

# TO ALL ENDS OF THE EARTH

*Sermons Preached throughout the World*

by

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Photo on Cover page:

Rev. William MacLean sitting in his study in  
the Free Presbyterian Manse, Gisborne NZ 1972.

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# HARVEST THANKSGIVING SERVICE

*“Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpeh and Shen and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us”.*

I Samuel 7:12

**T**he people of Israel at this time had to an alarming extent forsaken the Lord. Their priests Hophni and Phinehas were ungodly and immoral. The Word of God declares that they were the sons of Belial, and that they knew not the Lord. When the Philistines made war on Israel, it was Hophni and Phinehas who brought the ark of the Lord to the battlefield, expecting thereby to get the victory over the Philistines. In doing so they were but provoking the Lord. Instead of victory the children of Israel were smitten before the Philistines with a very great slaughter, both Hophni and Phinehas were killed and the ark of God was taken. When Phinehas' wife heard that the ark of God was taken she travailed and gave birth to a son whom she called Ichabod, saying, “The glory is departed from Israel; because the ark of God is taken”. Then we have an account of the hand of the Lord being heavy upon the Philistines. They came to realise that the hand of

the Lord was upon them because of the ark. They therefore, took two milch kine, tied them to a cart, shut up their calves at home, and laid the ark of the Lord upon the cart. The milch kine wended their way to Bethshemesh. We are told how irreverently the men of Bethshemesh dealt with the ark of the Lord. They looked into the ark, and because of this the Lord smote them with a great slaughter. Before they could look into the ark they had to remove the lid of the ark—the mercy seat, upon which the blood of the sacrifices offered as an atonement to the Lord for the sins of the people was sprinkled. The ark of the covenant was a type of Christ in His two natures, and the blood-sprinkled mercy seat, the atonement which he was to make. In removing the mercy seat they were setting aside the atonement and exposing themselves to the curse of the law. And in how awful a manner the wrath of God came upon them. From Bethshemesh the ark of the covenant was brought to Kirjath-jearim. “And it came to pass while the ark abode in Kirjath-jearim that the time was long; for it was twenty years; and the house of Israel lamented after the Lord”. We find Samuel saying to the house of Israel “If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you and prepare your hearts unto the Lord and serve Him only, and He will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines”. They assembled and fasted before the Lord and confessed that they had sinned against Him. While they were thus engaged the Philistines came up against them to Mizpeh. When the children of Israel heard it they were afraid and said to Samuel “Cease not to cry unto the Lord our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines. And Samuel took a sucking lamb and offered it for a burnt offering wholly unto the Lord for Israel; and the Lord heard him”. As proof that his sacrifice and intercession for Israel was acceptable to the Lord, “The Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines and discomfited them and they were smitten before Israel”. Then

Samuel took a stone and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us”. Samuel’s burnt sacrifice and his intercession on behalf of Israel typified and pointed to Christ’s sacrifice as the Lamb of God and his all prevailing intercession.

We have reason this evening to set up our Ebenezer anew to the goodness of the Lord to us in His providence and to confess, “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us”.

In seeking to make a spiritual use of these words, we may notice in the *first* place that there is help in the Lord, salvation in the Lord for helpless sinners as He Himself declares: “O Israel thou hast destroyed thyself, but in Me is thine help”. In the *second* place we will make a few remarks about those who have this confession “Hitherto, etc.” The people of Israel had experience of the deliverance of the Lord from the hands of their foes on the ground of the sacrifice and intercession, and the Israel of God in every age and generation entertain the hope that in their own souls’ experience they know something about this deliverance. In the *third* place there is encouragement for the future implied in the words “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us”. “The Lord of us hath mindful been and He will bless us still”.

Under *the first* head we may notice, as it is written, “O Israel thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thine help”. We destroyed ourselves in Adam our first covenant head and we have been destroying ourselves by sinning against God. This is the indictment the Lord brings against every individual of our fallen race. The blame and the guilt of our destruction, ruin and hell-deservedness lies at our own door. We are not only self-destroyed, but helpless to deliver ourselves from the ruin and misery of the Fall. Our case is hopeless as far as the help of man is concerned. “None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him”. The glory of saving sinners from their lost and ruined condition belongs

to the Lord alone. "Salvation is of the Lord". "For by grace are ye saved through faith and that not of ourselves; it is the gift of God". We may notice Ebenezers in the truth which opens up to us what the Lord declares. "O Israel thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thine help."

The memorial which Christ set up in the night in which he was betrayed, when He instituted the sacrament of the supper is an Ebenezer. It is a memorial of His atoning death apart from which there would be no hope for any sinner, for "without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin". The Lord's people in publicly giving obedience to the Lord's command, "This do in remembrance of me, for as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come", are also setting up their Ebenezer to the goodness of the Lord that He has hitherto helped them. There is in this solemn ordinance a voice to Christless sinners, "O Israel thou hast destroyed thyself but in me is thine help".

The divine memorial of Christ's resurrection from the dead is an Ebenezer. His resurrection is proof that he finished the work given Him to do, that He paid to the uttermost farthing the debts of His people. He rose triumphantly over death and the grave and the Sabbath is now an Ebenezer, a memorial stone of Christ's resurrection from the dead. It is a type and an assurance to the Lord's people of the eternal rest which awaits them in heaven. As a memorial it has a voice, every Sabbath day proclaiming to sinners out of hell, "O Israel thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thine help".

The sacrament of Baptism is an Ebenezer. We are baptised in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. This holy ordinance brings before us on the one hand that we have a nature which is depraved, deceitful and desperately wicked out of which nothing clean in God's sight can come, and on the other hand that, however vile and unclean we may be there is infinite merit



and efficacy in Christ's precious blood to wash the foulest sinner clean.

The long suffering of God in that He has spared us in the room of mercy is an Ebenezer. We are by nature and practice barren fig trees in the vineyard of the visible church. He has not cut us down as our sins deserved and cast us into a lost eternity. He is digging and dunging around us in diverse ways that we might bring forth the fruit of repentance. How we should give an ear to the gracious question He is putting to us: "Despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"

The free offer of Christ to sinners in the everlasting gospel is an Ebenezer. Christ is offered freely to sinners. The offer is based not on any merit or qualification in them, for they have none and cannot attain to any. The offer is based on what the Lord says, "Look unto me and be ye saved all ye ends of the earth; for I am God and there is none else." "Unto you O men I call, and my voice is to the sons of men." How awful shall the eternity be of those who neglect the great salvation which is in their offer! And how solemn the words, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God"! Thomas Brooks the Puritan divine says, "It is the duty of all the sons of Adam who hear the gospel preached and Christ offered to them to believe or receive Christ whether they be prepared or not prepared".

In the *second* place we may notice a few things about those, the spiritual Israel of God, who have this confession from personal experience. They are sinners saved by grace. It was the Lord who gave them deliverance. In setting up their Ebenezer to the Lord's goodness to them, their confession is: "Our sure and all sufficient help is in Jehovah's name". Their hope and confidence is placed in Him alone. They were brought, through the teaching of the Holy Spirit, to believe what the Lord declares in his word, that they had

destroyed themselves, that they were in a helpless and hopeless condition. They were brought in their own souls' experience to the end of their own resources, to acquiesce that God in His justice could cut them off, and in His sovereignty pass them by. It is when they died they lived, and lived through Christ being revealed in them, and their souls finding rest and peace and communion in Him. The glory of His person as the Father's eternally begotten Son, the One who is the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person is precious to them. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed". All who have died to the law as a ground of hope—for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified in God's sight—are married, as the Truth declares, to Christ in a covenant that shall never be broken. They are justified in Christ and shall be glorified in Christ. In the covenant Christ is made unto them of God, their wisdom, their righteousness, their sanctification and their redemption. Their own confession is, "Surely in the Lord have I righteousness and strength". But although dead to the law as a ground of hope they live to the law as a rule of life. Their having a love after the inner man to the law and to the whole of His revealed will, as set forth in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments is proof that the Lord is in covenant with them, and that therefore the forgiveness of sins is theirs. Hebrews 10:16-17, "This is the covenant that I will make with them after these days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more", confirms this.

It is because they have a love to the law after the inner man that they have a consciousness of the awful sinfulness of their nature which causes them to mourn and to cry "O cleanse thou me within from secret faults, thy servant keep from all presumptuous sin". Christ their covenant head is precious to them in His offices as their prophet, priest and king and so these profound and precious

blessings are theirs by covenant right—“Whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom he called, them He also justified and whom He justified, them He also glorified”. They are a people who seek to make their calling and election sure. “It is one thing”, as Dr Owen says, “to be in a state of grace, it is another to know that this is the case.” All believers are in a state of grace. They have peace with God, being reconciled to Him by the blood of His cross, but as to what shall be the measure of their understanding of their interest in it, this is left to the sovereign grace and good pleasure of God. There are many believers who all their days never come to an abiding sense of peace with God, but are filled with troubles and exercised with fears and perplexities, so that they go sorrowing and heavy all their days. But however tried they may be by doubts and fears and unbelief, they cannot but be looking to the Lord and waiting upon Him in their poverty and need, and in doing so they have from Christ Himself, the One who has the tongue of the learned, and who is able to speak a word in season to him that is weary, that they are in His intercession. “Let not them,” He says, “that wait on Thee, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed for my sake; let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake; O God of Israel.” (Ps. 69:6) They are at times tempted that they shall be put to shame and confusion of face, but His promise stands sure, “But Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation; ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end”. (Isa. 45:7)

“Poor creature” said the late Dr Kennedy of Dingwall in the course of a sermon, “if you are believing yourself to be so utterly worthless that you think your prayer is not worth hearing, your reading, your singing, your meditation worthless, your attendance at the means of grace worthless, my dear friend let me assure you that the day will never dawn when Christ will despise you”.

The cause of Christ in this world which is the cause of His glory

is precious to them. It is therefore a cause of sorrow and mourning to them how the glory has departed to an alarming extent from our once highly favoured land, and they would desire to have in truth the prayer of the Church of old:

“To these long desolations  
Thy feet lift do not tarry:  
For all the ills thy foes have done  
Within thy sanctuary”.

Their prayer and desire too is for the ingathering of God’s ancient people the Jews, through the promised outpouring of the Spirit of grace and of supplications. What a day of blessing unparalleled that shall be to the whole Gentile world! “The Gentiles shall come to thy light and kings to the brightness of thy rising”. (Isa 60:3) To the prayer of the sweet psalmist of Israel inspired by the Holy Spirit, “The whole earth let His glory fill”, the whole-hearted response of their hearts is, “Amen so let it be.”

In the *third* place there is encouragement for the future in the words, “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us”. “The Lord of us hath mindful been and He will bless us still”. Whatever troubles and trials His own have to pass through in their wilderness journey, they are assured that “all things shall work together for good, to them who love God, who are the called according to His purpose”. “The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble and He knoweth them who put their trust in Him”. His own promise confirms this, “Fear not thou; for I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness”. They are warranted therefore to say “For this God is our God for ever and ever; He will be our guide even unto death”.

The one thing needful for us in view of death and of eternity is to be found of this people, for “they are a blessed people whose God is the Lord”.

*Preached in Glasgow 21st November 1962*

# THE TREADING OF THE WINEPRESS

*"I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me."*

Isaiah 63:3

**I**n this chapter Christ is brought before us as the One who is to obtain the victory over the enemies of His Church. "I will tread them," He says, "in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment, for the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come," the year in which He will plead and vindicate the cause of His people, and take vengeance on the enemies of His Cause. Christ is seen in this vision by the prophet as coming from Edom with dyed garments from Bozrah, as a triumphant conqueror. Bozrah was the capital of Edom, and the Edomites who were the descendants of Esau were the sworn enemies of the people of God. We see that when Jerusalem was captured by Nebuchadnezzar, in the day of Jerusalem's distress, the children of Edom cried "Raze, raze it even to the foundation." (Ps. 137). The Edomites typify the enemies of Christ and His Cause in the world. But in this vision, which is a prophetic vision, the triumph of Christ and of His Church is assured.

Now, as the children of Edom were the sworn enemies of the Cause of Christ in Old Testament times, it is clear from the book of Revelation, that the Papacy, the great harlot of Rome, is the Edom of these latter days. The 19th chapter of Revelation is the key, as it were, to unlock the mysteries of this vision, which the Lord gave to the prophet Isaiah. The destruction of the Roman anti-christ is spoken of in almost identical language with that used in this chapter of Isaiah. In connection with Christ taking vengeance on the Great Harlot who is drunk with the blood of the saints, the apostle John tells us in his vision that he saw Christ “treading the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.” “And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. . . . And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.” The

vision is not to be understood literally, that Christ in person will come forth on a white horse, and that a literal sword will go forth out of His mouth. The words clearly mean, His coming forth in judgment to overthrow on the one hand, the principalities and powers of the kingdom of darkness through which Satan the god of this world is deceiving the nations of the earth and keeping them in subjection to him, and on the other, to deliver and raise up His own Cause.

When Zion by the mighty Lord  
Built up again shall be,  
In glory then and majesty  
To men appear shall He. (Psalm 102:16).

It is in connection with His coming forth that the mystical Babylon, the apostate Church of Rome, as we read in Chapter 18 of Revelation, will be destroyed, and the millions who are held in bondage to her idolatry and superstition emancipated. Satan will then be bound with a great chain not to deceive the nations of the world for a thousand years. Satan has great power in our day. How the nations of the earth, in our own once highly-favoured nation are being deceived by him! The homage and the honour paid to the anti-christ, the Pope of Rome, is clear proof of it. But Satan's power to deceive the nations will be bound and broken. Christ with His "rod of iron" shall smite down kings that do Him withstand, and with "the sword of His mouth," which is His own Word, piercing the hearts of sinners, as He did on the day of Pentecost, He shall be making a people willing in a day of His power. He shall not faint nor fail until He hath set judgment in the earth, and the isles shall wait for His law; His promises to make His Jerusalem a praise in the earth shall be fulfilled.



“His large and great dominion shall  
From sea to sea extend:  
It from the river shall reach forth  
Unto earth’s utmost end.” (Psalm 72:8).

The first resurrection of Revelation 20 in connection with the fall of the Anti-christ and of all false and idolatrous systems and the binding of Satan, is a spiritual resurrection. The fulness of the Gentiles has now come and the ingathering of the Jews, which the Word of God declares shall be as life from the dead. Witnesses shall be raised in all lands, for this resurrection is universal, to uphold and to defend and to glory in the glorious truths and doctrines for which the martyrs in former ages laid down their lives. Truth will now prevail. Error, idolatry and iniquity will hide their face for shame. All this shall be accomplished through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in rich measure. It is through His Word and Spirit that Christ quickens sinners dead in trespasses and in sins. It is not by His coming in Person again to this world to sit on a throne in the literal city of Jerusalem that these glorious days will be ushered in. Christ is now ruling and reigning in His Jerusalem, in His Cause in the world, for He is King of Zion. He will then reign gloriously, for His glory shall then cover the earth as the waters cover the face of the deep. The fanciful interpretations of Premillenarians that Christ is to come down to this world to rule on a throne in the city of Jerusalem would involve a second humiliation for Him. The days of His humiliation are forever at an end. His second coming, as the Word of God makes clear, is at the last day when He shall appear to judge the world in righteousness, justice to give each one.

In chapter 21 the vision of the holy city, the new Jerusalem, is the Church in her millennial glory in this world. We are told in verse 2 that John sees this glorious city “coming down from God out of heaven,” and in verse 10 that he saw “that great city, the holy

Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God”. “And the nations of them which are saved,” we read in verse 24, “shall walk in the light of it; and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.” The New Testament Jerusalem, the Church of Christ, has now become, as promised, a praise in the earth. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit full and copious as a river—a pure river of water of life clear as crystal proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb will effect this change in the nations of the earth, blessing and accompanying the Word of God read and preached with His quickening and enlightening power, for the leaves of the tree of life will be for the healing of the nations. (Rev. 22:2).

We have endeavoured to outline the primary meaning of our text—Christ’s victory over the enemies of His Cause, and the subsequent success and prosperity of His Cause in the world. We may also consider Christ’s treading the winepress alone as bringing before us His obedience unto death in working out salvation for lost and perishing sinners. Through the Fall all mankind are exposed to all the miseries of this life, to death itself and to the pains of hell forever. The word of God declares us to be, as we are by nature, children of disobedience and heirs of wrath. The winepress of the holy wrath of God would have been the portion of the whole race of Adam in eternity, had not God in His infinite mercy and love purposed, according to the good pleasure of His will to save a number which no man can number out of all nations, and kindreds, and people and tongues. It was to this end that He sent His only and eternally begotten Son into the world, that as their Surety and Substitute He would in their room and stead endure the wrath and curse due to their sins. The glory of working out the plan of redemption devised in the counsels of the Godhead before the foundation of the world belongs to Christ alone. He trod the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with Him.

We shall endeavour to consider: (1) The winepress which He

trod; (2) His treading of it; (3) The victory which He obtained, for it is as a triumphant conqueror He is here seen returning from the scene of conflict.

(1) The Truth speaks of the winepress of the wrath of God. It is the place where His wrath is made known. The destruction of the old world with the flood and of Sodom and Gomorrah, the cities of the plain with fire and brimstone from heaven, are solemn manifestations and examples of the wrath of God. These were winepresses of His wrath in this world. But the great winepress of His wrath, where His wrath is everlastingly made known, is in a lost and undone eternity. Hell is the great winepress of the wrath of God. It is called the great winepress of His wrath. It is the wrath of God Almighty. "Who knows the power of God's wrath?" Nothing can resist it nor stand before it. None can stand before God when He is angry. It is everlasting wrath—the consuming fire of God's holiness and justice coming forth in the way of righteous condemnation and judgment upon the finally impenitent. When countless millions of years have run their course, it shall still be, and will unendingly continue to be the wrath which is to come. From this wrath which our sins deserve we are warned to flee. "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain: escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed" (Gen. 19:17). "Because there is wrath, beware lest He take thee away with His stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee" (Job 36:18).

Instead of fleeing to the Saviour, the alone refuge from the wrath which is to come, sinners live carelessly, securely and indifferently. How solemn the thought that the Christless sinner is every moment of his life, awake or asleep in danger of being cast into hell. These are solemn realities. Beware lest, when it is forever too late, and the door of mercy is shut, that you come to realise them. How awesome the question "Who among us shall dwell with devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" (Isaiah 33:14). It is

in Christ alone there is shelter and safety for us. He is the One who in the sufferings and obedience of His life and death trod the winepress alone. He alone can save us from the wrath which is to come. And none perish that Him trust.

(2) The treading of the Winepress. Christ here says, "I have trodden the winepress alone." And when did He begin treading it? He began treading it when He took our nature in the womb of the Virgin, as it is only in the human nature He could suffer. The treading of the winepress in the room of His people implies the whole course of His obedience unto death. He was obedient unto death even the death of the cross, rendering, in His life, to the holy law of God which they had broken, perfect and sinless obedience, and full satisfaction in His death to the penalty of the law which they had incurred. He was treading it alone when for forty days He was tempted of Satan in the wilderness. He was treading it alone in Gethsemane when He was in such agony of soul, that His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. He was then coming in sight of Calvary where He was to endure in His soul and body the fierceness of the wrath of God as the righteous Judge, inflicting in inflexible justice the penalty of the law for sin.

In the light of the agony and the sweat of blood of the Redeemer in Gethsemane, how awful must the treading of the winepress of the wrath of God have been on Calvary! He was treading it alone when arrested by the soldiers. "Then all His disciples forsook Him and fled." He was treading it alone when, before Caiaphas the high priest and the Sanhedrin of the Jews, He was accused, maligned, buffeted and spat on.

He was treading it alone when brought before Pilate the Roman governor, scourged by the Roman soldiers, mockingly arrayed in a scarlet robe, a crown of thorns put on His head, and a reed in His right hand. He was treading it alone in the depths of His

sufferings on Calvary. "I looked for one to pity Me, but none I found: comforters found I none." (Ps. 69). None of the people, no finite being could tread where He was treading. The winepress of the wrath of God would have swallowed them up. Christ alone, Deity incarnate, could offer the sacrifice which alone could atone for sin and satisfy all the claims of law and justice, the sacrifice which God in His infinite love provided. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (I John 4:10).

(3) We shall now notice the victory which He obtained. He is seen by the prophet returning as a conqueror from the scene of conflict. We read that through His cross He spoiled principalities and powers and triumphed over them. By His death He destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil. Satan is a vanquished foe.

Christ triumphed over death, hell and the grave. It is in virtue of His victory that His ransomed church on the morning of the resurrection will have the triumphant song: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" It is in connection with treading the winepress alone that Christ could say, "I have glorified Thee on the earth, and I have finished the work Thou gavest Me to do." He made reconciliation for iniquity and brought in an everlasting righteousness. "But this man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Hebrews 7:24, 25).

There are incontestable proofs that He obtained the victory,

(a) His resurrection from the dead on the third day is the great proof that the sacrifice which He offered, when He offered Himself, was of infinite value and efficacy to make the one and only atonement for sin. "He was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification." (Romans 4:25). By His resurrection too, from the dead,

He was declared and proved to be the Son of God with power, the Second Person of the ever- adorable Trinity, the One who ever was, is, and shall be the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His Person.

