, and the few who could not follow them in their traitorous conduct? Wherein lay the secret of all this? The words of our text are very explicit on this point, “ran greedily after the error of Balaam *for reward*.” We have no doubt but promotion and the desire for being popular weighed much with some, but the love for reward was at the very root, and caused their contending for the faith to wither and die. The Apostle Peter, in warning the true Church against such men and their pretensions, points at this same thing. “Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness.” Let men say what they choose to the contrary, but the greed for reward, or the love of the wages of unrighteousness, and of a great place among men, were at the root of all the disgraceful compliance and most sinful compact formed between prophets and Moabites in Scotland. When men trample upon the conscience of the godly, break their vows to God and men, and are teaching Israel’s enemies to lay stumbling blocks before the people, their case is very desperate. Had Israel kept aloof from the Moabites, Balaam’s snares could not hurt them; but, going after strange flesh, twenty-three thousand of them fell of the plague. Let us therefore take the warning – “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning; that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope.” “Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”

(3) The third company appear with Core as their leader. “Woe unto them! for they perished in the gainsayings of Core.” In the 16th chapter of Numbers the conspiracy of Core, &c., is recorded. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, with two hundred and fifty of the renowned princes of the congregation “gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, everyone of them, and the Lord is among them: Wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord? And when Moses heard it he fell upon his face.” Notice the creed of these men. Moses spake much by the Word of God about the exceeding sinfulness of the congregation; but these men declare, “the congregation are holy, everyone of them.” There are many Korahs who hold this creed in our day. Moses and Aaron were set apart by God to lead the people – the one their lawgiver, the other their high priest. The Church of Christ must not loose a pin of either law or gospel. These two men took no undue honour to themselves; for the truth distinctly states that both were called of God. Why did these men raise such a cry against them? Probably they thought that they were abler leaders themselves. At any rate their creed was too narrow for them. They endeavoured before the whole congregation to ruin the influence of God’s servants. Had they attained their wish Moses and Aaron would not have had a single follower. The Lord can make of the lump of sinful clay one vessel to honour and another to dishonour. “He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill; that he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people.” Again, “He poureth contempt upon princes, and causeth them to wander in the wilderness where there is no way.” When He takes the worm Jacob by the hand, mountains are threshed like chaff before him, and carried away with the wind. Men say, “Do you take upon yourself to say that such an one is not more godly than any of you?” That sounds like the gainsayings of Core. Does that man of yours contend earnestly for the faith? Is he appearing against the enemies of the faith? or is he helping them, and causing them to succeed in leading the people astray



better than they could otherwise do? Does he continue to warn the people against the destroyers of the faith now, as he did in the past? “To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them.” Allow the truth of God to be doubted and carved by ungodly men at their pleasure, and you cannot be guiltless in church fellowship with such. The master mariner in mid-ocean who should throw his chart and compass overboard in a storm when neither sun, moon, nor stars could be seen, would not be so infatuated as the most of the so-called divines of Scotland to-day. The truth declares the need of “holding faith and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made a shipwreck.” This is metaphorical language, but very suggestive. A shipwreck is a most dangerous thing, as the apostle could certify by experience. Now, when some make shipwreck of the faith, and do all in their power to keep immortal souls in the wreck to ruin themselves and their posterity, who could find fault with the man that would “command the people that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea and get to land. And the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship.”

2. The defending party. As I have taken up so much space already these can only be mentioned by quoting a text or two of the Word of God. “These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them: for he is Lord of lords and King of kings; and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.” That is the Captain of the Lord’s hosts, with a part of His followers, and who can doubt the issue of the fight? The Lamb alone shall overcome them. Christ alone is more than a match for all His enemies. His soldiers overcame also as we are told, “And they overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto death.”

III. – The method prescribed for the saints in the contending. “That ye should earnestly contend.”

1. The soldier must obey the orders of his captain. “Thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.” This soldier must disentangle himself from earthly things, and set his face against wind and rain to make sure of fighting to the last. Demas stood many a battle, but the love of the world conquered him at last. Phygellus and Hermogenes turned away from “holding fast the form of sound words, and all they which are in Asia” followed them. Therefore Timothy must contend the more earnestly. Like Gideon’s army, the Lord’s orders are, “Whosoever is fearful and afraid let him depart early from Mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand . . . . And the Lord said unto Gideon, By these three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand.” The man who has got one eye towards the world, and the other towards the cause of Christ is in great danger. He may be compared to one holding a rope in each hand. While the tension is easy he can hold the two equally well, but let the tension become strong, and he must immediately let one of them go. He will act according to the value he sees in them respectively. If the Word of God be more precious to him than gold or silver, he will let the world go, and cling to the cause of Christ; on the other hand, if the world be greater and more precious in his estimation than the cause of Christ, he will let it go, and stick to the world.