(b) He is said to be glorious in His apparel. By His apparel we may understand His human nature, the robe or apparel in which in the days of His flesh He trod the winepress alone. Not only did God as a God of Peace raise Him from the dead, but glorified Him in the human nature with that glory which He had with the Father before the world was. That body that was buffeted, spat on, scourged and crucified, that image that was marred more than the face of any man, has now a glory and a brightness that far exceeds the light of the sun. His soul that was exceeding sorrowful unto death, that was often grieved and wounded and that reached depths of desertion unknown to any of His people, is now full to overflowing with joy unspeakable. "And thou hast with thy countenance made Him exceeding glad." (Psalm 21:6).

(c) He is said to be "travelling in the greatness of His strength." How glorious He was when travelling in the greatness of His strength in His ascension to God's right hand, leading captivity captive, and entering into heaven not with the blood of bulls and of goats but with His own blood having obtained eternal redemption for us. His glorious ascension was and shall be the song of His Church:

"Thou hast, O Lord most glorious,  
Ascended up on high;  
And in triumph victorious led  
captive captivity:  
Thou hast received gifts for men,  
For such as did rebel;  
Yea, ev'n for them, that God the Lord  
In midst of them might dwell." (Psalm 68:18).

“He is travelling in the greatness of His strength” we may say, in fulfilling the purposes of God in providence and in grace. He is ruling in the midst of His enemies, making willing, in spite of all the powers of darkness, a people in a day of His power, for He is a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. He shall strike through kings that do Him withstand, and He shall judge among the heathen. He shall not faint nor fail, as we have already noticed, until He has established judgment in the earth and the isles shall wait for His law. He is travelling in the greatness of His strength in ruling in a most holy, wise and powerful manner over all His creatures and all their actions.

It is to Christ as the risen and glorified Head of the Church that the words apply. “The Lord God omnipotent reigneth”. He is travelling in the greatness of His strength toward the time when He shall bring down the power of the Anti-Christ, and Mohammed the false prophet, and all the false sects and systems which deceive and delude sinners for eternity. He is travelling in the greatness of His strength to the ushering in of the latter day glory, when the knowledge of His glory shall cover the earth as the waters cover the face of the deep. The promise of the Father to the Son as the reward of His obedience shall be fulfilled.

“Ask of Me and for heritage  
The heathen I’ll make Thine;  
And, for possession, I to Thee  
Will give earth’s utmost line.” (Psalm 2:8).

The prayer and desire of His people therefore is “The whole earth let His glory fill, Amen so let it be” (Psalm 72:19).

(d) A further proof of His victory is to be found in His own declaration—that He speaks in righteousness and that He is mighty to save.

He speaks in righteousness in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. What He speaks is true, for He is the faithful and true witness, and all that He has spoken and revealed as recorded from Genesis to Revelation is divinely inspired, infallible and inerrant.

He speaks in righteousness in the dispensation of His providence, for He is just in all His ways, holy in His works all. "The Lord's voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it." (Micah 6:9).

He speaks in righteousness when He declares that He is mighty to save. He is able to save to the uttermost. What proofs we have of His power to save! He saved Manasseh who caused the streets of Jerusalem to run red with the blood of God's people. He saved Mary Magdalene out of whom He cast seven devils. He saved the woman of Samaria. He saved the woman who was a sinner in the city. He saved Saul of Tarsus who was a blasphemer, a persecutor and injurious. He saved the thief on the cross at the eleventh hour. He has saved millions of our race who are now in glory, all trophies and proofs of the victory He obtained. And today He is saying to us, lost, self-destroyed and hell-deserving sinners though we be, "I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save." It is because He is mighty to save for He saves on the ground of the victory which He obtained and the righteousness which He wrought out. He is calling upon us to look to Him for salvation. It is salvation we need in view of death, judgment and eternity. Without salvation, whatever else we may possess, we shall perish eternally, and have our portion in the winepress of the wrath of God in a lost eternity. Christ is the salvation of His people. There is no salvation outside of Him.

He is speaking in righteousness when He says, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." (Isaiah 45:22).

(e) The actual bestowing of salvation, the imparting of eternal life to sinners dead spiritually, without hope and without God



in the world, is proof that He obtained the victory. He speaks of such in verse 8 of this chapter (63) as His people, children that will not lie, and that He is their Saviour. There was a day when they were not His people, when they were the children of wrath even as others. It is through being born again, quickened by His Word and Spirit and united to Him by the faith which is of the Holy Spirit's operation that they become His children. They were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And as proof that they were born again they received Christ, and they rest upon Him alone for salvation as He is freely offered in the Gospel.

"They are children who will not lie," (v. 8) for the truth is in them. There are many who profess that they will not lie, and yet who are not the children of God. We may mention some respects in which the children of God will not lie. They will not lie in denying the reality of hell and of the eternal torments of the lost. All who deny these solemn doctrines are liars in God's sight. They are not His children. Whatever their profession they are bastards and not sons. (Heb. 12:8) Those who are His children believe them, because they came to see in the day the Holy Spirit convinced them of their sin and misery, that God would be just in their eternal damnation.

The children of God will not lie in holding and believing that any sinner can by any merit or power of his own procure salvation. Man by nature believes that he can or will do in the future what will save his soul. The Holy Spirit in His effectual work burned that lie out of the souls of those who are His children. In His effectual call the Holy Spirit will not leave as much as a sigh or a groan with the sinner in the way of merit. The children of God have become dead to the law as a covenant. They believe the truth, and no lie is of the truth, that by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified in God's sight.

To all who are God's children Christ is precious in the glory of His Person and in His offices as Prophet, Priest and King. All that pertains to Christ is precious to them, His Word, His Day, His Cause and His people. A godly man once said in the past when speaking to the Question, that whatever change a person might profess to have undergone, unless there was love to the Lord's Day in that person's soul and the love manifested in seeking to keep the Sabbath holy, he could not believe that the conversion and profession of that person was genuine. As in matters of the world so also in religion. "All that glitters is not gold."

(f) The last proof we shall mention is the assurance that the Lord gives to His own that they shall be more than conquerors through Him that loved them. The Captain of their salvation will give them the victory He procured for them. They are an afflicted and poor people, but in all their afflictions He was afflicted, for in treading the winepress alone He was tempted and afflicted in all points as they are yet without sin. He has a fellow feeling with them, and assures them that out of all their afflictions and temptations He will deliver them. He is leading them in a right way, to make Himself, as we are told in this chapter "a glorious name." Their troubles and trials are to His glory and what is to His glory must be to their good. They are not unto death but for the glory of God that the Son of God may be glorified thereby. "Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the Lord thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go." (Isaiah 48:17).

Are they not a blessed and a happy people whose God is the Lord?

We shall conclude by quoting the invitation which Moses extended to Hobab when the children of Israel were on their journey to the land of promise, "We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel" (Numbers

10:29). May we all be found followers of them who through faith and patience are now inheriting the promises. And if followers of them it is through faith in Him who is the divine Redeemer, of whom we read that this Man receiveth sinners and who says “him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out.”

*Preached in Gisborne NZ on 20th December 1964*

# AND THE DOOR WAS SHUT

Matthew 25:10

**T**he Gospel according to Matthew, chapter 25, verse 10—“And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage; and the door was shut.” In particular the words, “and the door was shut.”

In the first part of the chapter we have the Parable of the Ten Virgins. “The kingdom of heaven is likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.” By the kingdom of heaven in this place we are not to understand the kingdom of glory, for there are no foolish virgins in the kingdom of glory. The kingdom of heaven is Christ’s kingdom or church in this world.

My kingdom, Christ says, is not of this world. It is in the world, but not of it. Christ had a kingdom in this world from the beginning. There was the Old Testament dispensation or administration of the kingdom, but when Christ, the King Himself, came in the flesh, and when He began His public ministry, He was calling upon men to repent because the kingdom of heaven was at hand—that is the New Testament dispensation of the kingdom. The Old Testament dispensation administered through sacrifices and types—a dispensation which was largely typical—was to pass away through His own death and His resurrection, and the kingdom—the New Testament dispensation of the kingdom—set up.

After His resurrection He showed Himself alive for forty days to His apostles, to whom He gave commandments and spake to them concerning the kingdom of God. The commandments which He gave, during these forty days, were in connection with the kingdom of God, the New Testament Church in this world. This dispensation of the kingdom is to remain until the end of time, as we find the Apostle saying to the Hebrews: “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire.” And in this kingdom, the kingdom of heaven, or in other words, the visible Church in the world, we have, as Christ here points out, the two classes—the wise and the foolish virgins or, as in other parables, the wheat and the tares, the sheep and the goats. We have these two classes in the kingdom.

Now in connection with the words of our text, “and the door was shut,” we may in the first place make a few remarks about the door here mentioned. The words imply that the door was open, but now, when the midnight call came, that is at death, the door was shut. We may make a few remarks about the door here mentioned and the opening of this door.

In the second place, those who are to be shut out. There will be those who will enter in at death—those who are wise.

“They shall be brought with gladness great,  
And mirth on every side,  
Into the palace of the King,  
And there they shall abide.”

But there are those, and this is what will meet them at death, a shut door, “And the door was shut.” We shall notice, therefore, the character of those who shall be shut out who shall meet with this solemn truth at death “and the door was shut”, and the character

of those who shall enter in. In the last place we may make a few remarks about what is implied in the door being shut.

First of all, the door, which is here mentioned, is the door of the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. Christ is the door, for it is in Christ that God is merciful. It is in Christ that God receives sinners. It is in Christ that He is a Saviour.

Christ is set before sinners as a door of hope, a door of mercy, and a door of salvation, as He Himself declares, "I am the door, by Me if any man enter in he shall be saved and shall go in and out and find pasture." Now in connection with Christ being a door of Salvation in the everlasting Gospel, we may notice first of all that there was a door of life set before Adam in a state of innocence in the promise of the Covenant, "Do this and thou shalt live." If Adam continued to give the obedience which God required in terms of the covenant which the Lord made with him, then Adam and his posterity, the whole human race, would be confirmed in a state of innocency. They would enter into full possession of the life promised in the covenant. This door of life, of eternal life and felicity, was set before Adam and the human race in him, in the promise of the covenant. But we see how Adam by sinning against God and breaking the covenant, closed the door of life, and opened the door of death—spiritual, temporal and eternal death—the death threatened in the covenant. The Lord said, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," and Adam, by sinning against God, closed the door of life and opened the door of death and the door of hell for himself and for his posterity. Accordingly when we are born into this world our faces are set on the door of death.

Every moment that is passing is bringing us nearer the door of death, and if we are Christless, nearer to the door of hell, for death will be the door for Christless sinners into a lost eternity. God could have left all mankind in that condition, but in His mercy and love He had a purpose of mercy towards lost and perishing sinners, that

He would open a door of life for them in the second Adam, the Lord from Heaven, His only begotten Son. That door, as a door of hope, of mercy and of salvation, was first opened and set before Adam and Eve in the first promise. Christ in the promise was the door, the door of salvation. Christ was also set forth as the door of hope and of salvation, in the sacrifices and the types of the Old Testament, all of which pointed to Christ as the only name given under heaven among men whereby we can be saved. All who were saved in Old Testament times were saved through entering in by Christ, the door. He was the only door of salvation set forth in the promises and the types, and all who were saved, were saved through faith in Him as the One who was to come.

It is when He did come, and when He offered Himself as a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice on Calvary's accursed tree—when He cried on the cross “It is finished”—that the door was actually opened, that atonement was made for sin.

When He cried “It is finished” we read that the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, indicating among other things, that a new and living way was now opened up. Christ in the Gospel is set before us as the door of salvation. This door is not set before the angels who kept not their first estate. It is not set before sinners in a lost eternity. The door of mercy is forever closed upon them. It is to those to whom the Gospel comes that Christ is setting an open door, as He declares, “Behold, I have set before thee an open door and no man can shut it.”

He is the door that is set before us and we are called upon to strive to enter in. He, as the door of salvation, calls upon sinners to strive to enter in while it is yet called today for the door shall not always be open. “Now,” He says, “is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.” We ought to be seeking to enter in while it is called today, lest death will find us, as it found the foolish virgins who, with all their profession, never entered in through faith in Christ, and when

death came it was a shut door that confronted them. How solemn the words “and the door was shut”! And the door was shut, and shut for all eternity, but it is an open door that is now set before us in the everlasting Gospel.

We shall notice in the second place those who shall be shut out at death. The Word of God makes it clear who they are that shall be shut out: all who die in their sins shall be shut out. We find the Apostle, in writing to the Galatians, making mention of the fruits of the flesh; he gives a long list of divers sins, and he goes on to say that they who do these things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Those who go on living in these sins shall be shut out at death. He says the same in his First Epistle to the Corinthians—“Be not deceived”,—“neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.”

“Be not deceived”—that clearly shows that sinners deceive themselves. They think they can live in those sins and at last inherit the kingdom of God. In our day people are being deceived by persons in high places telling them that they can live in those sins and yet inherit the kingdom of God. But this is what the Holy Ghost through the apostle declares, “Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.” They shall be shut out at death unless they repent. The Lord Jesus Christ solemnly warns us that except we repent we shall assuredly perish. The apostle, in the case of the Corinthians to whom He was addressing these words, goes on to say “and such were some of you,” some of them were guilty of these sins, “but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.” And as the Lord washed away the sins of the



Corinthians, these terrible sinners, there is the same efficacy, and the same merit in His blood to cleanse from all sin.

But in this parable we shall notice that those who shall be shut out at death are spoken of as foolish virgins. They professed to be virgins, they professed to go forth to meet the bridegroom, and they fully expected that they too would enter in at death; but we see that when the midnight call came the door was shut, and they were shut out for all eternity. Now in connection with the character of the persons here mentioned who shall be shut out, we may notice some of the respects in which the wise and the foolish are similar. There are four respects in which they are similar. To all appearance the wise never suspected the foolish. They were similar in this respect that they all had the name of virgins. The foolish had the name of virgins as surely as the wise. We see that the apostate church of Rome is called the great harlot and the mother of harlots, and that, because she has corrupted and defiled the doctrines of God's Word.

When persons depart from the doctrines of God's Word and from His Worship, the Word of God calls that spiritual whoredom and harlotry, spiritual adultery. Now the church of Rome, at one time, was a virgin as she was when the apostle wrote his epistle, keeping to the truth and to the doctrines of the truth, and gave many martyrs for the truth. The catacombs of Rome are a standing witness to the numbers who laid down their lives for Christ, for the church of Rome pays tribute to these martyrs and canonizes them.

Nevertheless, she is not keeping to the doctrines for which these martyrs died. She has apostatized from the faith. She is a harlot in this respect, that she has corrupted and defiled the doctrines of the everlasting Gospel. She is called the mother of harlots. There are other churches which are harlots in that they are not pure virgins with respect to the doctrines of the Truth and to the mode of worship which God set up in His Church. But in the case of the foolish they had the name of virgins. They could not be accused of

having corrupted or departed from the doctrines of God's Word. They were sound in doctrine, and in their walk and conversation evidently showed that they honoured their profession outwardly. They had the name of virgins as surely as the wise.

Secondly, they were similar in this respect that they all went forth to meet the bridegroom. They all professed to be betrothed to the bridegroom—that Christ was their Saviour.

They also went forth in the way of a public profession, in the way of testifying and professing to be on His side. And thirdly, we see that they all had a lamp, the lamp of a public profession or the lamp of their hope, although in the case of the foolish the lamp was a false hope. We read that the hope of the hypocrite shall perish, his hope shall go out at death. But the righteous hath a hope in his death.

Now they had this lamp of a profession as surely as the wise had. It is the Lord who could see whether they had a true hope or not. They professed outwardly to have a hope and, as we mentioned, to all appearance the wise never suspected, but that they had the same hope as they had. But they proved that their hope was a false hope, that they were hypocrites, that they were self-deceived, for that is what the hypocrite very often means in the truth, persons who are self-deceived. Persons may try to throw dust in people's eyes and deliberately try to make out that they are what they are not. That is what we usually mean by a hypocrite. They are trying to get a name for themselves and a place for themselves, and if they get a name and place that is all that they are after, and they may go so far as to deceive the very elect. Well, these are certainly hypocrites in the strict sense of the term, but the term hypocrite is also applied to persons who deceive themselves, who are self-deceived and who, instead of having a good hope through grace, are entertaining a false hope which shall go out at death as the hope of the foolish virgins did.

Then they were similar in this respect that they all slumbered

and slept. By the slumbering and the sleeping of the wise virgins we are to understand their backsliding. They first slumbered instead of being lively in their graces, (perhaps the world and divers lusts got the upper hand of them) and instead of being lively in following the Lord they began to slumber. They got sleepy and at last they slept, but such backsliding will be made bitter to His own. They shall learn that it is an evil and a bitter thing to forsake the Lord. He shall awaken them and they shall hear His voice as surely as the Ephesians did, for it is to the saints in Ephesus that the words are addressed in the first place, “Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead”—“Come out from among them and be ye separate,” and “Christ shall give you light.”

The wise slumbered and slept and so did the foolish. This was a comfort to the foolish that they could see the wise slumbering and sleeping. The slumbering and sleeping of the wise however, was made bitter to them, and they could receive no consolation until the Lord restored to them the joy of His salvation, as we find the psalmist confessing “my soul He doth restore again and me to walk doth make within the paths of righteousness, ev’n for His own name’s sake.”

Those who are wise want their souls to be restored. But the foolish would say, ‘Oh well, the wise, the saints, in the Old Testament and the New fell and went astray.’ That is the plaster that they will put on their wounds, the short-comings and the failings of the Lord’s people. “Because they are like that” they say, “we are just like them; some of them have fallen farther than we have.” That is the source of their consolation. But that is no consolation to those who are wise. What will console and comfort their soul is the Lord’s restoring to them the joy of His salvation, His receiving them graciously, and His taking away their iniquity so that their souls are restored to walk again in the paths of righteousness.

But the foolish saw the wise slumbering and sleeping and therefore they excused themselves. They made excuses for their fallings and

their failings, and for their backsliding. But those who are wise cannot make excuses for themselves. They beat upon themselves and say, "My folly makes it so." Instead of trying to excuse themselves they will be making an open breast of their failings and of their fallings to the Lord, and seeking that He would cleanse them and receive them graciously. Desertion of soul and mourning an absent Lord are experiences to which the foolish virgins are strangers.

We shall now come to notice the respects in which they differed, and there are three respects, we believe, in which they differed. We see that in the case of the wise they took oil in their vessels with their lamps. The wise had an oil vessel along with their lamp. The foolish had just the lamp and whatever oil they had in the lamp, and however bright their lamps might appear for a time we see that when death came their lamps went out. They went out in despair and they were shut out. But there was this great difference between the wise and the foolish, that the wise had oil vessels along with their lamps. Then there was this difference, that it was the custom of the wise to go to them that sell to buy oil. They needed to have their lamps replenished with oil, and they went to them that sell. That was not the custom of the foolish. And thirdly, there was this respect in which they differed, that the wise were betrothed to the bridegroom of the Church, but the foolish, whatever profession they made, were never betrothed to Him.

In making a few remarks on these points of difference, we shall notice first of all that they differed in this respect that the wise had an oil vessel as well as having a lamp. We may say that the oil vessel which the wise had is the new creation, the effectual work of the Holy Spirit in the soul. The wise are those who are called effectually, "Whom He called them He also justified; whom He justified them He also glorified." That was true in the case of the wise. They entered glory at death, for they had the oil vessel of the effectual work of the Holy Ghost in their souls.

They had the Holy Spirit, for the Holy Spirit dwells in His own work, in the souls of those who are created anew in Christ Jesus. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His", for it is through His Word and Spirit that Christ dwells in the souls of His people. Now we see that the Holy Spirit is compared to oil, to an anointing or an unction. The apostle John in writing to the saints, to those who were wise, who were new creatures in Christ Jesus, says to them, "But ye have an unction," ye have an unction or anointing "from the Holy One and ye know all things."

And he also says, "but the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you", that is the spirit which they received, "and ye need not that any man teach you, but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him." They have this anointing that teacheth them of all things, that is, of all things pertaining to salvation, necessary for their eternal salvation.

They are inwardly taught and inwardly illuminated by the Holy Spirit. They have this unction. They have the Holy Spirit who teaches them, the Holy Spirit in His effectual work as distinct from the Holy Spirit in His common operations, for it was the Holy Spirit in His common operations that the foolish had, and under the influence of these common operations they went forth and took up the lamp of a profession and entertained the hope which they had, which proved to be a false hope. But in the case of those who are wise, they had the gracious and effectual teaching and working of the Holy Spirit. "Ye have an unction from the Holy One." They had this anointing which was teaching them and abiding with them.

We may notice some of the respects in which the wise have the Holy Spirit in His saving operations, in His effectual work, as distinct from those who have Him just in His common operations. And they have Him first of all, we might say, as the spirit of bondage. It is not as the oil of joy and gladness that they receive the Holy Spirit to

begin with, but as the spirit of bondage, convincing them of their sin and misery, giving them to see that they are in bondage to sin and to Satan. We read the spirit of bondage is the spirit of fear (Rom. 8.15). Fears come into their souls, fear of death. They now believe that death is appointed unto them, and after death, the judgment. Fear of hell. Fear of their sin, that their sins will bring them to a lost eternity. But above all, a fear that they shall not obtain Christ. There is that fear in connection with their being convinced of their sinnership and of their need of a Saviour. They fear that they may not find the Saviour. They find themselves in bondage and in darkness, in a prison, as it were, and need deliverance from that prison, that prison of bondage in which they are. Some are left in that condition longer than others. Some go through great depth of law work. Others are brought in more gently, as Lydia was. But there is in this spirit of bondage, fear and depression in the soul. The soul is not rejoicing in the Lord's salvation, but weighed down with divers fears, and afraid that no matter what reformation may take place, and does take place, that unless they have Christ they shall come short at last and perish eternally.

Those who have this anointing, who are savingly taught and who are made wise for eternity, have also the Holy Spirit as the spirit of illumination. He enlightens. In effectual calling the Holy Spirit not only convinces of sin and of misery, but He enlightens the mind in the knowledge of Christ. The person who is savingly taught is brought to realise his ignorance. Prior to this he may have been flattering himself in all the knowledge he had about Christ, and about the Scriptures, and about the doctrines of the Bible, how well informed he was. But now when he is being taught by the Holy Spirit, he comes to see how ignorant he is; that in spite of all the light he had in his head about Christ and about the doctrines of the truth, he has not got a spark in his heart, that he is ignorant of Christ.

The Holy Spirit as the spirit of illumination, illumines the sinner.

It is in His light that he sees how dark and how ignorant he is of the Lord Jesus Christ, whom to know is life eternal. Persons can speak with tongues of men and of angels, about the truth, and about Christ, and yet have only just common light, intellectual light, but when the Holy Spirit comes as the spirit of illumination, that person is brought to realise how ignorant he is, how dark he is, and his need of being enlightened. The language of his soul is "that I might know Him." The Lord's people will be conscious of their need of the Holy Spirit as the spirit of illumination as long as they are in this world. And they will be having the Holy Spirit as the spirit of bondage when they have sinned in convincing them of their sins.

But they have Him as the spirit of illumination. He sends His light forth and His truth into their souls. They find such a vail of ignorance on the eyes of their souls that they need light from heaven. They need the Holy Spirit as the spirit of illumination to open up the truth to them. They have also the Holy Spirit as the spirit of liberty. "Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ and renewing our wills, He doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to us in the Gospel." They have the Holy Spirit as the spirit of liberty and as the spirit of illumination, for it is as the spirit of illumination that He is the spirit of liberty, in giving them liberty of soul and freedom of soul, that strength to receive Christ as He is freely offered in the Gospel. He creates faith in the soul, and faith is light and faith is knowledge, and they are enabled to close in with Christ as He is freely offered in the Gospel.

When Christ meets with them they cannot but receive Christ and rest upon Him alone for salvation as their portion and hope for time and eternity. They have the Holy Spirit as the spirit of liberty and that is the spirit they would seek to have, that their souls would have this liberty in going forth unto Christ and living a life of faith upon Him.

They have the Holy Spirit, as the spirit of adoption. They are now adopted into God's family through being called effectually. They have the spirit of sons, and of daughters; they are the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty. They have the spirit of adoption. There is reverence in that spirit, there is love in that spirit, there is worship in that spirit, there is adoration in that spirit, there is thanksgiving in the spirit of adoption. They are now seeking to praise Him, "O Lord, I will praise Thee, though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away and Thou comfortedst me." There is praise and thanksgiving and reverence and godly fear, filial fear, in the spirit of adoption, so that they have the spirit of children, and come to God just as children to a father who is able and willing to help them. We have the spirit of adoption, we might say, in the petitions of the Lord's Prayer. It is there you find the spirit of adoption. All these petitions are the petitions of sons and daughters. "Hallowed be Thy name" they seek to hallow all that pertains to Him, they seek the coming of His kingdom and they seek daily bread, spiritual and temporal, from Him, for they see that He is the giver of every good and perfect gift, and they pray "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, for ever, Amen." You have just in the Lord's Prayer, the prayer He taught His disciples and which is the prayer of all who are His disciples, the spirit of adoption.

They have also the Holy Spirit as the spirit of holiness. As many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God, and He leads them in the highway of holiness so that they fully believe that without holiness no man shall see the Lord. Because they have Him as the spirit of holiness they have a daily consciousness, a continual consciousness of their own unholiness, and of their own sinfulness. They know in measure the plague of their own hearts, and their daily cry is "create a clean heart, Lord, renew a right spirit me within," and



“Do thou with hyssop sprinkle me,  
I shall be cleansed so;  
Yea, wash Thou me, and then I shall  
be whiter than the snow.”

Ps. 51.

They seek to run in the way of His commandments, for the law is holy, just and good. The precepts of the Gospel are just the spirituality of the law opened up by the Holy Spirit. Some people maintain that the Lord's people are not under the law as a rule of life. Because they have been delivered from the condemnation of the law, they think that they have been delivered also from the law as a rule of life. But the apostle says that we are under the law to Christ. They maintain that believers are not under the law—under the Ten Commandments, as their rule of life, but under the precepts of the Gospel. But what are the precepts of the Gospel but just the law, the law in its spirituality, opened up in the Scriptures.

“Thy law,” said the psalmist, “is exceeding broad.” It is the desire of the wise to run in the way of His precepts, in the way of His commandments. Having the Holy Spirit as the spirit of holiness, they are brought to see that holiness becomes His house and all His service, and that His Day is holy. They find out that the claims of God's holy Day are binding upon them. You find people making great claims. They speak about “Holiness Movements” and a person is reckoned holy if he gives up smoking and drinking and going to dances and pictures and so on. All that is perfectly true of those who are taught by the Holy Spirit, but in the estimation of the foolish these are the main things, as it were.

When it comes however, to the claims of God's holy Day, as the day which He has appointed to be the memorial of Christ's resurrection from the dead, they do not seem to have any consciousness about

these claims. Where the Lord writes His law in the heart, and He does that in regeneration, there is a love to the Lord's Day as the day set apart for worshipping God, and as a day that commemorates Christ's resurrection from the dead. Now, where there is no love to the Sabbath, there is no grace in the heart. Persons can make their own 'Holiness Movements' and have their own standards about worshipping God and Sunday-keeping, as they term it, but this is the crucial test, where there is no love for God's holy Day, when persons can play fast and loose with the divine claims respecting His Day, they prove they are graceless. They are but foolish virgins, whatever their profession. They put their own pleasures before the claims of God's holy Day, and they put their own profit before the claims of God's holy Day, but where the Holy Spirit is, as the spirit of holiness, that person is led to say with the apostle that the things which are gain to him, whatever gain he might have had, and pleasure he might have had in connection with the way in which he observed the Sabbath in the days of his ignorance, he now counts these as loss and as dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord.

He acknowledges Christ as Lord, and as Lord of the Sabbath, as He Himself claims "The Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath." Those who profess the lordship of Christ and who have no respect for the day which in a special way sets forth His lordship, are by their works denying Christ. But all in whom the Holy Spirit is as the spirit of holiness, seek to keep the Sabbath holy and thereby give to Christ that place which He claims and which is His due as Lord of the Sabbath. They also acknowledge Him as Lord in His own house. They believe that holiness becomes His house and all His service, and they seek to honour Him in refusing to admit into His house either in the way of doctrine or worship what He has not authorised in His Word. The anointing which they have teaches them to own and acknowledge and honour Christ as Lord of the

Sabbath and as Lord in His own house. As Lord of the Sabbath He makes it clear how He would have His Day honoured. "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." (Isaiah 58:13, 14).

The anointing teaches those who are wise to have the spirit that was in Christ Jesus. "Learn of Me," He says, "for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." It is in drinking in of His Spirit and in seeking to be of the meek and the lowly that they will be finding rest for their souls. It is the proud, the revengeful, the self-centred spirit they are of, as they are by nature, which so often robs them of their rest and liberty and fills their souls with darkness and bitterness. But they are taught to hear what God the Lord doth speak. "O that thou hadst hearkened to My commandments! Then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea."

Those who are wise have the Holy Spirit as a Spirit of Truth. He is not the spirit of error nor the spirit of delusion. The anointing which they have teaches them to abide in the Truth, and to try the spirits whether they be of God. They are kept from the religious delusions which abound in our day. They are led by the Spirit of God and are found therefore going forth in the footsteps of the flock, seeking to be found in the "old paths" trodden by the true Church of God in every age and generation. New-fangled doctrines and new ways of worship are from Satan as an angel of light. But the wise are kept from the religious delusions which abound in our day. The foolish who do not receive the truth in the love of it are given over by God

in His righteous judgment for their forsaking the truth, “to strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believed not the Truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” (2 Thessalonians 2:11, 12). What need we have in this day of delusion and error to give heed to the exhortation, “Buy the truth and sell it not!”

Where you find a person who has the Holy Spirit as the spirit of bondage, of illumination, of liberty, of adoption, as the spirit of holiness and as the spirit of truth, you have there a person who has the anointing that teaches of all things (1 John 2:27). You have there one who has the oil vessel which the wise have. You have there a person who is betrothed to Christ, one whose soul is bound up in the promise, “Thy maker is thy husband, the Lord of hosts is His name, and thy redeemer is the Holy One of Israel, the God of the whole earth shall He be called.”

The next respect in which they differ is that it was the custom of the wise to go to them that sell. We see that when the midnight call came and the foolish began to realise that their lamps were going out they said to the wise “give us of your oil.” They replied, “Not so lest there be not enough for us and you.” We have just what will do for ourselves; we are afraid that we may not have what will do us. Lest we should not have enough, you had better go to them who sell. Now this shows that there was this difference between the wise and foolish, that the wise were accustomed to go to them that were selling oil, that they were a poor people and a people dependent upon the Lord. It is the Lord that sells. He sells without money and without price. He is calling upon people to buy of Him—wine and milk, without money and without price. All the blessings of redemption are offered to us freely without money and without price. The fact that it was true of the foolish that they were not in the habit of going to buy shows that they were self-sufficient.

They were not poured from vessel to vessel, a poor and a needy people needing to go to the Lord to supply their spiritual needs and to uphold them. They fully believed they were going to heaven as surely as the wise. They were not harassed by doubts and fears nor praying to the Lord "Say unto my soul I am thy salvation." They were self-sufficient. They were increased in goods, in their own estimation, spiritual goods, and in need of nothing. But those who are the wise, are a poor people and a needy people and are dependent upon the Lord, and they go to Him that sells. He sells in the Truth. He sells in the public means of grace. That is why it is said that the Ministry is for the edifying of the body of Christ, for the edification of His mystical body, that the members thereof might be edified and built up in their most holy faith. Christ in the Gospel, and in the preaching of the Gospel, is there selling without money and without price.

The blessings of the Gospel are free, and those who are of the poor and needy will be coming and seeking for oil, seeking for spiritual food, seeking for the blessings they stand in need of, seeking for the Holy Spirit who is compared to oil. Their desire is that they would get a fresh baptism—an anointing in their soul. They feel themselves withered and dried and they need a fresh anointing of the oil of gladness in their souls' experience. Now the preaching of the Gospel is spoken of in the Word of God as the ministration of the Spirit. The Spirit of God maketh the reading but especially the preaching of the Word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort, through faith unto salvation. It is the ministration of the Spirit. Those who are of the wise seek to be where Christ has promised to be, through His Word and Spirit. "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them," and they are coming, hoping to get what will revive and refresh their souls. They feel themselves poor and

needy and there are times when they are revived and refreshed in the means of grace, and they go on their way rejoicing.

Although they would receive manna today for their souls they are as needy again the next day to receive again out of His fulness. They are not like the foolish who show that they are self-sufficient, and who do not need to be waiting on the means of grace. When you see persons who profess to have a hope and hoping to go to heaven at last and, at the same time, are not in the path of duty with respect to the command of the Lord, “not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together,” who are not seeking Him where He has promised to be, and who are not coming with an empty vessel to receive out of His fulness, then this will be true concerning them when death comes, that the hope which they have will begin to go out. They will then be crying for the prayers of the Lord’s people and saying “give us of your oil.” But it is now too late. They allowed the day of grace to pass, deceived by Satan in this way, that they had what would stand them. Oh, how awful to be self-deceived for eternity! When death comes, when the midnight call comes, and the darkness of death and despair is closing in upon their souls, they are now crying but it is forever too late. The door is shut and they are shut out for all eternity.

In the last place there is the curse of God in the closing of the door. When He closes the door He is, in effect, saying to that person, “Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.” There is the wrath of God in the closing of the door. It is closed in wrath. There is eternal despair in the closing of the door. The door is eternally shut and how solemn the words “and the door was shut”, “and the door was shut”. How we should be seeking while it is yet called today to be of those who are seeking to buy, coming as poor and needy sinners to the Saviour, crying for mercy and seeking that we would receive of His own Holy Spirit as He says, “if ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto

your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit unto them that ask Him.” “And the spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.” (Rev. 22:17)

*Preached in Gisborne NZ 4th July 1965*

## THE ONE THING NEEDFUL

*“But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”*

Luke 10:42

**I**n verse 38 we read that Christ and His disciples entered into a certain village, and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. The village was Bethany,—and in the house of Martha, her sister Mary and her brother Lazarus, Christ received hospitality. We read that Christ loved Martha and Mary and her brother Lazarus. They were all loved by the Saviour, and they showed their love and devotion to Christ and to His disciples by keeping an open door for them; by entertaining them when they came to Bethany. When the Lord opens the heart He opens the house. That was true in the case of Lydia. When the Lord opened her heart, she opened her house to the disciples of the Lord. That is true still. Where there is an open heart there will be an open house and an open purse, as the late Mr. Macfarlane said, “If it is not possible to open the house, the purse will be open.” The confession of those whose hearts have been opened is: “All things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.” I Chron. 29:14. All that they have is from the Lord, and whatsoever they give the Lord is what the Lord has given them. But where there is not an open purse to the cause



of Christ, it is to be greatly feared that the heart was never in truth opened; for it is in the nature of the grace of love to give. As it is the nature of faith to receive, it is the nature of love to give; and to seek to give to the Lord, and to His cause, and to His people.

We read of Mary that she sat at Jesus' feet. It was not Mary only who sat at Jesus' feet, Martha and Lazarus also sat at Jesus' feet. To sit at someone's feet is a Hebrew expression. It means to be a pupil or disciple. The apostle Paul sat at the feet of Gamaliel; in other words, he received teaching and instruction from him. That was true of Martha, Mary and Lazarus; they were all disciples of Christ, sitting at His feet and learning of Him.

But on this particular occasion when Christ was in the house and opening up to them the everlasting Gospel, we see that Martha was cumbered about much serving. When Christ began his discourse, Mary left the household duties and sat down at Jesus' feet to hear the gracious words that were proceeding from His mouth. It was not every day she would have such a blessed opportunity of hearing the Saviour preach the everlasting Gospel. But Martha, on the other hand, was so troubled about the serving—so much had to be done, so many guests had to be attended on—that she could not see her way to leave the matters that were a concern to her mind and to sit down. She was in quite a bustle with all that had to be done. She thought it was her duty to attend to those things. She was so confident that she was in the path of duty regarding the serving, that she came to the Lord and said to Him, "Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me."

But then we have Christ's answer. "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things": things that were lawful and good in themselves. "But one thing is needful" that we are to be supremely concerned with. However lawful and good other matters may be in their own place, they will last but for a season; they will pass away. They constitute but a temporary portion. But this is the

one thing needful. This good part shall never be taken from those who make choice of it.

And therefore, in the first place, we may notice a few things about the one thing needful. Christ here speaks of one thing needful. He speaks of it also as that good part which shall not be taken from those who make choice of it. In the second place we shall notice a few things implied in making choice of the one thing needful. And in the third place we shall make a few remarks about the assurance which Mary got at this time; that she had made choice of that good part that would not be taken from her. It was an assurance from the lips of the Saviour.

I. A few remarks, in the first place, on the one thing needful; that good part which shall never be taken from those who make choice of it. The Word of God makes clear what that one thing needful is: the one thing needful in view of death and eternity, is to have Christ as our portion.—as our Saviour; to be found in Him. “He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” 1 John 5:12. He may have health; he may have wealth; he may have a good home; he may have prospects, he may have worldly success. He may have all his heart’s desire; all that this world can give him; but “he that hath not the Son of God hath not life”. He hath not the one thing needful. He is without God and without hope in the world. What a sad state for a person to be in! Engrossed and encumbered and taken up with the world and its ways; things lawful in themselves; expecting success and all worldly happiness and worldly prosperity; and across his life and all that he has, the Holy Spirit writing these solemn words: “Without God and without hope in the world”!

Christ is here declaring to us in the Gospel this one thing needful. However encumbered we may be with the things which are lawful and good in themselves, it is to this our attention is called by the Lord in His Truth: this one thing needful. How solemn the thought, if we die without the one thing needful! This is the only preparation

that will stand us for death and for eternity: that we have Christ as the portion of our souls; that we would be enabled to say "The lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him". Lam. 3:24. How solemn if death finds us without the one thing needful! How many there are in this day to whom death comes unexpectedly: to young and old and middle-aged; and it is to be feared in the case of many that they go to eternity without the one thing needful. Death will put a separation between us and all that we may have now; all that we are setting our hearts upon, and that we think so much of, and see as so needful! But when death comes we must part with all. And the Lord Who is yet to be our Judge is here saying to us: "One thing is needful" and also saying to us: "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Mark 8:36-37.

We are in danger of dying without the one thing needful. We can be so engrossed by the lawful things—by our daily concerns—and neglectful of the one thing needful. The rich man who prospered in this world said he would pull down his barns and build greater, and he said to his soul, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years." He had a good bank account; he prospered well on his farm, and he was now going to retire. He had much laid up for many years. "Now, take thine ease; eat, drink and be merry." 'Enjoy your leisure time now.' He was promising himself many years; he must have been a pretty healthy man. To all appearances he would live many years yet. But the Lord said: "Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee." He was a fool spiritually. However wise he was in connection with his worldly concerns, he was a fool as far as the salvation of his soul and the one thing needful were concerned. What a night it was for that poor man when his soul plunged into outer darkness! He died in his sins. He died in despair.

And that is our danger. We know not what a day nor an hour may bring forth; and these solemn words come to us to warn of

the uncertainty of our time. We may be promising ourselves many things like this man; but it is what the Lord says that shall stand. Therefore we are called upon to prepare ourselves. "Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel." Amos 4:12. 'Thou shalt surely die and not live.' And this is the only preparation that will stand us; that we have the one thing needful. Every other thing, however needful and good, will leave us at death. But as Christ says; "Whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord." Proverbs 8:35.

Those who have the one thing needful have what will stand them. They are a happy people; they alone are a happy people. "Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places." Deut. 33:29. They only are a blessed people, whose God is the Lord; who have the Lord as the portion of their souls. Whatever trials and tribulations they may have to endure in this life, they have the promise in connection with these, "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Rom. 8:28. When Christ here calls upon us to seek the one thing needful, He calls upon us to seek Himself. He is "that good part" that shall not be taken from those who make choice of Him.

We are called upon to seek Him. "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Isaiah 55:6-7.

These gracious invitations are extended to us, that we might be found turning to the Lord and not halting, as others were, between two opinions. As the Lord said to Israel through His prophet Elijah: "How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him." I Kings 18:21. It is either the Lord

or Baal: it is Christ and the salvation that is in Him, or the pleasures of sin which are but for a season. There is one thing needful; and those who make choice of that good part find it to be a portion that shall never be taken from them.

II. We shall in the second place notice a few things implied in the making of this choice. The Lord says to Peter: "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." John 13:8. The choice of "that good part" is the fruit of the washing wherewith Christ washes those who are His people. The choice is a fruit of this washing which is, as the Truth declares: "the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost". Titus 3:5. The renewing of the Holy Ghost IS the washing of regeneration: the soul being renewed in the spirit of his mind through the gracious and efficacious teaching of the Holy Spirit. The work of the Holy Spirit is described as a washing, a renewing and an ingrafting. His gracious work is brought before us in different metaphors in the Scriptures.

This washing—the renewing of the Holy Ghost—is the effectual call of the Holy Spirit. Apart from His effectual call and work, no sinner can come to Christ. He Himself declares that; "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." John 6:44. The drawing of the Father, as Christ goes on to point out, is the teaching of the Father through the Spirit whom He sends; who is sent by the Father and by the Son; for all who are God's children are taught by Him. The making of this choice (of the good part that shall not be taken from us) is bound up with the gracious teaching, the effectual work, of the Holy Spirit. Regarding His work we read, that He convinces of sin and of misery. The sinner is brought to see that he is a sinner; and is convinced that all he has—however good and lawful his portion in this world—will not stand him for eternity. He is convinced that unless he has Christ as his portion, that he shall die in despair, and that his portion in eternity will be with the devil and his angels.

These convictions lay hold of the mind of the person who was taught by the Holy Spirit. He does not know it was the Holy Spirit who was teaching him, but he comes to see the vanity of all that this world can give. And this is brought home to him: “one thing is needful”.

Now in connection with the Holy Spirit convincing him of sin: some go through great terrors of mind. In the case of others, their conviction is deep and calm. It is a sure evidence of conviction wrought in the soul: if we are brought to this: ‘Well, if I die in this condition, I shall perish eternally,’ We must not think that the terrors which the Philippian gaoler and others experienced are always connected with the convincing work of the Holy Spirit. There is a certain terror of mind, a fear that the person may perish eternally. But a person may be assured of that in his soul without being distracted outwardly. The necessary conviction of sin is, that the sinner is convinced that whatever he may have; whatever knowledge he may have; and however circumspect he may be; and whatever good things he may have in this life; apart from being found in Christ and having Christ, he shall perish eternally. He has that conviction, and nothing will meet the need he now feels in his soul—except the one thing needful. Nothing that this world or any finite creature can give him can meet that need. He may get friendship from the Lord’s people; he may get sympathy from them, and counsel, and so on; but whatever they may seek to give, the poor sinner is conscious of this need. He is still without God and without hope in the world.