2. The good soldier of Jesus Christ should do all in his power to get rid of the strength of the flesh with its weapons of warfare. Like David when “Saul armed him with his armour, and he put a helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with his coat of mail. And David girded his sword upon his armour, and assayed to go; for he had not proved it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them. And David put them off

him.” David slew a lion and a bear in the strength of the God of Israel, and he would now do in His name what Saul, with his armour and the whole army failed to do; he would slay Goliath, and pull down the insulting pride of the Philistines. “This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the propheties which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; holding faith, and a good conscience.” The righteous is bold as a lion. He sees the power of carnal weapons extremely weak whether they be for or against him. The strongholds, which he has to attack both outwardly and inwardly, are impregnable without the perfect strength of Christ. “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh; (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;) casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” In order to accomplish his arduous task, this soldier must” make up his mind to overcome all his spiritual and carnal enemies, or rest assured that he shall be overcome by them. There are no quarters in this fight. “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.”

3. Christ’s promise is, “I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” “What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?” Sin causes many bitter tears, hard words and thoughts, and much strife even among the true followers of Christ. Therefore, “Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you, let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness and wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envy and strife is there is confusion and every evil work.” The Apostle Paul found Christ as good as His promise, and so will we if we hold fast the confidence of our hope, steadfast unto the end. He had to say, “At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me; I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding, the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me.” “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.” May the Lord grant us grace to contend earnestly for the faith, so that, when the hour of our departure comes, we may have a conscience clear from the blood of all men, and that it can be said of us, “All these died in the faith.” To God be all the praise for ever and ever. Amen.

[January 1898]

## Outlines of Sermons.

By the Late Rev. JOHN SINCLAIR, Bruan, Caithness,  
Preached on 15th, 22nd, 29th March, 1840.

“Jesus answered and said unto her, if thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of Him and He would have given thee living water” – John 4:10.

You will remember the three things for which God gave the gift of His only begotten Son in covenant: –

- I. To fulfil the requirements of the covenant of works by price. “He was made under the law to redeem them that were under the law.”
- II. To deliver them by power out of the state of spiritual death and bondage. “For a covenant to say to the prisoners, Go forth.”
- III. To be a new covenant surety to keep them by grace from falling away again. “The surety of a better testament” or covenant.

The first of these the Son has already finished for all who shall be saved. “By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” “It is finished.” But no one can know whether the Son has finished the work for him in particular, till He do the second. When He has opened the graves then “ye shall know that I am the Lord.” Now we mentioned several steps by which He brings them out in the day of power, and as they are not the same steps in every respect in all, we gave some marks to be found in all.

I. A true hatred of sin. This is a sure mark because we naturally love sin, and until renewed, we have no hatred of sin. “The carnal mind is enmity against God.” “All they that hate me (wisdom) love death,” not death directly for itself, but sin which brings death. They

“love darkness.” It is not sin, but the love of sin which destroys the soul. So when Paul could say, “What I hate that do I,” then he could also thank God through Christ that he would be delivered from sin at last. None is delivered fully from the being of sin here, for no man living sinneth not, but the believer is delivered from the love of sin. “What have I to do any more with idols?”

We find the following marks upon them who hate sin truly. (1) They hate all sin. “I hate every false way.” This must be, because they have a respect to all the commandments written in their hearts, and they have a love to all holiness. They desire to be “whiter than the snow.” They desire not merely what would make them escape hell and attain heaven, but they desire to be altogether holy. (2) They hate what the world calls little sins, such as sins of heart. “I hate vain thoughts.” They have to hate what the world hardly thinks to be sin. “Flee also fleshly lusts which war against the soul.” They have to cry, “My soul is weary because of murderers.” This must be, because the heart is the fountain of sin, “Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, etc.” No hatred of open sin will evidence the new work, because a new heart is required. Hence they are groaning when others think them eminently holy. (3) They have a holy self-jealousy of secret sin which they never saw. “Cleanse me from secret faults.” They have found “the heart deceitful above all things.” They cannot easily appeal to good intentions. While some sin is prevailing they think they are given over to sin for some unknown evil. Hence they are constantly examining themselves, and crying for light to see themselves. “Oh, what if I am deceived?” Even Paul was afraid lest he should be a castaway. (4) They mourn for sin even when in hope of pardon, and after some tokens for good they are ashamed. “O wretched man that I am!” In Christ, they are not condemned. Yet they are filled with shame and self-loathing. They say not, “I have paid my vows.” The nearer they get to the cross of Christ in hope, the more of this hatred of sin, though less bondage of fear. A fearful pardon that makes sin sweet! “They shall look upon him and mourn.” The blood of Christ is good to cool a burning conscience, but fearful sugar to sweeten sin. Fearful that His blood should be counted an unholy thing and employed to give peace in sin. (5) They hate sin in others. “Rivers of waters run down from mine eyes, because they keep not thy law.” Hence it is an evil saying, “They do hurt to none but themselves.” Is any sin no injury to God? Does it not damn an immortal soul? Then it is not a light thing. That sight of sin is of the right kind when it brings sighs and cries. Christ had a burden because of this. He sought the glory of God, and they have the mind of Christ. They have the Holy Ghost in them. (6) They hate the company of sinners. “I have hated the congregation of evil doers and will not sit with the wicked” (Psalm 26:5). There is something in their very spirit that rises against it, and further than the transaction of business, the discharge of duty, or the obligations of relationship, they cannot enjoy the company of the wicked. Not merely have they a sight of the inconsistency of mixing in their company, but a feeling of the hurt to God and the soul at the time and afterwards. (7) They have as great a desire to be freed from the dominion and pollution of sin, as from its guilt and condemnation (Psalm 51 throughout). Christ died not merely to free the soul from guilt, but also to sanctify and cleanse it. He took hold of them for this purpose, and they press to apprehend that for which they are apprehended. Salvation from guilt would be but half. He saves from sin as well as wrath. (8) They have greater fear of sin than of suffering. “If any man come to me and hate not father and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple” (Luke 15:26,27). So with Joseph, Moses, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshech, Abednego, Paul, and other disciples. The words include not only great men, but “If any man, etc.” They consider sin whatever the word marks to be sin.

II. Separation from self-righteousness. "As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse." Then, unless severed from dependence in these we can have no salvation. We are thus separated: (1) If fully convinced of the insufficiency of our own righteousness. "All our righteousness but filthy rags," not some but all. Not one clean rag. Sin mixed with all. And if clean, it would be but a rag, imperfect. They are as much afraid of being left in duties as in sins. They have a sight of the unbending justice of God, and see that only what is perfect will do. True, imperfect duties will evidence grace, but will not satisfy justice. And theirs are only marks and preparations, no satisfactions to justice. (2) If bent after the righteousness of Christ by faith. So Paul, "not having mine own righteousness, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Philippians 3:9). Persons may see they are wanting righteousness, and yet are not seeking it. But when real want is seen, nakedness to righteousness and judgment, it will make them look about them for a shelter. (3) Therefore, they are put on duties, not to rest in them, but to find Christ. "I press toward the mark." They seek to find Him by God's appointed means of finding. Here no known duty is omitted, as no known sin is committed. They are not free from sin, and so duties are not perfectly performed. But as they would be perfectly free from sin, so they would perfectly perform duties, if they could. "Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments." "Walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless," not omitting any. (4) If Christ be the only food in them to the soul. So they go not only to God's altar but to Himself. "I determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified." The cross of Christ is of high value now. He is all in all. Ignorant, guilty, polluted, captives: what can meet their case but Christ? All is lost empty dishes without Him to a thirsty and hungry soul. When the child is seeking the breast, all toys are dashed away. So here. (5) If delivered from building on the applause of others. "How can ye believe who receive honour one of another?" They do not value the approbation of men, except as rested on the Word, and then in virtue of God's own authority. "Whose praise is of God."

III. Deliverance from our own faith. Seeing the fulness of Christ, we think there is nothing to do but believe. And indeed faith is all that is necessary, but we have it not. Many are perishing here. Now faith is the gift of God. It is of the operation of the Spirit, and that operation of almighty power, such as wrought in Christ Jesus when God raised him from the dead. But all say they are seeking the Spirit. Therefore, let us examine first, whether we have been convinced of the sin of unbelief and our inability to believe. "Of sin because they believe not in me."