In the work of effectual calling, the Holy Spirit also enlightens the mind in the knowledge of Christ. We may have great knowledge about Christ and yet not know Christ. Persons can write books about Christ; and persons can preach about Christ, who are of a religious turn of mind. They can devote themselves to theology and be orthodox, and so on; and yet not know Christ. But in effectual calling the sinner is brought to this conviction, that he does not

know Christ. We need divine illumination—light from heaven—to bring us to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The soul is enlightened in the knowledge of Christ through the Truth. It is made able and willing to close in with Christ and to receive Christ as He is freely offered in the Gospel. The soul closes in with Christ; for Christ is revealed to the soul. The soul and Christ meet, however short the meeting may be. The soul goes forth, as it were out of itself, to the Lord; and rests on the Lord. That puts a distinction between the person who is self-deceived through his knowledge and an outward change in behaviour, and the true believer who is brought to a knowledge of Christ. And in the day in which the soul closes in with Christ and receives Christ; in that day the soul is brought to the feet of Christ. He is from that day forward a disciple of Christ, one who is seeking to learn of Christ. We see that in the case of the man out of whom the Lord cast the legion of devils. Once Satan was cast out and the Lord took possession of his soul, we read that he was sitting at the feet of Christ, clothed and in his right mind. He was doing that literally; it was true of him spiritually as well. He was now learning from this Person who had delivered him from the power of darkness and who had translated him into His own Kingdom.

Those who have made this choice are sitting at the feet of Christ. They seek to learn of Him. And what is it that they are seeking to learn? What is the exercise of the souls of those who have made this choice? Well, the exercise which the apostle had (and he speaks on behalf of the church of God) is: that I might “be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith”. Phil. 3;9. It is those who are in Christ who seek to be found in Christ. It is those who have been called effectually who seek to make their calling and election sure. It is those who are in Christ who seek to learn of Him. They desire to make sure that what they hope

they got was the real thing; that they are not deceiving themselves and deceiving others. They are exercised regarding this momentous matter; and unbelief and Satan in their souls war against grace, and seek to blind and overthrow them. But whatever they endure, and however downcast they may be, the characteristic of those who have been called effectually is, that the bent and bias of their soul is toward Christ; desiring that they would be clothed upon with His righteousness; that they would be cleansed from sin.

In the old days when they had sailing vessels, a ship might be sailing westwards when a blast of wind might come and send it in the opposite direction. But when the wind calmed and the sailors once more took control of the sails, the ship would be turned round to face the correct direction. The same may be true of the temptations of Satan, and those of the flesh and of the world. The Lord's people may be turned from their course; and they may believe they are on the wrong course altogether, such is the power of temptation. Once they are delivered from the temptation they make for the desired haven. The language of their souls is: "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

They seek to learn of him; they are found at His feet. They learn of Him as their Prophet. God's Word is the revelation of his mind, and is alone able to make them wise unto salvation. They seek to know His mind as that is revealed in the Word of God; and instruction that is contrary to God's word they cannot receive. "My sheep hear my voice." John 10:27. They hear what Christ as the Good Shepherd, the Prophet of their souls, says in His Truth; and a stranger they will not follow. When someone comes along with strange doctrines and fanciful ideas, persons who have not the root of the matter can be taken aside and bewitched, and embrace what is false; but those who are His people will reject what is contrary to His holy Word.

They are sitting at His feet as their Priest; for they have experienced that they are sinners; and the longer they live, the more they are



brought to know the corruption of their nature and their need of the blood—the precious blood of Christ “that cleanseth from all sin.” They cannot cleanse themselves; and it is a comfort to them that Christ has made provision for the cleansing of sinners.

They sit at his feet as their King, desiring to submit their will to Him and to take His yoke upon them. “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me”—the yoke of His commandments. They seek to acknowledge Him as their Lord and Master, as their King, and to submit to His dealings with them in Providence. They seek the grace of submission. They seek to be delivered from a murmuring spirit, which is of the flesh; and they seek to have what is of the Spirit. It was the fruit of the Spirit that the Psalmist had when he said:

“Dumb was I, op’ning not my mouth,  
because this work was thine.” Psalm. 39:9.

They seek to kiss the rod and Him Who has appointed it, believing that:

“The Lord is just in all his ways,  
holy in his works all.” Psalm 145:17.

They will seek grace to submit to the Lord in all the dispensations of His providence. In that way they show that they are His disciples. Bound up in this choice of Christ and of the Gospel is the same choice that Moses made. By faith Moses chose “rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.” Where there is a choice of Christ there is a choice of his people:

“I am companion to all those  
who fear, and thee obey.” Psalm 119:63.

That person will have new companions. He will have the confession of Ruth: "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." Ruth 1:16. He will have respect unto the recompence of the reward: he now has his eyes on eternity and on the reward, which is reckoned not of debt but of grace—the crown of eternal life that the Lord's people receive at death. It is these things that now occupy his soul. He presses toward the mark; toward the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

These things are true of the person who has made this choice: the choice of that good part which shall not be taken away from him. Great efforts are made by Satan, the flesh and the world to rob him of his interest in Christ; to darken his evidences; to cast him down; and at times he will conclude that he never made this choice. But the Lord will not leave His own; and however dejected and downcast they may be, beset by Satan and unbelief, when the Lord lifts up the light of His countenance on them, their comforts are restored. Then they seek to praise the Lord with the Psalmist:

"I love the Lord, because my voice  
and prayers he did hear.  
I, while I live, will call on him,  
who bow'd to me his ear." Psalm 116:1.

They are a tried and an afflicted people; but their desire is to trust in the name of the Lord. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe."

They believe there is one thing needful; and it is this they seek during their life's journey. They are not as the Arminians who "choose" Christ and then can fold their arms in complacency. It is a life-long struggle with the believer: he is in a conflict from which there is no discharge while he is in this life. It is the choice of his soul to follow the Lamb in this world through good and evil report; to be

sitting at His feet. He shows by his walk and conversation whose he is and whom he serves.

III. In the last place we shall notice the assurance Mary got at this time. Martha was cumbered about much serving. There was much to be done. They were serving the Lord and His disciples, whom they had invited to their home. It was true also of Martha that she had made choice of that good part that would not be taken from her; and also Lazarus. They were all loved by the Lord. Moses says in his blessing of the children of Israel “Yea, he loved the people; all his saints are in thy hand, and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words.” Deuteronomy 33:3. That is where His people desire to be—at His feet. Their souls are at home there. They say: “It is good for us to be here.”

These are a people who have been loved by the Lord. It was His love that brought them to this wealthy place. Behind their choice is His choice of them, and His eternal love of them. “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.” John 15:16. “Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.” Jer. 31:3. It is proof of His everlasting love that his people desire to be sitting at His feet and learning of him.

Those who are called are described as saints, and they are in the Lord’s hand; and no man shall pluck them out of His hand. This good part shall not be taken from them. It is in the keeping of the Lord. Satan went very far in seeking to take that good part from Peter when he was in Satan’s sieve; but the Lord showed clearly that Peter, even when denying his Master with oaths in Satan’s sieve, was still in the keeping of the Keeper of Israel, Who slumbers not nor sleeps. “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.” Luke 22:31-32. He was in the keeping of Christ; and because he was in Christ’s hand, he was brought back to sit at his feet again in his soul’s experience.

“Yea, he loved the people.” They will receive from His table what will sustain and uphold them; for Christ has the tongue of the learned, and He is able to speak a word in season to him that is weary.

It is one thing to make choice of the good part: it is another to enjoy the assurance Mary received at this time. Martha and Lazarus had made the same choice of the good part; but at this time, Martha was so encumbered in her mind about the serving that she could not see her way to leave the serving, to sit down and hear what the Saviour had to say. She believed that her duty was at this time to attend to the serving. She was so certain that she was in the path of duty that she went to Christ and said to Him: “Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.”

That shows that there are times when the Lord’s people adopt an attitude or position which they are quite sure is right; and yet they are mistaken. Martha was so sure that she was in the path of duty that she appealed to the Lord Himself and to His church—the apostles—expecting that they would justify her, and condemn Mary. And no doubt the apostles would have supported her. But the Lord Himself settled the matter. Instead of justifying Martha, He rebuked her. The rebuke was in love. That is evident from the repetition of her name. The very taste of love is in the rebuke. Very often when we give a rebuke, we may do so in a sharp, harsh way with the result that the rebuke is lost on the person. But this rebuke was not lost on Martha. “Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.” Heb. 12:6. “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.” Rev. 3:19. He rebukes His own privately and publicly. His own works are without rebuke. If a rebuke is not taken, He chastens them.

Martha took the rebuke. Later on, six days before the Passover, shortly before Christ’s death, Simon the leper made a feast for Christ and His disciples; and we read that Martha was serving. She did not

say, "Well, this is all the thanks I'm getting for all my serving and all my hospitality, and all I've been trying to do: I'm just rebuked for it.

This is the end of serving for me." No: she showed that the Lord's rebuke was blessed to her. Later on, she is found serving; but now she knows her place. She does not serve when the Lord is speaking. She puts first things first. She was put right in her mind, to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; "and all things shall be added unto you."

Here was a good person—a godly person, who was devoted to her Lord and Master—and yet she took this attitude, wholly convinced that she was in the path of duty and that the Lord would justify her—that His apostles would justify her—and that Mary would be censured. The incident shows that there was something wrong somewhere. The things that were such a concern to the poor woman, and taking such a hold on her mind, were a means not of causing her to sit at Christ's feet, but a means of separating her from the fellowship that Mary and the apostles were having at that particular time in listening to what the Saviour had to say. This concern about the serving was a means of taking her aside—putting her on her own.

When some concern gets a hold of a gracious person's mind, and is a means of isolating him, not drawing him nearer to the Lord and to His people, there must be something wrong. The person may be sure that he is in the path of duty; that the Lord will uphold him and justify him, and His church too: yet if it has this fruit, that it comes between that person and the fellowship of the brethren; then there must be something wrong.

Martha was not taking a low place. You can see that by the way she spoke. It was not the spirit of love and power and of a sound mind that was in exercise: the old nature was a bit ruffled in her. She spoke abruptly, peremptorily, even to the Lord. The grace of love was not in exercise in her soul at this time. She was sitting in condemnation on her sister; and she was possessed of a contentious spirit. The whole

thing was stirring up the old nature. That is evident in the way she spoke, and in the way she acted—which was a means of putting her apart, alone. And very often when a person is separate like that, and they're alone, and they are sure in their own estimation that they are right, they develop self-pity. Not only did Martha have a contentious spirit; she was also possessed by self-pity. Such people often have a martyr complex. They feel that everyone is against them; that they are being persecuted. You can see that with the prophet Jeremiah, great man though he was. The Lord had to rebuke him for it. He thought that he was being persecuted by everybody, and that he was the sole witness for the Truth; and he had to be rebuked for that.

When you see these fruits: persons quite sure that they are right and that the Lord will justify them; and yet it is a means of separating them from the brethren; and when you see them develop this martyred attitude: it is evident there is something wrong. I have known people like this. If you disagreed with them, you were their enemy; if you sympathised with them, you were their friend. They felt themselves so crossed and ill-treated, and sorry for themselves; and this was a means of separating them from the fellowship of the brethren, and from having the spirit of love and of power and of a sound mind.

You can see all that in the case of Martha. Although she was so sure, the Lord in His love rebuked her. The Lord WILL rebuke His own people, as sure as He rebuked the prophet Jeremiah. Martha was brought to her right mind. She could see then how she had gone astray in that particular matter.

In conclusion, it is quite evident that it was not easy for Mary to leave the household duties and to sit down to hear what the Saviour had to say. If Martha spoke like that in the presence of the Lord and His disciples about her sister—publicly—one wonders what she said to her in private. To all appearances the house belonged to Martha. Poor Mary would realise that if she left the serving, she

would incur the resentment and anger of her sister. There was so much to be done. But in spite of all these obstacles, she did not keep the peace by staying where she was. No: she saw this to be the one thing needful. This was the path of duty for her—to sit and listen to what the Saviour was saying. And she got this assurance from the Lord that she had made choice of that good part that would not be taken from her.

That shows that it is when the Lord's people put first things first, and when it is not easy for them; and there are other things—so needful, and so lawful—to be done; and they meet with the resentment of their nearest and dearest; when they seek to give Christ the pre-eminence and to sit at His feet—it is then they can receive the blessing. And I'm sure Mary would say, "What a blessing I sat down; that I left everything to avail myself of that opportunity! What a blessing I received." She got a blessing that she would remember for the rest of her days.

Martha got a blessing too. Whom the Lord loves He rebukes and chastens; and she was brought to her right mind, and no doubt would be quite apologetic to her sister. "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." Proverbs 16:7. They would discuss what they had heard: the blessing that Mary got in the assurance she got; and the blessing that Martha got from the rebuke which the Lord so lovingly gave her.

"One thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

May He bless His Truth.

*Preached in Gisborne NZ 13th February 1966*

# THE CHARIOT OF SALVATION

*Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon. He made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom thereof of gold, the covering of it of purple, the midst thereof being paved with love, for the daughters of Jerusalem. Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart.*

Song of Solomon 3:9-11

**I**T is clear that in the Song of Solomon a greater than Solomon is brought before us: even the New Testament Solomon, the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom King Solomon was a type. It is believed by many that the text refers to the chariot that King Solomon made to bring the daughter of Pharaoh, whom he had married, from Egypt to the house he had prepared for her at Jerusalem. Be that as it may, it is in the chariot of salvation or redemption, made by the New Testament Solomon, the Lord Jesus Christ, that sinners are brought from the Egypt of a state of nature to the heavenly house that He has prepared for them.

He has declared: "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for



you . . . that where I am, there ye may be also.” Therefore we believe that the chariot in our text may be described as the chariot of salvation which Christ prepared for lost sinners. No other chariot can bring us safely to Immanuel’s land but the chariot of His preparing.

First, we may consider *the need* for preparing such a chariot. Secondly, we may notice what is said about *the making* of the chariot “King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon. He made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom thereof of gold, the covering of it of purple, the midst thereof being paved with love, for the daughters of Jerusalem.” Thirdly, we shall notice *the invitation* that is given. Christ, in the chariot of the gospel, is passing by, and this invitation is given: “Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold King Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart.”

I. First, let us notice the need for making this chariot. The covenant of works which the Lord made with Adam was a chariot reflecting the glory of God. The chariot that Solomon made for the bringing of Pharaoh’s daughter to the house that he had prepared in Jerusalem would be a chariot befitting Solomon’s glory. The truth shows that there was no king so rich, so wise, so glorious in his day as was Solomon: and we can well believe that the chariot he made would reflect his glory. The chariot of the covenant of works that the Lord made with Adam was a chariot reflecting the glory of God in His attributes: the glory of His holiness, justice and truth. The way that Adam, as the head of the covenant of works, was to take was set before him by God. It was: “Do this and thou shalt live.” It was the way of obedience to God’s revealed will; and in going this way he would bring himself and all his posterity (which were included in the covenant) into possession of the life which was promised in the covenant. He and his posterity would be confirmed forever in a state of innocence.

But Satan, as an angel of light, came and set another way before Adam: the way of disobedience. In this way Adam thought to obtain greater glory and happiness. The way set before Adam by Satan did not appear to be the way of death but a way in which he and Eve could become as gods, knowing good and evil. Adam was deceived by Satan and took the way set before him by Satan: but instead of obtaining the happiness, honour and glory which Satan promised him and he expected, he went over the precipice and brought himself and the whole human race into an estate of sin and misery. He broke that chariot: he broke the covenant of works, and brought death upon himself and his posterity.

Sinners will discover as surely as Adam did, that the way of disobedience is the way of death. Satan promises them happiness and satisfaction in the way of disobedience. The truth declares, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." The fall brought man into "an estate of sin and misery"; a condition out of which man could not save himself and in which he was now "liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself and to the pains of hell forever". Not only was man not able to deliver himself, but also the way into heaven was now shut because of the sin of man. The flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life, was proof that man was shut out by the justice of God.

What need there was of another chariot; the chariot of salvation. Man would have been shut out eternally if God did not have a purpose of mercy towards him. In the eternal councils He made a covenant with His only begotten Son, whom He set up as the head and mediator of the covenant of grace. It is because of grace in God that such a covenant was made for the saving of a countless number of the race of lost, perishing sinners to which we belong. With regard to Christ being set up as the head and mediator of this covenant of grace, and as the only redeemer of God's elect, He himself declares,

“I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.” Under the covenant of grace, which is God’s way of salvation, Christ undertook to come in the fulness of time and to suffer and die for all who were given to him by the Father. Christ was to give the obedience to the divine law which the first Adam failed to give, and thus He was to magnify the law and make it honourable. He was to meet with the flaming sword of God’s inflexible justice; He was to suffer the penalty of the law, and thereby open up the way which man, by his sin, had closed up against himself. He was to prepare the chariot of salvation.

II. That leads us, secondly, to notice the making of the chariot; the preparing of the chariot of salvation by Christ, by his obedience unto death. This is symbolically brought before us in our text, “King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon. He made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom thereof of gold, the covering of it of purple, the midst thereof being paved with love, for the daughters of Jerusalem.”

First, with regard to the chariot of salvation, ***the bottom or base of it is of gold.*** By “gold” we understand Christ’s eternal deity; for only God manifest in the flesh, God the Son, could work out redemption for lost sinners. The word “gold” also brings before us the preciousness of Christ’s person. He is, as to his person, God’s eternally begotten Son. The eternal Sonship of Christ is the base of the chariot of redemption. In constituting Christ as redeemer and as priest, we find the Father saying to Him, “Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.” The glory of His person is bound up in His eternal Sonship, as it is written, “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.” This is the base of the chariot: Christ’s eternal person as God’s eternally begotten Son. He is the brightness of the Father’s glory and the express image of His person.

How precious is this base or foundation! Christ has become precious to all who are in the chariot; who are saved by grace. “Unto you therefore which believe he is precious.” They may have doubts about their relationship to Christ, and have fears about not being in Him, but where faith is in the soul by the Holy Spirit’s operation, the person of Christ is precious to that soul. “We believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the son of the living God,” said Peter. It is through divine teaching that Christ becomes precious to us, and through divine light that we see Christ as God’s eternally begotten Son. Then we can never countenance any view that is derogatory to the glory of Christ’s person.

The Holy Spirit will strip sinners of Arianism, as surely as he strips those he saves, of Arminianism. The essence of the lie of Arianism is the denial of the eternal Sonship of Christ. It makes Christ to be a created being only and says that He is not God. That lie is burnt out of the souls of those whom the Lord in his grace brings into this chariot. They are brought to set their seal to what the apostle Peter says, “We believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.” They are brought therefore to worship Him as God. That is the base of the chariot, the preciousness of Christ’s eternal person.

The chariot was also made “*of the wood of Lebanon.*” By the wood we may understand Christ’s human nature. There was no wood comparable to the wood of Lebanon. Now, there was a time when the wood of Lebanon did not exist. But then the wood of Lebanon was created. So there was a time when the human nature of Christ did not exist. His eternal deity existed, but the human nature did not exist until it was miraculously formed by the power of the Holy Ghost overshadowing the Virgin. It was then that Christ took a human nature into union with His divine person. For if He was to work out eternal redemption for sinners, He must take the nature

of those who have sinned, and in that nature must render to divine justice the satisfaction it demanded.

Then we read about *the pillars of the chariot*. “He made the pillars thereof of silver.” The pillars support the covering of the chariot. We may take these precious pillars to signify, in the first place, the proofs that Jesus of Nazareth was God manifest in the flesh and the promised Messiah. We may mention the following proofs: His fulfilling all the Old Testament types of the Messiah. They found their fulfilment in Him. His fulfilling all these types is a proof: a pillar of silver supporting His claim of being the One who was to come.

Also, the Old Testament *promises and predictions* concerning the Messiah found their fulfilment in Christ. What was predicted concerning His death was fulfilled. The Scripture was fulfilled, “A bone of him shall not be broken.” When the Pharisees, anxious “that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day”, requested Pilate that their legs should be broken, Pilate gave orders that their legs should be broken to hasten their death. Then we read that the soldiers brake the legs of the first malefactor and of the second, “but when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they break not his legs.” We also read there, “But one of the soldiers took a spear and pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water: and thus there was the fulfilling of the scripture which says, “They shall look on him whom they pierced.” The fulfilling of these scriptures is as a pillar of silver supporting Christ’s claims to be the One who came to work out eternal redemption for His folk.

His *miracles* also were proofs of His messiahship. In connection with His first miracle we read, “He manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.” His miracles were proof of His deity; they are as silver pillars supporting His claims to be the promised redeemer who is divine.

The pillars not only support the covering but may also serve as *a support to cling to* for those who travel in the chariot. As far as those people who have a hope that they are in this chariot are concerned, the *promises of God*, all of which are yea and amen in Christ Jesus, are pillars of silver to support and sustain them. What a pillar of silver this has been to many a poor and cast down believer: “Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea I will help thee; yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.” The promises of the truth are “exceeding great and precious promises” and are as pillars of silver for the strengthening and the supporting of those who are in the chariot.

These also are as pillars of silver to his people: that all *the purposes of God* are in the hands of Christ. All things are put into His hands and He is fulfilling God’s eternal purposes in His providence and grace. Christ is in supreme control of every trial that befalls His people. Who was more tried than Job? In all that he met with he could see the hand of the Lord. He went beyond second causes and saw by faith the hand of the Lord in the losses that befell him; for he said, “Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?” That was a support to Job. He could say about God, “He knoweth the way that I take;” a way mapped out and appointed for him by the Lord. “But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.” The Lord’s people shall be tried as gold, for He says, “And I will bring the third part through the fire, and refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, it is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God.” So when grace is in exercise, this promise and purpose of the Lord is a pillar that the hands of grace will lay hold of when they are passing through the fire, whatever the fire may be.