#### *Ninth Outline –*

The first work for which Christ was given is completely fulfilled. "It is finished." The second is going on. He is sitting at the right hand, "to give repentance and the forgiveness of sins." He is continually making intercession for His people. He is still loosening prisoners by giving repentance and issuing pardons in new cases and to them already brought in. Hence it is written, "Thy seed shall endure for ever, and thy throne to all generations" (Psalm 89:4,29-36). Hence, when the gates of hell seem opened to swallow up all, they shall not prevail. The psalmist in haste said, "All men are liars." Learn (1) Some men are good even now. The Church may be low, but not extinct. All are not hypocrites. (2) "Try the spirits." Take them not on credit. Many false spirits are gone out into the world. Wolves put on sheep's clothing. Try them by the Word. (3) Join the true people. "We will go with you." "The Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel." Better to be among fleeing Israel than with time-triumphing Pharaoh. (4) Be one of them. Not a foolish virgin, shut out when the door is shut. "Let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant." "The servant abideth not in the house for ever, but the Son abideth ever."

The third work for which Christ was given is to be a covenant, a better covenant for them. This is begun when He, having said to them, Go forth, from the love of sin, self-righteousness, natural faith and their own spirits, brings them as self-destroyed, helpless, hell-deserving sinners to rest on Christ alone for salvation on His own terms. When the Spirit's almighty power brings them to this, the work will never end. Among the privileges they receive are the following: –

#### I. – Justification.

This we find joined to repentance. “For to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.” “Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations” (Luke 24:47). Also it is written, “Whom he called, them he also justified” (Romans 8:30). Justification contains two things: (1) The pardon of all sin. “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Ephesians 1:7). “Thou hast covered all their sin” (Psalm 85:2). “Who forgiveth all thine iniquities” (Psalm 103:3). This must be because they receive a whole Christ, and all their iniquities were laid on Him. From this time forward not one sin is laid to their account, as against the covenant of works, so as to bring condemnation. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” (2) The imputation of righteousness. They are “made the righteousness of God” in Christ. They are not only held innocent, as if they had never sinned by breaking what the law forbids, but as righteous in covenant, as if they had fulfilled all the law's commands. This is wonderful. Their pardon and righteousness both depend entirely on Christ, and these blessings are received by faith. Works are the evidence, not the ground, of their justification. They are “kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.”

#### II. – Peace with God. “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.”

Justification by faith is the root of all the other privileges. The convinced sinner knows he is guilty, and that “God is angry with the wicked,” the unjustified, “every day.” But now, the guilt being removed, there is peace. (1) It is a *solid* peace. “My peace I give unto you.” It rests on Christ's peace with the Father. The Father was angry, but now His anger is turned away. It is a very sure peace. “For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee” (Isaiah 54:10). This is because “the chastisement of our peace was laid upon him” (Isaiah 53:5). Therefore Christ is called the Prince of Peace. (2) A *friendly* peace. “Ye are my friends.” “Henceforth I shall call you not servants but friends.” God will do good to them by all things as their friend. The treaty is not one of mere forbearance but of the purest friendship. (3) A *loving* peace. “The Father himself loveth you.” Sometimes they have drops of this love shed abroad in their hearts, other times it is concealed from them. The Lord said, “My dear son, Ephraim,” even when seemingly angry. (4) An *everlasting* peace. “I will not be wroth with thee any more.” He may chasten them, but only to keep the peace, not to break the peace. (5) A *fruitful* peace. This it is in three things, to “bruise Satan” (Romans 16:20), to “sanctify you wholly” (1 Thessalonians 5:23), and to “make you perfect” (Hebrews 13:20).

#### III. Adoption into the family of God, never to be put out. “Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will” (Ephesians 1:5). Adam was the son of God by creation, but he lost the image of God. In Christ's adopting flesh His people are adopted to an inseparable union. (1) It is a rightful adoption. “To as many as received him to them gave he power (a right) to become the sons of God.” No creature can object. Only receive the Son of God, and then you have a right to become a son. (2) A fruitful adoption. 1. They receive *the nature* of children. “And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father”