Solomon’s chariot also had a *covering*: “he made the covering

of it of purple.” By the covering of purple we may understand the atonement that He made for sin by His death. The word “atonement” in Hebrew signifies “a covering”. Only the atonement that Christ made can cover our sins. By His obedience unto death He brought in an everlasting righteousness and made reconciliation for iniquity. This is the covering of all who are in the chariot. All who have a hope that the Lord delivered them out of the Egypt of a state of nature, and to whom Christ is precious, have the blessing of being under this covering. “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.” They are under the shelter of the blood. “It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.” Those who are in the chariot believe that nothing else could atone for their sins but the precious blood of Christ. God looks upon them in Christ; He is not looking upon them as they are in themselves, but as persons under this covering. God sees such infinite merit and efficacy in Christ’s precious blood that He says about those who are in the chariot that He “hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel”. They are perfect in Him. “Ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.”

We read too that Solomon’s chariot was *paved with love*—“the midst thereof being paved with love, for the daughters of Jerusalem.” It was in love that the chariot of salvation was prepared. “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” Those who are in the chariot are loved by Him with an everlasting love, and He gives them tokens of His love. Even the chastisements they receive are the pavings of love in this chariot. “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth . . . But if ye be without chastisements, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.” His dealings with them are in love, and are for the good of their souls and to His glory. We find the Lord saying about Lazarus’ sickness, “This sickness is not unto death, but for the

glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.” This chariot is paved with love inasmuch as He loves His people with a constant and unchanging love. “Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.” Their love changes, and at times waxes cold. We read in Scripture, “And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.” But however cold they may find their love to be, and may be wondering at times if they have any love to Him at all, His love to them is unchanging and everlasting.

THIRDLY, we shall notice the invitation that is given in connection with this chariot. “Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold King Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart.” Now it is evident that it is Christ’s church, His spouse, His people, who are in the chariot and are giving this invitation to the daughters of Zion to go forth, and behold Christ when He is passing by in the chariot of the everlasting gospel.

In connection with those in the chariot, we may notice what is written about Noah and the ark. The ark is another type of Christ and the salvation that is to be found in Him. As there was no safety for Noah but in the ark of God’s providing so there is no safety for us, nor hope of making heaven of it, but to be found in the chariot of salvation. We read that the Lord closed Noah into the ark.

First, Noah was closed in to the warning that God gave him of the judgement that He was to bring upon that generation for their sins. So it is true that those in the chariot have by the teaching of God the Holy Spirit, been first closed in to the conviction that their sins deserve eternal death, and that in themselves they are hell-deserving sinners. Their confession is, (and David was in the chariot of salvation when he made the same confession), “If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?” They confess, “O Lord, although my iniquity would not break out into actual sin,



thou lookest upon the heart and knowest the abominations that are there.” With the Psalmist they must say,

“Thy servant also bring thou not,  
in judgement to be try’d:  
Because no living man can be,  
in thy sight justify’d.”

But they also acknowledge that just as Noah was closed into the ark, so they were closed in to Christ, and closed in to the salvation that is in Him, as their only hope for time and eternity. Like another they must say,

“I’m a poor sinner and nothing at all,  
but Jesus Christ is my all and in all.”

They are poor sinners in themselves but are closed in with their understandings, their consciences and their wills to God’s way of salvation by Christ. They desire no other way of salvation, but are willing to be saved in the way that He has set forth in His truth so that He would have the glory. Their confession is, “Shame and confusion of face belongeth unto us, but glory belongeth unto thee.”

“Not unto us, Lord, not to us,  
but do thou the glory take.”

They are closed in to Christ as their only hope because “there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” The language of their souls is, “To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.”

Now, this is the fruit of grace and of regeneration in the soul. Some may be able to tell when they were closed in to condemnation:

that was made clear to them, as in the case of the Philippian jailor. But those in the chariot were closed into the Saviour also. However secret the work may be, this is the two-fold evidence of persons being in the chariot and under the shelter of the blood. On the one hand they believe what the Lord declares, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself," and like the publican they take the blame and the guilt to themselves. On the other hand they are closed into the One who says, "In me is thine help."

"Our sure and all-sufficient help  
is in JEHOVAH's name;  
His name who did the heav'n create,  
and who the earth did frame."

They are closed into Christ, and do not seek to cover themselves with the fig leaves of their own works of righteousness. They believe that nothing else can cover them, but that they be found in Christ, in the chariot, and under the shelter of His atoning blood. They are closed into Him as their only hope.

Furthermore, they are betrothed to Him. They prove that they are betrothed to Him by their seeking to be obedient to Him. As the wife is to be obedient to her husband and as the church is obedient to Christ, so they seek to show obedience to Him. It is their desire to walk in obedience to His revealed will. "If ye love me," Christ says, "keep my commandments," and it is their desire that they will be found running in the way of His commandments.

By being obedient to His rule they put the crown on His head. The invitation is, "Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon *with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him.*" The word "mother" is just another name for His people. Christ says, "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." And this is the will of

God: that we should believe in the name of His Son whom He has sent.

It is also the desire of those in the chariot to put the crown of their salvation upon Christ's head. They do indeed put the crown of their salvation upon His head. They are not putting the crown of their salvation on their own heads, but are taking a low place at His footstool, confessing, "Shame and confusion of face belongeth unto us, but glory belongs to thee." The church (spoken of in the text as Christ's "mother", "sister" and "spouse" in order to show how great is the love between Christ and her) shall be putting the crown of her salvation upon Him through endless ages. Her song shall be, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

They crown Him in His offices as prophet, priest and king. They crown Him as the Prophet by accepting what He has revealed in the Scriptures, and submit to that revelation. They do not sit in judgement upon the word of God, but seek that the word would judge them. They put the crown upon Christ's head in acknowledging that He is "the faithful and true witness" and that His word is truth. They put the crown on His head as their Priest; the One who offered the necessary sacrifice for their sins when He offered Himself without spot unto God; the only one who can cleanse them from their sins. Also, they put the crown upon Him as their King; the One who subdues their enemies; the One who reigns in them and over them, and makes them loyal and faithful subjects to Himself in their day and generation.

Now, the desire of those in the chariot with regard to others outwith the chariot is that they would be saved. "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." Their desire is that others would go forth to "behold king Solomon." In giving this invitation, "Go forth," the church is

bringing before the daughters of Zion, that is, before sinners in the visible church, that this is the day of Christ's espousals, the day in which He is betrothing sinners to Himself. Now is the day of salvation! Now is the accepted time! This is the day in which Christ is making an offer of marriage to your own soul. Should you be the blackest sinner out of hell, you are among the sinners in the visible church to whom the gospel comes. This is the day in which He is betrothing sinners to Himself, and is saying to you, "And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgement, and in loving kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness; and thou shalt know the Lord." This is part of the gospel that His church proclaims: "This is the day of Christ's espousals," and, "This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them."

May you, sinner, be found this day giving a bill of divorcement to every other lover that will bring your soul to hell. May you be receiving Christ in the offer of the everlasting gospel, when He is offering to betroth you to Himself. If you reject that offer you shall have an eternity of weeping and wailing in hell, to bewail the sin of rejecting the Christ of God in the free offer of the everlasting gospel. The Lord will hold you responsible for your rejection of Christ. Your rejection of Him is your sin and guilt, and Christ Himself says that for that rejection you shall be damned. Heed the church giving the invitation to sinners and saying, "This is the day of his espousals; the day in which He is receiving and betrothing sinners to Himself."

In giving the invitation she also says that it is "the day of the gladness of his heart." This is what His heart is set on and what He says upon His oath, "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" It is the day of the gladness of His heart, the day of salvation. The church is making known not only Christ's power to save, but also His willingness to

save. She says, "Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him," that is, wherewith she herself, the church, crowned Him. In putting the crown of her salvation upon His head she is saying in effect, "Ah, when Christ saves such a sinner as I am, there is hope for any sinner. You go forth! Go forth from the ways of sin. Go forth from the ways of the world. I was enabled by grace to put the crown of salvation upon His head. When He has saved me, He shows that there is hope for every other sinner." On His head there are many crowns; multitudes of sinners in every age and generation have put the crown of their salvation upon Christ's head. Therefore go forth, O ye daughters of Zion. Go forth! The way is open! This is the day of Christ's espousals, the day of the gladness of His heart. The church is testifying to what the Lord did for herself, just as the woman of Samaria did when she crowned Him. She put the crown of salvation upon His head, and gave Him all the glory, saying, "Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?"

Would not this communion Sabbath day, in which Christ's death is to be commemorated, be a day to be remembered if your own soul was betrothed to Christ? Instead of being lead and deluded by Satan and allured to everlasting destruction by the things of this world, may you hear the glad tiding of salvation and the joyful sound of the everlasting gospel. May you comply with the invitation of the church in the text: "Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart." The Spirit and the bride are saying to you, "Come!" "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

This question was put to others: "How long halt ye between two opinions?" How long do you, sinner, hesitate between two

opinions? When God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost, and the church that He hath purchased by His blood, are appealing to you to go forth from the ways of sin and the world, and to behold king Solomon, may you go to Him as the leper of old did, crying, "Lord if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." The leper believed in His power, but Christ made known to him His willingness also, for He said, "I will; be thou clean." This is the day, says the church, of His espousals, and the day of the gladness of His heart. She mentions both His power and His willingness. "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." Today, after so long a time of rejecting Christ in the gospel, today if ye will hear his voice, then harden not your hearts, but give ear to what God the Lord doth speak:

"O daughter, hearken and regard,  
and do thine ear incline;  
Likewise forget thy father's house,  
and people that are thine.  
Then of the king desired shall be  
thy beauty veh'mently:  
Because he is thy Lord, do thou  
him worship rev'rently."

How can you, sinner, leave this solemn service rejecting the Christ of God. What guilt! What fearful guilt you are bringing upon yourself by rejecting Him. You are still in the room of mercy, while millions of others are now in hell. Archibald Cook, a godly minister in Scotland, said, "There are millions in hell who would give all that they ever saw, for one other offer of Christ." But there are no other offers of Christ or of salvation in a lost eternity.

It is in virtue of this chariot of salvation that He made, that he is able to save to the uttermost, and that such an offer and invitation is

extended in the everlasting gospel to us as sinners today. “Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart.”

May He bless His truth.

*Preached in Auckland NZ on the Communion Sabbath  
23rd October 1966*

## WEIGHED IN THE BALANCES

*TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.*

Daniel 5:27

**I**n this chapter we have an account of the great feast that Belshazzar, King of Babylon, made to “a thousand of his lords” (verse 1). In the course of his feast he “commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein” (verse 2). The vessels were brought, and the entire company drank from them.

In this way Belshazzar was showing his contempt for the living and true God. By putting the sacred vessels of the temple of God to this unholy and sacrilegious use, he was showing his contempt for the God of Israel, and was honouring his own gods. We read that “they drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood and of stone” (verse 4).

Belshazzar learned—as every sinner shall learn, either in mercy or in judgement—that “God is not mocked” (Gal. 6:7). By making this sacrilegious use of the holy vessels of God’s house, and at the same time honouring gods of silver, brass and stone, he was mocking the God of heaven, but he learned to his cost that “God is not mocked.” In the midst of their merriment and revelry, there came forth the



fingers of a man's hand that wrote on the wall opposite the King. This writing on the wall had a powerful effect on the King: "his knees smote one against another" (verse 6)—he trembled for fear! And he called for the astrologers, the Chaldeans, the soothsayers and the wise men of Babylon, that they might read and interpret the writing on the wall.

"But they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof." The king was greatly troubled. Then the queen told him that there was among the captives taken from Jerusalem one, Daniel by name, in whom light, understanding and wisdom had been found in the days of Nebuchadnezzar (the present king's father), and who was able to interpret dreams and hard sayings. Daniel was therefore summoned before the king. He read the writing on the wall and gave the interpretation of it. In the words of our text we have part of the writing and its interpretation—"TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting [lacking]."

In God's balances Belshazzar the king was found wanting. The writing on the wall was a sentence of death and of judgement. That night Belshazzar was cut off in the midst of his revelry and blasphemy. He was slain by Darius, King of the Medes, who also captured the kingdom.

The words of our text teach us that the Lord has balances: balances which are just and true, for "shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. 18:25). We may notice first, that when we are weighed in God's balances, the sentence which is passed on every one of us as we are by nature is that we are found wanting. Secondly, we shall notice that sinners prove, as surely as Belshazzar did, that this is true of them: that they are found wanting. Thirdly, we shall notice the end of all who shall die in this state of being found wanting. As Belshazzar was struck down by the sword of King Darius, so all who shall die in a state of being found wanting, shall be cut down by

the sword of God's inflexible justice, and be given their portion in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. Fourthly, we shall notice the ground upon which the Lord saves sinners from this sentence of death. The everlasting Gospel sets before us the basis upon which the Lord delivers sinners from this sentence of condemnation and death. Finally, we shall see what is true of those who have this sentence revoked—who are delivered from the sentence of condemnation. We read: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:1), and they are now "accepted in the beloved" (Eph. 1:6).

**I. First, this is a sentence passed on every individual: "TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting."** In God's balances we are found wanting, as we are by nature.

As man came forth from the hand of God in a state of innocence, he was not found wanting. He was created as holy—in the image of God, in righteousness, in holiness, and in knowledge. He was able to come up to the righteousness of the law, and to give perfect and sinless obedience to the holy law of God. Man in a state of innocence had fellowship and communion with God. There was no deficiency; he was not "found wanting".

But man fell from the estate wherein he was created. By the disobedience of one man "sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12). This is the condition in which we were born and in which we are by nature; in God's balances we are found wanting.

There are three things which make us to be wanting in God's balances. The first is, *the guilt of Adam's first sin*; for we sinned in him and fell with him in his first transgression. The second is *the want of original righteousness*. Through the fall we lost God's image—the righteousness, holiness and knowledge which we had.

Unless God's image is restored to your soul through the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, and unless you and I are made new creatures in Christ Jesus, death will find us wanting in the balances of the Judge of all the earth. We have the want of original righteousness whether we are conscious of it or not. The third thing which makes us to be wanting before God is *the corruption of our whole nature*, which is commonly called original sin. We do not have a holy nature but a nature that is full of sin. The heart of man "is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9). The Lord Jesus declares that "out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies" (Matt. 15:19). People are sometimes described as having good hearts; but the seed of every conceivable sin is in your heart and mine; the heart is a cesspool of iniquity. We have a nature that will drink in iniquity like water; we have no relish for holiness, no relish for God's truth, and no relish for Christ. We have a relish for the pleasures of sin. That is proof of how corrupt we are in our nature; that is the writing on the wall of God's truth with regard to all of us.

It would be our wisdom to read the writing, to face up to facts, for if we do not read the writing now we shall read it on the walls of a lost eternity. There are many of whom it is true that it is on the walls of hell they shall read the writing for the first time, and discover that they are TEKEL: weighed in God's balances and found wanting. It is in mercy and in love that the Lord is now setting before us the writing on the wall of His holy word, and is revealing that we are found wanting in His balances as we are by nature. He shows us that the guilt of Adam's first sin is laid to our charge and that we have the want of original righteousness. Lacking the image of God, it is the image of Satan that is on our souls, as Christ declares: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do" (John 8:44). Our doing those lusts, as we are by nature, prove that we are found wanting.

**II. Secondly, we shall notice that men prove, as surely as Belshazzar did, that they are found wanting in God's balances.** Belshazzar proved it to be so by the sacrilegious use to which he put the holy vessels of God's temple. At this popular feast he held, attended by all the lords and ladies—the upper classes of society—there was plenty of drink and merriment. That is true of many of the celebrations of our day: there is plenty of strong drink: much carnal merriment: and much blasphemy as God's holy name is taken in vain. The person who does not attend these carnal feasts in which there is carnal mirth, drinking and dancing, is considered a killjoy. But Christians can be sociable without making fools of themselves, and without trampling God's holy commandments underfoot. At New Year time, and especially at Christmas time, you will find people abandoning themselves to all forms of levity and frivolity. They are at home in these worldly feasts, and the solemn realities of death and judgement vanish from the mind, if they were ever there previously. Persons who are given to the fleeting pleasures of sin find themselves at home in such places, and thus prove that they are found wanting when weighed in God's balances. You will not find the Lord's people there.

Pubs are such places. They are simply dens of iniquity, seething with sin and blasphemy. People who find themselves at home in public houses prove, as surely as Belshazzar did, that they are weighed in God's balances and found wanting. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31). Now a person cannot glorify God, and fulfil the end of his creation by frequenting cinemas, pubs and dance halls: places that pander to the flesh, and where provision is made to gratify the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life.

Sinners also prove themselves to be found wanting by the ill-use that they make of the holy vessels of God's house. The vessels which Belshazzar made a sacrilegious use of were the vessels of the Lord's

temple. We shall mention three of the Lord's vessels in His house today which many people ill-treat, and thus demonstrate that they are weighed in the balances, and found wanting.

**First of** all there is His holy Word. This book, the Bible, is God's holy Word: inspired by the Holy Ghost. When people call into question God's holy Word—its inerrancy, trustworthiness, authenticity and infallibility—they prove that in God's balances they are found wanting and that they were never born again, whatever standing they may have or whatever their academic attainments may be. I was reading an article in the Presbyterian magazine *The Outlook*, by Principal Lloyd Geering<sup>1</sup> of the Presbyterian Theological Hall in Dunedin, in which he clearly shows his attitude to God's Word—how he sits in judgement on the holy Word of God, and clearly does not accept it as God's inspired, infallible Word. What Principal Geering says proves clearly that he is found wanting in God's balances. It is to be feared that this is the case with the great majority of the ministers of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, when they would have a man who makes such attacks on God's holy word as the Principal of their college. Those who accept such views, whatever their standing in church or state, are in God's balances found wanting. Unless they repent, they shall be in that condition at death, and throughout the endless ages of eternity.

Persons who do not read the Bible may say, "Oh, yes, we believe the Bible to be God's Word," but they do not search the Bible. They do not take the Word of God as a lamp to their feet or as a light to their path.

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1 Born in 1918, Lloyd Geering was Principal of the Theological Hall at Knox College, Dunedin, from 1962 to 1971. The article referred to is called "Is a new Reformation possible?", published in *The Outlook*, Vol. 72, No 17 (25 September, 1965), pp 16-18.

By what means shall a young man learn  
his way to purify?  
If he according to thy word  
thereto attentive be, (Psalm 119:9, metrical).

Persons who do not take the Word of God as a light to their path are going their own way; they show no regard for what God says in His truth, They prove clearly that they are TEKEL: weighed in the balances, and found wanting.

The *second* vessel of the Lord is the public means of grace, on Sabbaths and weekdays. These are the Lord's ordinances: vessels belonging to Him. Persons who are indifferent as to their attendance at the means of grace, and their making right use of them, and who have no concern for worshipping the Lord in these means of grace, show clearly that they are found wanting.

The Lord's day is the *third* vessel of God. "The Sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day, even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days, and spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of God's worship, except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy." People who prostitute God's holy day for pleasure and profit—as Belshazzar was putting the holy vessels of God's temple to a sacrilegious use—and who have no love for God's holy day, are indeed found wanting in His balances. A great divine, Thomas Sheppard,<sup>2</sup> said that in his opinion, the sin which comes next to the sin for which there is no forgiveness, is the sin of neglecting and despising the means of grace. This is a solemn statement: the person who is despising and neglecting the means of grace is rubbing

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2 Thomas Sheppard (1605-1649), a celebrated Puritan divine, who retired to New England in 1635 and is known especially for his exposition of the parable of the ten virgins.

against, as it were, the sin for which there is no forgiveness. It should be a wonder to us that we have the means of grace: a blessing which is denied to millions of our fellows.

These three, the Scriptures, God's holy day and the ordinances of God's house, are some of the vessels of the Lord. If they are not honoured as they should be in our attitude towards them and use of them, we show that we are found wanting when weighed in God's balances,—and terrible shall be our end if we do not repent.

**III. We have, in the third place, the end of all who shall be found wanting at last.** They shall be cut down at death as surely as Belshazzar was, and their portion shall be given them in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. God shall not be mocked by kings or queens, or principals of theological halls, or doctors of divinity, or archbishops; or by any person high or low, rich or poor. What the Word of God says shall stand. God will not be mocked by the worms of the dust; and unless sinners repent and turn to the Lord, they shall assuredly perish. As the Lord Jesus Christ was appointed to be the Judge of the quick and the dead—"for we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10), so He declares, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). A lost eternity—an eternity of everlasting despair with the devil and his angels—an eternity of the wrath of God—will be the portion of those who die in this condition of being found wanting.

Snares, fire and brimstone, furious storms,  
on sinners he shall rain:  
This, as the portion of their cup,  
doth unto them pertain" (Psalm 11:6).

That is the cup they are filling up; a cup of defiance to the Lord; the cup of their iniquities; and when that cup is full, it is given to them as a cup of condemnation. This is our danger—that we shall be cut down.

The parable of the barren fig-tree was spoken to reinforce the necessity for repentance. Unless the tree would bear fruit within a certain period, the order would be given: “Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?” (Luke 13:7). What is the earth better of cumberers of the ground, of sinners whose mouths are full of blasphemy, and who use their strength and time to defy the God of heaven? The Lord, by the Flood, purged this earth of a whole generation of such; He swept them with a besom of destruction to a lost eternity, and for all we know He may come forth, by means of nuclear warfare or disaster, to burn up this generation in a moment of time. Thousands who are now as these people were at Belshazzar’s feast, in the midst of their revelry and blasphemy, may in the twinkling of an eye find themselves in the depths of hell.

We are called upon to read the writing on the wall *now*. “TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.” It is a personal matter. We see how others are found wanting; for example, the foolish virgins fully expected that they would enter heaven, but when they arrived “the door was shut” (Matt. 25:10). How solemn are these words! They were shut out for all eternity because they were weighed in the balances, and found wanting. We must heed the writing now, and seek to be delivered from being found wanting.

**IV. In the fourth place, we shall consider the ground upon which the Lord delivers sinners from this condemnation under which they are.** There would be no point (speaking with all reverence) in bringing these truths before sinners, unless there was a way of escape revealed. The gospel makes known to us how sinners can be saved



from the condemnation under which they are on account of their sins, and from the danger to which they are exposed because they are found wanting—the danger of being cut down by the sword of God’s justice and cast into a lost eternity. The Lord has provided the ground upon which sinners can be delivered in accordance with the claims of His law and justice, and in a way that is to the glory of the righteousness of His nature. In a righteous, just and holy way, God can save the chief of sinners from this condemnation. It is by way of the paying of a ransom, for we read, “Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom” (Job 33:24). It is upon the grounds of ransom paid by the Redeemer that sinners are delivered from going down into the pit of hell. The Lord Jesus Christ said that He came “to give his life a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:28). He paid the ransom price by the obedience and sufferings of His life and death. He poured out His soul unto death; He made reconciliation for iniquity; He brought in an everlasting righteousness. It is on the ground of His finished work—the ransom which He paid—that the Lord is just when He justifies the sinner who believes in Jesus.

What Christ did in the room and stead of His people is described as “blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross” (Col. 2:14). This handwriting which is contrary to us, signifies the curse and condemnation of God’s law. “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them” (Gal. 3:10). We are already under the condemnation of God’s law. In other words we are TEKEL: weighed in the balances of God’s holy law and found wanting. This is the writing which is contrary to us: the law and its condemnation. The Lord is speaking personally: “Thou art weighed in the balances”; and we are called upon to read the writing. What a blessing it would be if we were led to read the writing on the wall concerning ourselves and to believe that this is our state in God’s sight: and what a blessing to be led,

through the teaching of the Holy Spirit, to see how that writing can be blotted out.

None could blot out that writing which was contrary to us, save the Lord Jesus Christ; and that by His cross (that is, by His atoning death and not the literal cross). By the cross of Christ we mean the work that He accomplished on the cross. People wear crucifixes and crosses, and vainly imagine that these are going to save their souls or help them to heaven—that is not what we mean by the cross. We read in 1 Corinthians 1:18 of “the preaching of the cross”. There the apostle makes it clear that by the preaching of the cross is meant the preaching of Christ and Him crucified. He preaches the work that Christ accomplished on the cross: His obedience unto death. Now, the handwriting is blotted out by Christ’s obedience unto death: the perfect obedience which He gave to the law in His life, and His having suffered the penalty of the law in His death. He bare the curse of the sins of His people as He stood in their place. The sins of all the elect were imputed to Him. He bare their sins in His own body upon the cross, that is. He suffered what was due to them for their sins. “He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed” (Isa. 53:5). “He was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification” (Rom. 4:25).

Now, it was when He cried on the cross, “It is finished”, having finished the work given Him to do, that He blotted out the handwriting of ordinances which was contrary to us, and spoiled principalities and powers, making a show of them openly. He triumphed over all the enemies of His people: over death, the grave, hell, and Satan; and He blotted out the condemnation and curse of the law. And it is in virtue of Christ’s finished work—the atonement which He made and the ransom which He paid—that sinners can be delivered from this sentence of death and condemnation: “TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.”

If there was any sinner who proved that she was a sinner found wanting in God's balances, it was the woman of Samaria. What an ungodly life she led! She came that day at noon to Jacob's well to fetch water; she left her home with no thought of death or eternity; a sinner going about her ordinary occupations; and there at Jacob's well the Lord met her. Without going into the whole story, we see how she got from Christ living water. He convinced her of her sins; He gave her vision to see the writing on the wall; He enabled her to see that He alone could blot out the writing on the wall, and that He could give her what she could never get from the pleasures of sin which are but for a season. She got that living water, and returned home a new person in Christ Jesus.

Many a poor sinner came to the means of grace—to the well of Gospel ordinances—and in the course of the sermon saw the writing on the wall, and not only that, but got deliverance. That can happen just as the Lord in His sovereignty sees fit. The great preacher and divine, Jonathan Edwards of America, said that he believed that during a time of revival in his congregation, 200 people passed from death to life under one sermon. They saw themselves to be lost and hell-deserving; they saw the writing on the wall and believed that this was their condition; they saw also the One who could deliver them from going down into the pit.

The Saviour calls upon us in the everlasting Gospel to look to Him: "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else" (Isa. 45:22). None other can do this for you. If Christ will not do it for you, you are lost: lost eternally. An angel, a saint, all the Church of God cannot do it for you; father and mother cannot do it for you; an apostle could not do it for you. Though the apostle Paul should come back from the dead and preach to us, he could not do it. One, and One only, can do this for you: and that is the Lord Jesus Christ—the One who died for sin and rose again, and who alone has power on earth to forgive sins.

Unless you apply to Christ you are lost. Whatever any minister, elder or any person may say to you to the contrary, you shall be lost. You will die under the curse and condemnation of a broken law. But “if the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” (John 8:36). You will be free from the sentence of death, and you will never come under condemnation again. Read the writing that is against you and look to Christ for salvation. Trust Him for salvation.

**V. Finally and fifthly, we shall make a few remarks about those who have been delivered from this condemning sentence: “Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.”** It was through the gracious teaching of the Holy Spirit that they came to believe that they were found wanting, and that they acknowledged their guilt. “When he (the Holy Spirit) is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement” (John 16:8). They were convinced that they were found wanting, and that nothing they themselves could do would blot out the writing against them.

Some people, when they begin to realise their condemnation, think that perhaps if the Lord would give them time and opportunity, they would by their own good works, and by their tears and prayers, blot out the writing of condemnation. Others ‘make a decision for Christ’ and think that the decision may help them. But the believer has to testify that he discovered that nothing he could do would deliver him, that the writing was still there—and he was convinced of this in his soul. All the advice, all the promises, all the exhortations and invitations that others might pour into his mind (and rightly so, for the Lord can bless means) could not erase the sentence of death. He saw what he was in God’s sight: a lost, ruined, and hell-deserving sinner. The writing was on the wall of his conscience.

But then the Holy Spirit enlightens the mind of that poor sinner in the knowledge of Christ, and renews his will. It is by the enlightening work of the Spirit that the sinner sees the One who can deliver him

from condemnation. On the day on which the sinner closes in with Christ and exercises faith upon Him, the writing is blotted out, and he is delivered and set free in God's sight. The moment a sinner looks to Christ and closes in with Him, he is justified: God blots out the writing. Although it may be some time after that before his new standing is made clear to himself, the fact is that in the moment he closes in with Christ and believes in Him, he is justified in God's sight; and being justified by faith, he has peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. The sinner who looks to Christ will also have peace in his conscience. Perhaps in some cases the light may not be very clear; they may be troubled as to whether they are truly born again—but they will be seeking to make their calling and election sure.

It is true of those that are in Christ Jesus by faith that there is "now no condemnation to them", and they "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit". They walk not as they used to, when they made provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof; they are now seeking to mortify the flesh with its affections and lusts; to crucify the flesh and to walk after the Spirit. They are seeking to be led by God's Spirit, to walk in newness of life and to follow the Saviour in this world, through good and through evil report. The writing on the wall that was against them has been blotted out for ever; they shall never come into condemnation. And what is the writing on the wall now for the Lord's people? It surely is this; "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:1).

King Belshazzar needed an interpreter to read the writing and interpret it. Speaking with reverence, the Lord's people need the Holy Spirit as their interpreter of the writing in God's Word concerning themselves. Indwelling sin and the mists of unbelief often blind their eyes. They walk in darkness and have no light, but they cry to the Lord. "Who is among you that feareth the Lord that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light?

Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God” (Isa. 50:10). Christ is spoken of here as the Lord’s “servant”. Although His people are seeking to listen to the voice of the Servant of the Father, and are fearing the Lord and believing His Word, they still find themselves at times walking in darkness and having no light. They need the Holy Spirit to give them light; they need that the Lord would bless His Word and ordinances to them.

There is also this written on the wall for God’s people: “I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee” (Isa. 44:22). His people need these things to be brought before them. Written on the wall by the finger of God for them is this: that the cause of their condemnation has been eternally blotted out. “Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope: even to day do I declare that I will render double unto thee” (Zech. 9:12).

There are many things written on the wall for the redeemed. There is this: “Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee” (Jer. 31:3); and this: “Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God” (1 John 3:1); and all the other great and precious promises. The Lord’s people have a right to them all. It is in His light that they see that.

Instead of now seeking their pleasures in carnal feasts, as many of them at one time did, they are now seeking to go to the feast that Christ has set up: the feast of the Gospel. It is there that they now desire to be fed; there that they seek their satisfaction, for they know that He alone can satisfy them.

For he the soul that longing is  
doth fully satisfy;  
With goodness he the hungry soul  
doth fill abundantly. (Metrical Psalm 107:9).

They will be coming to the means of grace hoping to receive something for their souls—praying for food for their souls and asking the Lord to teach and enlighten them by His Word. They will be going to the feasts to find what will meet the needs of their souls. I have told the story before of a girl in times of the persecution of the Covenanters in Scotland: the times when those who were keeping to the truth and preaching the Gospel were banished from their homes and churches, and had to meet in lonely glens and solitary places. There they used to meet quietly and worship the Lord. The dragoons (with Claverhouse at their head) used to scour the mountainsides looking for these poor people worshipping the Lord. When they were captured, some were shot instantly or taken away and tortured; others were sold as slaves or hanged and burnt. During the persecution, which lasted for 28 years, it has been computed that “not less than 18,000 people suffered death, or the utmost hardships and extremities on account of religion”.<sup>3</sup> Now, the girl heard that there was to be a conventicle held in a certain place—miles from her home and in a quiet, solitary place—and that the Lord’s death was to be commemorated. She determined she would go, although in doing so she was risking her life. She did not have all the conveniences that we have; she had to walk and even run, being in danger of meeting with the dragoons: in danger of death, torture and banishment. But off she went. The dragoons spotted her. Suspicious as to where she might be heading, they accosted her, and questioned her. “Oh”, she said, “my Elder Brother has died, and today they are reading His will. I am going to see if He has left anything in the will for me”. The dragoons of course understood her literally; they did not understand the significance of her words. “Oh”, they said, “if that’s your business, just go on your way”. But what the girl meant, of course, was that Christ the Elder

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3 McCrie, *The Story of the Scottish Church*, 1875, p. 377.

Brother had died, and that His will—the everlasting Gospel—was being preached, and His death commemorated in a certain place, and that she was going to see if there was anything in the will—in Christ’s Testament—for her soul.

That is true of all His people: that they will be seeking to follow Him in His means and in His ordinances, in a cloudy and dark day. They will seek to deny themselves for His sake and to follow Him through good and evil report. They look for what is on the wall of the everlasting Gospel for them. They believe that he will fully satisfy the longing soul, and abundantly fill the hungry soul.

It is in Christ alone that you will find deliverance from the condemnation under which you are; and in Christ alone that you will find what will satisfy your soul. You go alone to some secret place and cry to the Lord to show you what you are, and to reveal Himself to your soul. Plead that you would taste and see in your own soul’s experience that God is good, and gracious, and that who trusts in Him is blessed.

*Preached in Gisborne NZ*

1966



# CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

## PRINCIPAL GEERING'S VIEWS EXPOSED

*"And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins."*

1 Corinthians 15:17

**T**he Apostle, at the beginning of this chapter says, "Brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand." And concerning the Gospel which he preached to them, we find him saying to the Galatians, "I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." The Gospel is called the *everlasting* Gospel (Rev. 14:6), indicating that it is an unchanging Gospel. It is like its Author, it changes not. Mathematical truth does not change; divine truth does not change. The doctrine on which the Apostle is laying special emphasis in this chapter, as a fundamental doctrine of the Gospel which he preached, is the doctrine of the resurrection of Christ from the dead, a doctrine which was denied by the Jews and ridiculed by the Greeks. But as he says in the words of our text, "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins."

We may notice, that implied in the denial of the resurrection of Christ from the dead, is a denial of all the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith. The Christian faith becomes vain, meaningless and useless, if this fundamental doctrine of the resurrection of Christ is denied. And firstly, it implies a denial of the deity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The Apostle, through divine inspiration, says to the Romans, that Christ was declared, or manifested, to be the Son of God with power by His resurrection from the dead. (Rom. 1:4). He was in a powerful manner declared and manifested to be the Son of God. Deny His resurrection from the dead and that leads to a denial of His eternal deity. He Himself says, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father" (John 10:17, 18). He had that power as the eternal Son. None could obtain that victory over death and the grave but the eternal Son, manifested in our nature. But if Christ be not raised, He did not obtain the victory over death or over the grave, as the Apostle brings before us in this chapter. Death has conquered Him and the grave still holds Him captive. He is not the Conqueror, the Victor over death and the grave. And then, if that is so, that the grave still holds Him, the song which the ransomed Church of God, will have on the morning of the resurrection—"Oh death, where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory?" becomes meaningless. What the Apostle is here declaring concerning the resurrection of the body, and of the song of triumph of the redeemed becomes meaningless, if the resurrection of Christ from the dead is but "a beautiful legend" as Principal Geering maintains. Then this song of triumph is part of the legend, a beautiful piece of poetry, legendary and mythical.

But not only does the denial of Christ's resurrection from the dead involve a denial of His deity, but also of His virgin birth. The

human nature which He assumed, was conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the virgin Mary and born of her yet without sin. That nature He assumed into union with His divine Person. His body was incapable of seeing corruption. Although at death there was a separation put between Christ's human soul and Christ's body, there was no separation put between Christ's soul and His divine Person, or between His body lying in Joseph's tomb and His divine person. They still remained united to His Person, although for a time separated by death. In connection with the separation, the following illustration has often been made use of. A soldier has the sheath in which he holds his sword, attached to his body. He draws the sword out of the sheath and holds the sword aloft in his hand. A separation has been put between the sheath in which the sword was encased, and the sword. Although there is a separation between the sheath and the sword, there is no separation between the sheath and the soldier himself, or between the soldier and the sword which he holds in his hand. And so in the case of the separation that death put between Christ's human soul and His body. They were still united to His divine Person. And because of that it was impossible for that body to see corruption. A body that had no sin in it could not see corruption. But if His body was not raised, then that body was not miraculously conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost. That leads to a denial of His virgin birth. It is a well known fact that those who deny the resurrection of Christ from the dead, also deny and even ridicule the miracle of His virgin birth. And that leads to a denial of the promises of the Old Testament which have reference to His virgin birth, as for example the first promise—there shall come of the seed of the woman that shall bruise the serpent's head. "Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." (Isaiah 7:14). All these promises become meaningless—part of the "beautiful legend." Not only does a denial of the resurrection of His

body lead to a denial of His virgin birth, but also to the atonement which He made.

But before coming to that, we may observe what Geering and his school hold, that it is Christ's spirit that rose, that His body still remained and rotted in the grave. It is His spirit, they say, that rose. But His spirit was never in the grave. He committed at death His human soul into the hands of His Father. It was His body that rose from the dead and both soul and body at His resurrection were reunited. It must be observed that Geering denies the immortality of the soul, and that by Christ's spirit, he does not mean the human soul of Christ, but the principles for which He stood.

The denial of His resurrection leads to a denial of the atonement which He made. We read in Romans that He was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification. Now if Christ was not raised again for our justification, that implies that He did not make the atonement for sin which justice in God required Him to make, that He did not pay the ransom price to the uttermost farthing in the room and stead of His people. Therefore "if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." No atonement has been made for sin. Christ's resurrection from the dead is the proof that He paid the ransom price and that He made the atonement necessary for sin. A denial, therefore, of His resurrection implies a denial of Christ's atonement and that leads to the denial of the need for an atonement—a denial of the fall. We read "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." That is, all for whom Adam stood. He was the federal head of the whole human race. They all died in him. And all for whom Christ stood, as the covenant head, the last Adam, the Lord from Heaven, all for whom He stood—the whole election of grace—they shall live. But if Christ has not risen from the dead, that leads to the denial of the need for an atonement. It leads to a denial of the fall of man, that in Adam all died. Of course, according to Geering and his school, the

account of the fall is just a Jewish myth, pointing a moral, but not an historical fact.

A denial of the atonement makes Christ Himself a liar. He repeatedly said to His disciples that He must needs die, and that He would rise again on the third day. After His resurrection, when the disciples were still incredulous and supposing it was a spirit that had appeared to them, He said "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet." If Christ is not risen from the dead, and His resurrection is but a beautiful legend, then that implies that Christ is not the truth, that He is not, as the Scriptures declare, the "faithful and true witness." He is a false witness if He did not rise from the dead. His statements to His disciples that He would rise again on the third day must be false, and that He said to His disciples, "handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have," must also be untrue. And then also, if Christ be not risen, the Apostles also are liars. Paul says, "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not."

A denial of Christ's resurrection leads to a denial of the doctrine of the resurrection of the just and the unjust at the last day. In this chapter the apostle bases the proof of the resurrection of the dead at the last day upon the doctrine of Christ's own resurrection from the dead. Christ Himself says "Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." If Christ therefore be not raised, there will be no resurrection of the dead, of the just and the unjust, and these words of Christ are just part of "the beautiful legend". They are false, and the testimony

of the Apostles is false. They testified that for forty days after His passion He showed Himself alive by many infallible proofs and that He spake to them the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. The apostle is mentioning in this chapter different witnesses. "He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time." But all these witnesses must be dismissed as false witnesses, and what Principal Geering and his school say, is what we must accept. "For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea let God be true, but every man a liar." (Rom. 3:3, 4).

And not only does it lead to a denial of the resurrection of the dead at the last day, but also a denial of the doctrine that is brought before us in this chapter, that the bodies of the saints shall be raised and made like unto Christ's glorious body. It is in connection with the bodies of the saints that the apostle is speaking in this chapter. Their bodies are to be made like unto Christ's glorious body, but if Christ be not risen, He has no glorious body. He is only a spirit. But He Himself declared after His resurrection "handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have." A denial of Christ's resurrection from the dead includes in it a denial of the resurrection of the just and the unjust, and a denial of the mystery which the apostle is here bringing before us, that the bodies of the saints are to be made like unto Christ's glorious body.

It also leads to a denial of the doctrine of the judgment at the last day. Christ appeared first of all to take away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. The second time He is to appear unto those that look for Him without sin unto salvation. And in the context it is mentioned that it is at the Judgment He will appear "without sin unto salvation." He shall appear as the God-man to judge the world in righteousness,

justice to give each one. But if Christ be not risen, then there will be no judgment, for the doctrine of the judgment of the last day is based upon Christ's resurrection. God "now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." (Acts 17:30, 31).

Further, if Christ be not raised from the dead, then the sacraments of the New Testament Church—Baptism and the Lord's Supper—are no longer valid. When Christ instituted the sacrament of the supper, He said to His disciples, "Take, eat: this is my body which is broken for you" and "For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." The sacrament of the Lord's Supper not only commemorates the death which He died in the room and stead of His people, but is a reminder that He is to come again. But if Christ be not raised from the dead, then, as we observed, that rules out the doctrine of the atonement, for Christ "was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification." The doctrine of the atonement is in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. It is through His body being broken and His blood being shed that He obtained eternal life and eternal forgiveness for His people.

The sacrament of baptism also becomes a meaningless rite. The Apostle says in verse 29, "What shall they do which are baptised for the dead?" He is bringing forward the implications that if Christ be not raised, then our preaching is vain and our faith is vain, we are still in our sins, etc. He then says, "what shall they do which are baptised for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptised for the dead?" The Mormons make much of this text and they hold the doctrine of baptism for the dead. If a person becomes a Mormon he is baptised, and he is not only baptised for himself, but for all his forbears. If they are to be saved, it is through baptism,

and the Mormons therefore have baptism for the dead. But in the light of the chapter, baptism for the dead is a belief in the doctrine of Christ's resurrection from the dead, and of the resurrection of the dead at the last day. Persons who were baptised, were received by baptism into the Christian Church. It was on the ground of their professing that Christ did rise from the dead, and that they believed also in the resurrection of the dead at the last day, that they were baptised. These were the doctrines that were denied and ridiculed by the Greeks. Not only Christ's resurrection from the dead, but the resurrection at the last day. We find Paul saying "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" But all who professed the name of Christ and who embraced Christianity and were received into the Christian Church through baptism, made this profession, that Christ was the Son of God and that they believed in His resurrection from the dead. On making this profession they were baptised. They were in this public way identifying themselves with the Church of God, and because of that, they met with ridicule and opposition and persecution. So if Christ be not raised "why are they then baptised for the dead? and why stand we in jeopardy every hour?" These people were putting their lives in jeopardy by receiving baptism and thereby making a public profession that Christ rose from the dead. If the dead rise not, why do people go and hazard their lives and meet with scorn and ridicule from both Jews and Greeks, by professing that Christ rose from the dead. Is it any wonder that the apostle says, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable?" Meeting with all these trials and troubles in connection with following Christ, if Christ be not risen, then all our suffering and all that we meet with, is in vain. "If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die." He fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, that is men who were just acting like wild beasts, and, of course, it was



true also that the Christians were thrown to wild beasts. Those who professed Christ were subjected to that death in Rome. They were brought into the amphitheatre and before thousands of spectators, lions and wild beasts were let loose upon them, that savagely tore them to bits. They endured all that for Christ and in defence of the belief that Christ rose from the dead and that He is a living Saviour. But if Christ be not raised, What is the advantage of suffering all this? It is as well to "eat and drink; for tomorrow we die." And that is just the logical conclusion of a denial of the resurrection. It leads to the new morality. There is no judgment, no Heaven and no Hell.