(Galatians 4:6). It was at the time of deepest distress that Jesus so cried (Mark 14:34). And so also see Romans 8:15-26. The Spirit brings them in distress to Him as their only refuge. "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." The child in its trouble goes to the father. 2. *The nursing* of children. "As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby." The doctrine and the promise of the Gospel are the two breasts to feed them (Isaiah 66:11). Others may feed on any trash, but not so the children. 3. *The education* of children. "They shall be all taught of the Lord." They have the guidance of the Spirit into all truth. None else but the Spirit can teach so as to make the soul to learn. He not only gives the lesson, but power to learn it. "And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God" (Jeremiah 24:7). If He would not give this heart, they would be "ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." 4. *The correction* of children. "If ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons." "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten" (Revelation 3:19). First, their correction is from love. It is not in wrath, though they may think and fear it is so. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." Chastisement is a mark of His love. Secondly, it is for profit. He chastiseth "for our profit." He never gives a stripe or stroke too many, nor in a wrong way. Thirdly, it is to make us partakers of His holiness (Hebrews 12). He corrects them only to fit them for heaven. He learns them His law so that they may not go astray. In faithfulness to their souls, He rebukes by His Word and chastises by His rod. 5. *The inheritance* of children. "If children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ." On His right, they enter into the inheritance and abide there for evermore. He hath said, "They shall sit with me on my throne." He has prepared many mansions for them, and they are begotten to "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away" (1 Peter 1:4).

#### IV. Communion with God.

He hears their prayers. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ." "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." He hears their prayers because: – (1) They have an advocate. The advocate knows their case. And as an advocate He does not plead only according to His client's knowledge, but according to His own knowledge of the law. (2) He pleads His own merits, not theirs. He pleads His own blood. "I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work thou gavest me to do." (3) He does not always tell them of His success at the time. He hears long, but keeps them in waiting upon Him. (4) So He sends forth His Spirit in their hearts, the Holy Ghost. It is good hearing on His part that keeps praying on theirs. (5) But He will come speedily, as birds flying, though He tarry long. What! Tarry long, and yet come speedily. He will come at last in surprisal when they think all is gone, and He will hear no more.

#### V. Sanctification.

Christ is made of God unto us sanctification (1 Corinthians 1:30). This work is laid in conviction of sin, sorrow, and denial to self-righteousness and their own spirit. They seek to get free of all sin, and to attain to all holiness. (1) They were chosen to salvation through sanctification of the spirit. (2) The will of God is their sanctification. (3) It is the end of Christ's coming. (4) It is His prayer. (5) The desire of angels. (6) The desire of good men. (7) Their own desire. Their cry is, "Cleanse me, wash me, purge me." None are against it but the devil, the world, and the flesh.

May the Lord, in mercy, enable me to amplify and apply the above, and to apply Himself by the Spirit for Christ's sake, and to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost be all praise through Christ. Amen.

*Tenth Outline. –*

In speaking of the third thing for which God gave the gift of His only begotten Son, namely, to be an everlasting covenant to them who are made by the mighty power of the Holy Ghost to believe in Him according to that word, “By so much was Jesus made the surety of a better testament” or covenant, which is an everlasting covenant, we said – I. He is made their justification. This in two things. (1) The pardon of all sin. His blessed being was laid in the balance against all their sins, as if they had done what He did. (2) The imputation of perfect righteousness. They are “made the righteousness of God in Him.” Their justification is complete. It does not rest on anything in themselves either before or after they believe. Therefore Paul, long a believer, desires to be found in Christ’s righteousness. Here the exercise of faith keeps the looks clear, and the exercise of a spiritual mind keeps the peace. Then II. Peace with God. III. Adoption. IV. Communion with God. V. Sanctification.

VI. Some things in which He is available in covenant to them in death. (1) As to natural or temporal death, they shall not die till He sees fit. “I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and death” (Revelation 1:18). In the covenant of works, no sinner has any assurance of life, of being out of hell for a moment, according to Deuteronomy 28:66, but since Christ suffered eternal death in effect for His people, He has the keys of hell and of death. All power in heaven and earth is given to Him. No accident, no sickness, no disease can befall them till His time. “The very hairs of their head are all numbered.” Further, “Thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field; and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee” (Job 5:23). He promises to “make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground” to be at peace and to supply them (Hosea 2:18). Though they know not the time of death, He knows and watches. (2) They shall not die till they are ready. So it is written, “He will present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but holy and without blemish” (Ephesians 5:27). They may die sudden or lingeringly, and as in themselves without actual preparation, but not as in Him without habitual preparation. (1) He prepares them Himself. So He sanctifies, cleanses, washes them. (2) He makes them prepare. “Prepare thyself.” “The Lamb’s wife hath made herself ready.” “They have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” They do these things by employing Him, and so they say, “Thou hast wrought all our works in us” (Isaiah 26:12). “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you” (Philippians 2:12,13). The Holy Ghost applies Christ’s blood and righteousness to their souls, and keeps them applying the same by faith.

(3) He takes out the sting of death. “O death, where is thy sting?” It is on the subject of Christ’s rising from the dead that the Apostle sings over death. The arm of the holy law pierces the soul of every unbeliever with sin, giving him an everlasting lease of sin, the poison of wrath, ever gnawing the soul. But there is no sin for the law to fix on in them.

(4) They die in Christ. 1. They die in His blood, free from guilt. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” It is then the full efficacy of His blood will be known, when their garments are made white. 2. In His righteousness. When they come thither, they will be clothed not in their own filthy rags, but in the wedding garment. Neither Father, Son, Spirit, law, angel, nor saint will refuse admission to one robed in Christ’s righteousness, the livery of heaven. 3. In His loved and loving embraces. “Arise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.” He loved them with the love of salvation when in their sins, but oh, what sweet embraces of love when His fair one will have no spots or blemish, either imputed or inherent! 4. They shall die blessed. “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.” They are blessed of the Father, of the Son, and of the Spirit. All the angels



and saints bless them. Then who can curse whom He has blessed? Balaam could not, even when they were on the earth.

VII. The last thing we mention, in His being an everlasting covenant for them, is their confirmation through Him in holiness and happiness through all eternity. "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world" (see John 17:21, and following verses). Here the union between the Father and the Son, and the love between them are compared to the union and love between Christ and believers. He says, He gives them His glory. What will He deny them that is for their good?

We observe – (1) They shall never sin any more, "As in Adam all die, so in Christ all shall be made alive." He is their covenant head, and not themselves. As they were one with Adam, so now they are one with Christ. Christ stands for them. The enemy attacked Adam as the head, but now he will be bound for ever and ever. They shall carry no fragment of the old sinful nature with them thither. Nothing that defileth can enter there. Not only nothing unclean, but no thing that defileth, no inclination to sin. They are conformed to Christ, like Him in soul and body, "His servants shall serve Him." They shall be capable of keeping the whole law as Adam's seed would have been, if he stood. The time of trial for him is over, and their time will be over at death. There can no tempter enter heaven. He is cast into hell. They have nothing to defile them with themselves, no carnality, not a wandering thought. They cannot become rebels as the fallen angels did, because "they are partakers of the divine nature." This nature is begun in their souls here, and it never sinned. "It is no more I that do it." There shall be no sin dwelling in them to excite to sin. If it were not for the old nature, they would not sin here, but there will be no old nature there. Nothing but a pure stream of the water of life, and fruit every month. No forbidden fruit will be there, only the tree of life, none of good and evil. Their drawing continually and eternally new supplies from Him keeps His nature in them, and them safe.

(2) They shall suffer no more in soul or body. "There shall be no more curse" (Revelation 12:3). "Nor death, sorrow, crying, pain" (Revelation 21:4). No more fear in the understanding, guilt in the conscience, nothing to cross the will, to cause the affections to loathe, to annoy the memory, to harass the imagination. There will be no pain or sickness in body. "The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick" (Isaiah 33:24).

(3) They shall serve Him fully. They shall keep all the commandments. These are written in their hearts, and there will be no law in the members warring against them. Their bodies shall never weary, and their souls shall never be cloyed.

(4) They shall enjoy Him in unutterable felicity. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them who love him." His power shall then be glorious to them, His wisdom satisfying, His holiness sweet, His justice full of comfort, His goodness filling, and His truth most precious. All the Divine attributes shall just be what they would wish in Christ. The place and the company will be their delight. All this they shall enjoy for ever.

Application: –

I. Is any afraid of death? Hasten to Him who has the keys of hell and of death. It is easy to be hardened against fear while health and strength last, but remember death made the Mediator to be in agony, very sorrowful, and very heavy. Now He has made it light for His people. All the gates of death are open till we are brought to Him. No gate but will be the gate of hell, unless we are in Christ. Be sure you are in Him by the new birth.

II. Be ye ready also. Those He makes ready, He makes themselves prepare. (1) Try to put your house in order, and seek that it be kept in order. (2) Finish your work whatever relative

duty to God or men. Be diligent to be found in peace. (3) Seek to be in the exercise of faith. Have your loins girded, and garment on. (4) Let your lamps be burning, examining evidences and promises.

III. Get free of love of sin, the sting of death. All that hate Christ love death. A carnal mind is death. Apply to Him to take away the curse, and seek deliverance from “the house of the wicked.”

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