But to return to the sacraments. Those who are receiving baptism profess that Christ rose from the dead. It is on that basis, the basis of that profession and on the doctrines implied in that profession, that they receive baptism. But if Christ be not risen, then baptism becomes a meaningless rite. When ministers therefore, who deny the resurrection of Christ from the dead, (as the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand now denies, through her Supreme Court) administer baptism, their baptism is invalid. The Reformers accepted the baptism of the Roman Catholic Church because she had not changed the doctrine of baptism. Although she has added many things to it, she baptises in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and fully believes in the resurrection of Christ from the dead and His ascension to the right hand of God. Her baptism was regarded as valid. But when we come to a Church that denies, through its Supreme Court, the doctrine of Christ's resurrection from the dead, that unashamedly seals what Principal Geering said (that His resurrection is but a beautiful legend), then the validity of the sacraments falls to the ground, and all the other doctrines that we have mentioned: they are just relegated into the region of legend and become null and void. The General Assembly instead of excommunicating Professor Geering as a heretic and as an apostate from the faith, dismissed the charges of doctrinal errors

brought against him, and DECLARED ITS CONFIDENCE IN THE PROFESSOR AS MINISTER, TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL OF THE THEOLOGICAL HALL.

The doctrine of the new birth becomes meaningless. We find the Apostle Peter saying to those to whom he was writing, that they were begotten again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. They were begotten again, born again, and through being born again, they came to have a lively or living hope, a good hope through grace by the resurrection of Christ from the dead. But if Christ be not risen, then their faith is vain, their hope is vain. There is no such thing as a good hope through grace. But all who have been born again, are living witnesses to the fact of Christ's resurrection, that He is the resurrection and the life. "And our preaching" he says "is vain". "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." A denial therefore, of the resurrection of Christ, of this fundamental and cardinal doctrine, undermines the whole fabric of the Christian faith, all the cardinal doctrines collapse. A church, therefore, that publicly condones in her Supreme Court the views of Principal Geering, that denies Christ's physical resurrection from the dead, has forfeited the right to be called a Christian Church. She has by the decision of her Assembly overthrown all the cardinal doctrines of our most holy faith, nullified the validity of the sacraments, made Christ and His apostles false witnesses, and has put the Christian Church on a foundation of falsehood.

That is the state to which matters have come in our day, not only in the Presbyterian Church, but in other churches as well,

applauding through their leaders the decision of the Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. They are showing that they are of the same opinion. What proof that truth has fallen in the street and that there is no true witness in such churches on the side of Christ! They are dead churches and apostate from the faith once delivered to the saints. To remain in such churches is to incur the righteous indignation of the Lord for the dishonour done to His Son. No person can absolve himself from that dishonour or from the guilt bound up with that dishonour, but by separating from such churches. "Come out from among them and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing and I will receive you and ye shall be my sons and daughters saith the Lord God Almighty." "If the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins."

But Christ is raised and exalted to be a Prince and Saviour for to give repentance and remission of sins unto Israel. He is a Saviour from sin, in its guilt, power, pollution and punishment, in virtue of the infinitely efficacious atonement He made for sin by the sacrifice of Himself. His blood alone cleanses from all sin. He is an all sufficient and an all powerful Saviour. He is a living Saviour. All who have been begotten again to a living hope, a good hope through grace, have Christ as their life and Christ as their hope. They were born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever (1 Peter 1:23). They live a life of faith upon Him. It is to the Lord Jesus Christ we are invited in the gospel. He it is who says to sinners, even the chief, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

The Christ of Principal Geering is a false Christ, not the Christ of God and of the church universal in all ages and lands. Whatever claims Principal Geering may lay to gifts and to scholarship, his soul is still in the death and darkness of unregeneracy. He is a wandering star without hope and without God in the world, heading heedlessly towards the blackness of darkness of a lost and undone eternity.

How in this day of blatant apostacy we should give heed to the solemn warning of the Saviour—"WHOSOEVER SHALL DENY ME BEFORE MEN, HIM WILL I ALSO DENY BEFORE MY FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN"! (Matt. 10:33). These words should make the so-called Evangelicals in the Presbyterian Church tremble. Where was their witness on the side of Christ at the Assembly? The everlasting gospel of the grace of God is not to be found in the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand. The notorious Declaratory Act of 1901 which is part of the constitution of the Presbyterian Church and to which all ordained in the Presbyterian Church must subscribe, robbed the Presbyterian Church of the gospel. Their so-called "evangelical" gospel is another gospel.

The Lord in His infinite mercy grant that the gospel would come to us as it came to the Thessalonians and to all who are the Lord's people, not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance (1 Thess. 1:5), for apart from divine teaching, the things of the Spirit of God will be foolishness to us.

We have since been informed that not a single minister of the so-called Evangelicals of the Westminster Fellowship in the Presbyterian Church so much as recorded his dissent against the decision of the Assembly exonerating Principal Geering.

Principal Geering, in defence of his views at the Assembly, appealed to the Declaratory Act as giving him and others liberty to hold views contrary to the Westminster Confession of Faith.—W.M.

*Preached in Gisborne NZ at the Prayer Meeting  
Wednesday 8th November 1967*

# THE GOOD HOPE AND THE FALSE HOPE

*“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.”*

1 Peter 1:3-4

**W**e shall consider as the Lord will enable us: 1. Those who have this hope. 2. The nature of their hope—it is a lively or living hope. 3. That bound up with this hope is an interest in and a right to the inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for all who have this hope. In other words, it is those who have this hope, as the words of our text make clear, who are heirs of heaven.

And firstly—those who have this hope. There was a day when they did not have this hope. The Word of God declares that all by nature are without God and without hope in the world, that is without this lively hope, this good hope through grace. All have a hope of some kind, but only those who have been begotten again, or born again, have this lively hope.

There are many whose hopes are centred on the things of this

world. Their portion is in this life only. Their hopes and prospects therefore are worldly and materialistic. They have no hope for eternity. Their need of being born again, and of being prepared for death and eternity are matters which give them no concern. They are of the earth earthly. They are like the rich man in the parable who prospered in worldly things, and who said to his soul, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou has provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." Luke 12 v. 20. How numerous they are in our day who live as this rich man, blinded by the god of this world, wise in their own estimation but fools in God's sight, careless and unconcerned as to their latter end! But the wrath of God will be the eternal portion of all who die as the rich man did, for "the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." (Psalm 9, v. 17). They shall then know, when it is forever too late, the answer to the solemn question, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" It would be our wisdom to face this question now, for "now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation," and to believe that nothing short of having Christ as our portion will profit or save our souls. "Godliness with contentment" the Word of God tells us, "is great gain." We can have neither, apart from faith in Christ. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, for "none perish that Him trust."

There are others, and they too form a numerous class, who profess to have a hope. They do not question but that they are God's children, and that they will be received into heaven at last. If, however, they were examined as to the foundation of their hope, they would confess that they live honest and good lives, engage in social work, in helping the poor, the sick and the bereaved, they do

much for the Church and serve the Lord. They are not irreligious like the first class. But all without exception, whose hope for eternity is based on what they themselves think they are and upon what they do and what they hope to do, have not “the lively hope” which our text speaks of, but a false hope. Those who have this “lively hope,” their good hope through grace is not based on any works of their own. It is based on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness. Christ is the centre and the foundation of their hope. The Truth declares that the hope of the hypocrite shall perish, but that the righteous has a hope in his death. A hypocrite, according to the common scriptural usage of the term, is a person who is deluded or self-deceived. All who are building their hopes for eternity on their own good works, their kindness to their neighbours and so on, are building on a foundation of sand. They are self-deceived and their hope shall perish, they are not of the righteous who have a hope in their death. The foolish virgins were hypocrites, that is they were self-deceived. At death the lamp of their hope went out. Instead of being received into heaven as they expected, they were shut out and shut into the prison of eternal despair. We read that the door was shut. How solemn the words, “And the door was shut!” But the wise virgins who had this lively or living hope entered in.

2. Now in connection with the nature of this hope, it is said to be a lively hope or as it is elsewhere called, a good hope through grace that shall not be put to shame. We are told that they who have it, were begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Christ’s resurrection from the dead implies the death which He died in order to make an atonement for sin. “He was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification.” No sinner can be justified in God’s sight, can be accounted righteous and have the pardon of his sins, but on the ground of Christ’s atoning death. “It is the blood,” we read, “that maketh an atonement for the soul.” No blood could make an atonement for the soul but the precious blood

of Christ. The blood of the sacrifices slain on Jewish altars pointed to the coming of Christ, to the one sacrifice which He in the fulness of time was to offer for sin. It is Christ's sacrifice on Calvary that made the atonement that God required for sin. It is the sacrifice which the Lord in His eternal love provided. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life." We therefore read, that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth from all sin. There is infinite efficacy and merit in Christ's blood to wash the foulest sinner clean. As proof that Christ by the offering of Himself met and satisfied the claims of divine justice and made the atonement for sin which justice in God required, God raised Him from the dead, but exalted and glorified Him in the human nature with the glory which He had with the Father before the world was. He is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour for to give repentance and remission of sins unto Israel. It is in virtue of His death, resurrection, ascension and glorification, that He is set before us in the gospel as a Saviour mighty to save. There is no hope for any sinner apart from Christ, but in Christ there is hope for the greatest sinner out of hell. He is set before us in the gospel as a door of hope and as an open door. "I am the door, by me if any man enter in he shall be saved."

It is true of those who have a good hope through grace, that they died to the false hope they once entertained. We have either a good hope or a false hope. If we have not been begotten again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, then our hope is false. It is a hope that will perish. The apostle Paul tells us, there was a time in his life that he was a godly young man in his own estimation. He fully believed he was in possession of a hope that gave him a right to the heavenly inheritance. In the mercy of God he died to that hope. He came to see it to be false and unfounded. It was based on the training and privileges he had as an orthodox Jew, which included the sacraments of the Old Testament Church, Circumcision and the



Passover. Besides the thorough grounding he had in the law and the prophets at the feet of Gamaliel, and the zeal with which he did God service, he bore a character which was outwardly blameless and above reproach. If any could lay claim to credentials for heaven on the ground of church privileges and good works it was Saul of Tarsus. A day, however, came in his experience when he was brought to see that they were altogether irrelevant as a ground for salvation, that he was guilty of going about to establish his own righteousness and not submitting to the righteousness of God. "When the commandment came" he confesses, "sin revived and I died." The commandment which gave a death-blow to his mistaken hopes was the tenth commandment. "I had not known sin, but by the law, for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." The Holy Spirit opened up to his understanding and conscience the spirituality of God's law, that it requires perfect obedience in heart, walk and conversation. Such perfect obedience can only come from a nature that is holy, sinless and undefiled. Adam, as he came forth from the hand of God in a state of innocency, had such a nature. He was therefore, able to come up to the righteousness of the law, to give the law that perfect obedience which the law required. But since the Fall man has a nature that is sinful, defiled and depraved. On account of the sinfulness of our nature and the sinfulness of our actions we are under the curse and condemnation of God's holy law. As it is written, "Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." The ruin of man's nature by the Fall, and his total inability to be saved by any obedience of his own to the law, is experimentally opened up in the understanding of all who have a good hope through grace. They are taught to know that by the works of the law no flesh can be justified in God's sight. That is an unerasable conviction that the Holy Spirit stamps on their hearts. But not only did those who have this good hope die to all hope of obtaining salvation, or of being justified in

God's sight by any works of righteousness of their own, but they also died to all ability on their part of believing in Christ. Persons may profess to believe in, and even defend and contend for, the doctrine of justification by faith, and yet only have a natural faith, or as divines term it, an historical faith. It is the faith of decisionism, the soul-deluding technique of popular evangelists who lead their converts to believe, that their decision for Christ is the fruit of the faith which is the gift of God. We can believe in the Fall of man, the divinity of Christ, His virgin birth, atoning death, His physical resurrection, ascension and glorification, and as we have already mentioned, the doctrine of justification by faith alone, and yet have only an historical or intellectual faith. The intellect of man apart from regenerating grace can attain to such a faith and to a sound and profound acquaintance with the cardinal doctrines of Christianity. Persons brought up in orthodox circles unquestionably hold to such doctrines. There are many, too, who undergo an intellectual conversion from Arminianism to Calvinism. They come to hold and to uphold the doctrines of free and sovereign grace. But alas! They unwarrantably conclude that because their creed is sound, that their hope is good. But all who have been convinced of their sinnership before God, whether they were orthodox or unorthodox, were convinced of their inability to believe in Christ. The Holy Spirit convinces all whom He savingly teaches, of the sin of unbelief, that their inability is their sin and proof of their guilt. They are brought in guilty before God, the judge of all, in their consciences and brought to see and to believe, that God would be just in their eternal condemnation. Only those who have been convinced of their total inability, believe experimentally, and therefore savingly, in the doctrine of the total depravity of man's nature, for no sooner has the sinner died to his own ability and to realise that in himself he is helpless and hopeless, than his mind is enlightened in the knowledge of Christ, so that he sees Christ by faith and receives and

rests upon Him alone as He is freely offered in the gospel. All who are regenerated are dead to the law. No sinner who has passed from death unto life looks to the law for life. All, without exception, who belong to the household of faith, whether sanctified from the womb as John the Baptist was, or like Timothy from childhood made wise unto salvation, whether their conversion corresponds with that of Lydia or of the Philippian jailer, all are dead to the law. And if dead to the law then married to Christ, as the Truth declares, in a covenant which ensures and makes over to them all the blessings which are in Christ. "But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." They are called effectually and justified freely. "It is one thing" as Dr Owen says, "to be in a state of grace, it is another to know that this is the case. All believers are in a state of grace. They have peace with God, being reconciled to Him by the blood of the cross, but as to what shall be the measure of their understanding of their interest in it, this is left to the sovereign grace and good pleasure of God. There are many believers who all their days never come to an abiding sense of peace with God, but are filled with troubles and exercised with fears and perplexities, so that they go sorrowing and heavy all their days." Persons with an intellectual or historical faith are not tried as to their faith or as to their hope. They are buoyed up with the delusion of an unquestioned assurance. The savour of spiritual death is in their writings no matter how sound, and in their exercises no matter how scriptural. They are strangers to the poverty of spirit of the living in Jerusalem (Matth. 5). Those who have a good hope through grace are said to be an afflicted and poor people whose trust is in the name of the Lord.

A "lively hope" is not apart, as we already observed, from faith in Christ. The confession and desire of those who have it is, "that I might be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ,

the righteousness which is of God by faith.” Faith is the substance of things hoped for. Faith sees a substance, a reality, in the blessings of redemption freely offered to us as sinners in the gospel. We read of those in the parable of the marriage feast to whom the invitation, “All things are now ready, come ye to the feast,” made no appeal. What was real and of substance to them was their land, their oxen, their merchandise and their family concerns. They are the seed of the serpent, whose god is their belly and who live on the dust. They have neither appetite nor relish for the manna from heaven. But the lively hope and the faith unfeigned of saving grace seeks to rise to the confession of the apostle—“the things that were gain to me, them I counted loss for Christ, yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.” Faith sees a reality in the blessings of the gospel, and hope waits for them. Those therefore, who have this hope, are a waiting people. They wait upon the Lord and look to Him for the blessings their souls stand in need of.

My soul, wait thou with patience  
upon thy God alone;  
On Him dependeth all my hope  
and expectation.

Ps. 62 v. 5 (Metr. version).

Where this “lively hope” is there is an endeavour to keep the commandments of God. Those who are in Christ, are under the law to Christ. Although they are dead to the law as a ground of acceptance, they are under the law to Christ as their rule of life. “If ye love Me” Christ says, “keep my commandments.” The prayer and desire of grace is, “Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart. Make me to go in the path of thy commandments: for therein do I delight.” They love the law of God after the inner man. They are not under the law, but

under grace. That is, they are delivered from the condemnation of the law, but not from the obedience due to the law. The grace of love in the soul manifests itself in obedience. "This is the love of God that we keep His commandments." There is false teaching abroad in connection with the believer's relation to the law. The verse, "ye are not under the law but under grace," is interpreted to mean that the law as a moral code and rule of life for the believer is dispensed with. Such an interpretation is not from grace but from nature, for the grace of God that bringeth salvation, as the apostle says in his Epistle to Titus, teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world. Saving knowledge of Christ is all of grace. "And hereby we do know that we know Him" says the apostle John in his First Epistle, "if we keep His commandments. He that saith I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him." There are others who hold that the moral law is not the believer's rule of life, but the precepts of the gospel. But what are the precepts of the gospel, but an unfolding and an opening up of the spirituality of the law?

It is by the resurrection of Christ from the dead that His people are begotten again to a lively hope. The denial of the doctrine of Christ's resurrection from the dead, so widespread in our day, is the very negation of the Christian faith. All who deny Christ's physical resurrection from the dead have no lively hope. They are liars and hypocrites, and all such shall have their portion in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone which is the second death. All who have this lively hope believe in the resurrection of Christ, for their faith and hope is in a living Saviour, the One who was dead and is alive, and alive for evermore after the power of an endless life. They have, accordingly, a love to the Lord's Day, the divine memorial to Christ's resurrection from the dead. A person who claims to love Christ and who has no love for His Day is self-deceived. His love is spurious and his hope is false. The following question was put by the

saintly Rev. Robert Murray McCheyne:—“Did you ever meet with a lively believer in any country under heaven—one who loved Christ, and lived a holy life—who did not delight in keeping holy to God the entire Lord’s Day?”

Those who have this “lively hope” are said in this chapter to purify their souls by obeying the truth through the Spirit. The Word of God has become precious to them.

“This word of thine my comfort is  
In mine affliction:  
For in my straits I am revived  
by this thy word alone.”

Ps. 119, 50.

They are as new-born babes, as we read in chapter 2 of this epistle, desiring the sincere milk of the Word, that they may grow thereby. Nothing will sustain and nourish the life of grace in the soul, but the sincere milk of the Word, unadulterated by false and erroneous views. Those born again cannot feed on the husks of false doctrine. Those who wilfully do, prove that they are strangers to grace and to God. We find the apostle warning the saints in Corinth against complicity in or compromise with what is false and idolatrous in doctrine and worship, and he concludes his warning with the exhortation, “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” What is contrary to the revealed will of God as set forth in His Word is “unclean” in His sight. And if “unclean” in God’s sight, it cannot but have a defiling and deadening effect on those who countenance it. It will rob His people of their liberty, and prove a yoke of bondage to them. But in obeying the truth through the Spirit in pursuing the path of duty so clearly set before them in the above exhortation, the Lord will be

restoring to them the joy of His salvation, and giving them tokens that they are His sons and daughters. However difficult and trying they may see their duty to be, how gracious the encouragement in the words, "And I will receive you." To the self-deceived, the approval and the applause of men is more to them than the honour of Christ and His Cause in the world.

They seek also to purify their souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit, as set forth in verses 14-16 of this chapter. "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance; but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy, as I am holy." "And every man," says the apostle John in his First Epistle, "that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." His people are kept conscious of their need of being cleansed and kept. And to Christ, the Hope of Israel and the Saviour thereof in the time of trouble, they look for both. They plead the merit of His precious blood to cleanse them from secret faults and to keep them from all presumptuous sins. With the Psalmist they confess, "If in my heart I sin regard the Lord me will not hear." Balaam was a prophet whose profession was great and his words were good. "Let me die," he said, "the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." Although he desired the end of the righteous, for the righteous has a hope in his death, Balaam had no desire to live the life of the righteous. He loved the wages of unrighteousness despite his confessions to the contrary. The Lord exposed the enmity which he cherished to His Israel. His hope, like the hope of every hypocrite, perished at death. How solemn the words, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name have done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." They were workers of iniquity either in secret or in public. But those with a good hope are

made honest. They greatly fear being deceived for eternity. "Search me, O God," is their cry "and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

It is true of His people that they have unfeigned love to the brethren. "We know," said the apostle, "that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death."

They have a love for the Cause of Christ in the world. They seek and pray for the coming of His kingdom, the glorious days promised, when His will shall be done in the earth as it is done in heaven. It is through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit blessing the gospel, which will usher in the millennial glory of the Church, "when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." Their prayer and desire is that of the Psalmist, "The whole earth let His glory fill, Amen, so let it be."

The Rev. Christopher Munro, a godly minister of the last century in Scotland, once remarked in the course of his preaching, "If you can say in truth, 'Thy kingdom come,' I tell you that you have what will stand you for eternity."

3. Those who have this lively hope have a right and a title to the inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away. Their right to it has its source in their election in Christ before the foundation of the world. Christ redeemed them by the price He paid for them, and by His perfect obedience obtained a right to the inheritance for them. "I go," He said to His disciples, "to prepare a place for you, that where I am there ye may be also." He was then on His way to Gethsemane and Calvary. They have a right to the inheritance through the sprinkling of Christ's blood upon them, in their regeneration, in their being quickened out of the grave of spiritual death in which they were, and in their being put in possession of a good hope through grace.



It is through much tribulation that they are to enter the kingdom, but whatever storms they meet with on their voyage to the desired haven, it is said that the anchor of their hope is both sure and steadfast. It is the all-prevailing intercession of Jesus, their Saviour and Advocate within the veil, who is made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec, that keeps the anchor of their hope sure and steadfast. He ever liveth to make continual intercession for them. It is in virtue of Christ's intercession that they are kept in the world, sanctified through the truth and in His own appointed time, glorified. They are said in verse 3 to be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. That is the salvation they will receive at death, when they enter into possession of their eternal inheritance. It is through faith in His power that they are kept. It is through faith in His blood that they are washed.

So they from strength unwearied go  
still forward unto strength,  
Until in Sion they appear  
before the Lord at length.

Psalm 84, 7.

Their desire is to give to Him the honour, and the glory and the praise which are His due. They feel they come far short of what they desire. When they would do good, they find evil to be present with them. But the Lord has promised to fulfil the desire of those that fear Him. Their desire shall be fully satisfied when throughout the endless ages their song of praise shall be, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen."

*Preached in Palmerston North NZ  
23rd June 1967*

## GUIDED BY THE LORD

*“Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.”*

Psalm 73:24

**W**e have in these words the confession of Asaph who wrote this Psalm, after the Lord had delivered him from the trial through which he passed, a trial which brought him so low that he concluded his hope and his profession were all in vain. When he got deliverance this was the new song that was in his mouth—“Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.”

As the Lord may enable us we shall consider; (1) Those who have this confession and who have a right to such a confession; (2) A few things implied in their confession.

1. It is clear from the Psalm that it is the Israel of God, His own ransomed people, who are led and guided by the Lord. As the Lord delivered His people out of the land of Egypt and guided them through the wilderness, and into possession of Canaan the promised land, so the Lord is guiding all whom He delivers out of the Egypt of a state of nature to the heavenly Canaan of eternal glory. And what is true of them? The Psalmist here through the Holy Spirit tells what is true of them. They are a people to whom the Lord is good, good

and gracious to them in all His dealings with them. It is the fruit of His goodness, of His everlasting love to them that they are of a clean heart, that a principle of life and purity was implanted in their souls in the day of their regeneration and thereby blessed in their union to Christ. "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." They shall at last be with Him where He is, beholding His glory, as that is brought before us in Christ's intercessory prayer on their behalf: "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."

There is nothing clean in the heart of man as he is by nature. It is in connection with the heart of man that the question is put: "who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" The Word of God declares that "the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it?" The Lord alone knows the depths of depravity of our nature, what a cesspool of filth and sin the heart of man is. "Out of the heart," says the Saviour, "proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." We were born in sin and shapen in iniquity. We have a nature that drinks in iniquity like water. Sin is sweet to our fallen and depraved nature. We are guilty before God the Judge of all, of choosing and seeking after the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season, to gratify the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life. Such is the power and love of sin in the heart of a sinner that he will set at nought the counsel of God, the warnings of God in His Word, no matter how solemn, and the invitation of God, no matter how gracious, in order to go on in his own way. He walks, as the Word of God says, in the ways of his own heart and not in Wisdom's ways, although Wisdom's ways are pleasantness and all her paths are peace. He walks in the light of his own eyes and not in the light of God's Word, vainly and foolishly imagining that all shall be well. But what the Lord says shall stand—"Rejoice, O young man in thy youth;

and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth; and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.”

We live in a day when the counsel of God is cast aside by leaders in the professing Church. Like the false prophets of old they stand not in the counsel of the Lord, and the woe of the Lord is upon them. The pronouncements they make on doctrinal and moral issues are diametrically opposed to God’s counsel. “They have rejected the Word of the Lord and what wisdom is in them.” They are blind leaders. The light which they profess to have is darkness, and those who follow them are blind also. “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the eyes of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them.” All who sponsor and support the Ecumenical movement are blinded by Satan as an angel of light and are heading towards the midnight darkness of the Church of Rome in time, and towards the blackness of darkness in eternity. “To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them.”

The leaders in the State are equally guilty of rejecting the counsel of the Lord. The civil magistrate or the civic authorities are duty bound according to the Word of God, to uphold the law of God, not only the second table of the law, in seeing to it that thieves, murderers and all evil doers are judged and punished for their crimes, but also the first table of the law, the first four commandments setting forth our duty to God. In holding the view that this is outside their province they prove their rejection of the counsel of God, and that is clearly revealed in the recent decision of the Wellington City Council to permit organised sport on the Lord’s Day. The god of this generation is but an idol of their own imagination, not the one living and true God who is infinite, eternal and unchangeable in His being, and in all His glorious perfections, unchangeable too in His hatred of sin.

The God of Truth cannot be mocked, as desecrators of His day shall discover, either in mercy or in judgment. "Cursed is that health," said the great Dr Love, one of the most renowned ministers of Scotland in the 18th century, "and cursed is that wealth and cursed is that recreation which is obtained by criminal encroachments on God's Holy Day." And the saintly Rev. Murray McCheyne said that the polished Sabbath breaker and the murderer are one in God's sight. They are both guilty of contempt and defiance of God's law. The polished Sabbath breaker is guilty of trampling under foot the memorial of Christ's resurrection from the dead, and therefore guilty of trampling under foot the blood of Christ and of rejecting the great salvation which Christ by His precious blood obtained. Sabbath breakers are pure in their own eyes. They do not look upon their Sabbath breaking as a sin. God in His Word declares that "There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness." Sabbath breakers are in that class. They are not of the Israel of God who are clean in heart because washed with the washing of regeneration. If you have no love for God's Day and seek your own pleasure on it, you are not of the Israel of God who are journeying toward eternal glory. You are being led captive by the devil at his will on the way that will end, if you repent not, in eternal perdition.

We shall now notice the counsel by which the Lord is leading His people, and according to which He will bring them at last to glory. That counsel is the covenant of grace. Were it not for the covenant of grace no sinner of the lost race to which we belong would ever get grace in time or glory in eternity. By breaking the covenant of works, Adam the covenant head and representative of the human race, forfeited the promise of eternal life and procured for himself and for his posterity the sentence of eternal death. But the Lord in His grace, love and mercy, made the covenant of grace with His beloved Son on behalf of all whom He purposed to save, a number which no man

can number, as the dust of the earth, and the stars of the heaven, innumerable. It is in terms of this everlasting covenant that Christ assumed in the womb of the Virgin the nature of those whom He came to save. In terms, too, of the covenant of grace, He satisfied all the claims of God's law and justice, made reconciliation for iniquity and brought in an everlasting righteousness, purchased eternal life for sinners deserving eternal death, pardon and peace for the guilty and the lost. Christ is the Head and Mediator of the covenant of grace. All the blessings of the covenant and the blessings of salvation are at His disposal, and conveyed and revealed by the Holy Spirit to all who are savingly taught by Him. The Father, Son and Holy Ghost are one, one in their witness that God hath given to us eternal life and that this life is in His Son. However guilty, ruined, lost and hell deserving you may be, there is eternal life in Christ for you. "Incline your ear," he says, "and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." The blessings to be found in Christ, bound up in the eternal life that is in Him, are sure mercies. He Himself says, "I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." The witness and testimony of His Israel is, "Thou hast received gifts for men, for such as did rebel; Yea, ev'n for them, that God the Lord in midst of them might dwell." "Hear and your soul shall live." Hear what He says concerning you that you have destroyed yourself, that you are undone in your state and nature. You say, I believe that I am a graceless and Christless sinner. On what authority do you believe that? I believe it on the authority of God's Word, for if I would say otherwise I know I would be but deceiving myself. And if you believe that on the authority of God's Word, you have the authority and the warrant of God's Word for believing that there is in Christ, and in Christ alone, what will meet all your needs as a sinner. "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in Me is thine help." "Hear and your soul shall live and I will make an everlasting covenant with you."

What a blessing it would be if you would hear in your soul the voice of Christ speaking to you as a sinner and calling upon you to return to Him and to receive that eternal life which is to be found in Him alone. And at this very moment that gracious invitation is coming to us from the Saviour, for He is nigh to us in His Word. How we should be crying to Him—O Lord turn me from every evil way. Enlighten me lest the sleep of death me overtake. Remember me with that love which thou bearest to thine own. Visit my soul with that salvation wherein thy glory is made great. Leave me not to be deceiving myself for eternity. Wash me and I shall be whiter than the snow. You will find Christ to be according to His Word, for He never said to the seed of Jacob to seek His face in vain.

Now, those who are of the Israel of God are fully satisfied with God's counsel, with God's way of salvation. It is salvation from sin and salvation that ensures conformity to the image of Christ. They know that without holiness no man shall see the Lord, but there is in this salvation what will sanctify them and make them perfect in holiness at death. We find David confessing on his death-bed, "Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow." If the question were put to David, "How do you know David, that the Lord has made an everlasting covenant with you and that the blessings of the covenant are yours, grace in time and glory in eternity?" We have his own answer—"It is all my salvation and all my desire." I desire no other salvation but this salvation, the salvation planned and presented in the covenant that is ordered in all things and sure.

If you are satisfied with God's way of salvation, that there is no hope for you apart from Christ and His precious blood, with God's way of salvation, with the glorious scheme of redemption, things which the angels desire to look into, you cannot but be dissatisfied with yourself. The house of your soul is far from what you would

have it to be. But with all your backwardness, backsliding and wretchedness is this not your cry—"Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation?" It is because you are a partaker of that salvation that you are satisfied with Christ and dissatisfied with yourself. You are embraced in the promise of the covenant. "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."

The Word of God which is His counsel, is precious to His Israel. They do not sit in judgment on the Word of God, for they have been, and are being judged by it. All who sit in judgment on God's Word, impugn its inspiration and infallibility and are not of the Israel of God. They are of their father the devil and his lusts they will do. They are in this dark day of apostasy like a plague in the schools, colleges and pulpits of our land. All who have an ear and a heart for their teaching are not of Christ's sheep. The Lord Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, says concerning His sheep "And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers."

The doctrines of Christ are to His Israel the words of eternal life. What His counsel reveals they accept. Saving faith receives and embraces the doctrines of the faith—the fall of man, his total depravity and inability, the doctrine of election, redemption by the blood, regeneration by the Spirit, the perseverance of the saints and the offer of Christ, free, full and unfettered to all to whom the gospel comes.

II. It is clear from the history of the Israel of God that, through the power of indwelling sin, unbelief and the wiles of Satan, at times they have been taken aside to follow counsels of their own. It was his own counsel that Jonah the prophet of the Lord followed when he fled to Tarshish. It was not the counsel of the Lord that Joshua and the elders of Israel followed when they gave the right hand of fellowship



to the Gibeonites, for the account they gave of themselves was so plausible and the evidences, that they had come a long journey, so convincing. But Joshua and the elders of Israel soon discovered that they had been taken in. And the reason?—"they asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord." And how often history repeats itself. Philip the evangelist, a man full of the Holy Ghost, received and baptised Simon the sorcerer, and the apostle Paul speaks of Demas who afterwards fell away having loved this present world, as a fellow-labourer.

It was following his own counsel, his own reasoning on the dispensations of God in His providence that led Asaph, as he confesses in this Psalm, into the trial which brought him so low. He saw and even envied the prosperity of the wicked. They rejected the counsel of the Lord, blasphemed His name, lived as if God did not exist, and yet they prospered. On the other hand Asaph was given the bread of adversity and the water of affliction. "All the day long I have been plagued, and chastened every morning." During this period all that he was conscious of was the plague of his own heart, plagued by its carnality and corruption and the rod of the Lord upon him. "Verily," he concludes, "I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency." "With the heart," it is written "man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." My faith cannot be saving and the public profession I have made cannot but be false. It cannot be that I am of the Israel of God to whom the Lord is good and who are of a clean heart.

But although Asaph was writing bitter things against himself, he was by his speech betraying that he was an Israelite indeed. "If I say I will speak thus; behold I should offend against the generation of thy children." There is a tenderness in grace toward the Lord's people. Although I cannot see myself to be of them, I know the Lord is good to His Israel and I would not desire to hurt them. One of Jonathan Edwards' seventy resolutions was, "Let there be something

of benevolence in all that I speak.” Asaph also desired to be in the sanctuary of God. “The Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.” Grace in the heart loves what the Lord loves, where the Lord is publicly honoured and publicly praised. The godly in the past, although none more diligent in the private means than they, would walk long distances to be present in the public means. In the days of the persecution in Scotland a young woman set off to attend a communion service far among the hills and the glens which afforded seclusion and protection. The journey was long, and she was in danger, if caught, of being either tortured or shot. The Red Dragoons who were out for the life of the Lord’s witnesses spied her and rode up to her. On enquiring where she was going, she said, “The Elder Brother has died. His last will and testament is being read today and I am going to see if there is anything in the will for me.” Not understanding the language of Canaan, they expressed their sympathy in her loss and allowed her to continue her journey.

It was in God’s sanctuary that Asaph got deliverance. The Lord in leaving Asaph’s deliverance in the sanctuary on record, did so for our learning, that with David who also honoured the private means, we might say—“A day in thy courts is better than a thousand.” I knew a godly woman in Scotland whose prayer and desire was that when she would not be able to attend the public means of grace that the Lord would remove her out of this world. Her desire was granted to her. In her younger days she used to walk the distance of about 30 miles to a neighbouring parish to hear the Word of life, denied her at that time in the parish in which she lived.

Asaph was given to see in the sanctuary the end of the wicked. He may have heard in the reading of the law the solemn words “To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence; their foot shall slide in due time : for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste.” He sees them hastening unconcernedly down on the slippery slope of worldly prosperity to

be received at death not into glory, but to be cast into the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone which is the second death. And he exclaims, "How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors."

"How foolish and ignorant I was and in thy sight a beast! Nevertheless I am continually with thee." I am not with the wicked, their way is not my way, their prosperity is not my portion. I am not with them. I am with Thee. I am continually with Thee even when in deep and darksome caves. Thou art ever watching over me for Thou art the Keeper of Israel who slumbers not nor sleeps, and who art making continual intercession on behalf on Thine own. Asaph's deliverance was the fruit of Christ's intercession as surely as Peter's was. "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

"Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel." Save me from walking in counsels of mine own. It is thy counsel that shall stand. Thy counsel is good, for good is the will of the Lord. What thou hast ordained for me shall come to pass, for the covenant is ordered in all things and sure. Whatsoever comes to pass is for thy glory, and what is for thy glory must be for my good. Thou art guiding thine Israel by a right way however dark and difficult and mysterious the way at times may appear.

"And afterward receive me to glory." Thou art my shepherd. Thou hast restored my soul from wandering in forbidden paths which led me into darkness and bondage. Reviving and restoration are in the covenant for His Israel. Many times did he deliver them; but they provoked him with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity. Nevertheless he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry, and he remembered for them his covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies." "My soul He doth restore again." is the testimony of His Israel. The Psalmist therefore in the

light of the Lord's manifold restorations and deliverances to his soul from darkness, desertion and bondage, could say, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." My foes shall be found liars unto me. I shall feast eternally in Immanuel's land. I shall be anointed with the oil of gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. My cup shall be overflowing and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

"Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel and afterward receive me to glory."

Are they not a blessed people whose God is the Lord! They only are a happy people. "Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places." You shall never know what true peace and true happiness is until you find the peace and the happiness that is in the One who redeemed His people and who says "I am not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." And the message also of His Word is to you, "The Master is come and calleth for thee." "The Master is come and calleth for thee."

*Preached in Wellington NZ  
1968*

# CHRIST THE GOOD SHEPHERD

*“My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.”*

John 10:27, 28

**I**n this chapter Christ is speaking of Himself as the Good Shepherd and in the words of our text He is bringing before us what is true of His sheep. In the first place we may notice the person who is speaking—the Good Shepherd and in the second place what He is saying concerning His sheep.

Christ is speaking of Himself as the Good Shepherd. He is the Good Shepherd as distinct from the false shepherds whom He calls thieves and robbers. They did not enter in by the door into the sheepfold, that is into the church, but they climbed up some other way. But Christ says in connection with Himself as the Good Shepherd; that He entereth in by the door, and that is true of all who are under shepherds, that they enter in by the door, into the fold or into the church. To enter in by the door is to enter in by a lawful way. Christ entered in by the door because He was called and appointed to be the Shepherd of the Sheep.

He began His public ministry at the age of 30, after His baptism

in Jordan by John the Baptist. In Old Testament times the Levites at the age of 30 entered on their ministry in the tabernacle, by having pure water sprinkled upon them at the door of the tabernacle. We have brought before us in the Book of Numbers that once they were sprinkled with pure water at the door of the tabernacle, the door of the tabernacle was opened for them to enter their public ministry.

Christ at the age of 30 came to John the Baptist to be baptised of him. He was fulfilling as He said "all righteousness". In being baptised by John, He was fulfilling that which was typified of Him. The Levites were types of Christ and as they entered at the age of 30 into their public ministry by having pure water sprinkled upon them, so Christ in entering on His ministry was baptised by John in the light of the type which Christ was fulfilling. It would therefore appear that John sprinkled Him in the river Jordan. Thus it does not imply that He was immersed. He came up from the place where the water was, and when coming up out of the water, the Holy Spirit came down in the form of a dove and abode upon Him. He got at that particular time a baptism of the Holy Spirit, for as Mediator He was given the Holy Spirit in human nature without measure. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is always spoken of as the sprinkling or pouring forth, never as immersion. In the light therefore of the type which Christ was fulfilling and in the light of reality, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, we believe that Christ's baptism was through pure water being sprinkled upon him.

After His baptism and after His temptation for 40 days in the wilderness, He entered on His public ministry. We read that He came to the synagogue in Capernaum and read from Isaiah chapter 61. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because the Lord hath anointed Me, to preach good tidings unto the meek. He hath sent Me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;"

and so on and these words were being fulfilled in their hearing that day in the synagogue.

Christ as the Good Shepherd was chosen and appointed to the work. God the Father speaks of Him as “My Shepherd” and “the man that is My Fellow.” The words “my fellow” there mean the one who is equal. For the One who is the shepherd of the sheep, is God’s co-equal and coeternal Son, the One who was called and appointed to be the Shepherd of the Sheep. He therefore entered by the door, and the Porter was opening to Him, and by the Porter we understand the Holy Spirit. He had the Holy Spirit in abundance. It was through the Holy Spirit that He preached; it was through the Holy Spirit that He performed miracles. The Holy Spirit as a Porter was testifying that He was the Shepherd. He was opening the door for Him. That must also be true of those who are under shepherds; they have to enter in by the door, because called to the work of the Holy Ministry. They are not only called by grace, but they are called to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ as the apostle said, “Unto me who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.” They are dependent on the Holy Spirit to guide them. He opens a door of utterance for them and a door into the place where they are to labour. “Behold I set before thee an open door and no man can shut it.”

Christ is the Good Shepherd because it is the truth of God that He preached in His Ministry. He declared to Pontius Pilate, “To this end I was born and to this end came I into the world that I might bear witness unto the truth.” He preached the Truth, the truth about God. No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten of the Father He revealed Him. He preached the truth about man as lost, ruined and hell-deserving. He preached the necessity of the new birth; as he said to Nicodemus, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” He preached the

truth about heaven and about hell. Many people in our day deny the truth about everlasting punishment, but Christ as the true witness preached these doctrines.

He is the Good Shepherd in the sympathy that He has for His sheep. We read that in all their afflictions He was afflicted, that He was tempted in all points as they were, yet without sin. Although He has now entered into heaven He has a fellow feeling and sympathy for them. He is able to succour them that are tempted. It is good in time of trial to receive sympathy from our fellow men, but there is none who can enter into the troubles and trials of the Lord's people like the Good Shepherd. He is the Friend who sticketh closer than a brother. He says, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." They may say at times, "The Lord hath forgotten me, and my God hath forsaken me." But he says, "Can a mother forget her suckling child that she could not have compassion on the son of her womb. They may forget, but I will not forget thee. For behold I have engraven thee on the palms of my hands and thy walls are continually before Me."

He is the Good Shepherd in that He is making continual intercession on behalf of His own. He is the Good Shepherd especially in this respect that He laid down His life for His sheep. He died in their room and place and by His obedience to death He paid the debt to the uttermost farthing; and as proof that He paid their debt (a debt which they could never pay and which the lost in hell will never be able to pay), and as a proof that He made reconciliation for iniquity and brought in everlasting righteousness as the God of peace, He brought again from the dead that Great Shepherd of the sheep and He is now exalted and glorified in His human nature with the glory which He had with the Father, before the world was. And in connection with His resurrection and ascension we read that He received gifts for men, even for the rebellious. That is brought before us in Psalm 68.



“Thou hast, O Lord, most glorious, ascended up on high; and in triumph victorious led captive captivity.” Thou hast received gifts for men and as the apostle explains in his epistle to the Ephesians, among the gifts which He obtained, were prophets, apostles and evangelists. Christ is therefore the Good Shepherd in that He provides pastors after His own heart to feed His flock with knowledge and understanding.

Now we shall notice what Christ says about His own sheep. He says, “My sheep hear My voice.” He speaks of them as ‘My sheep.’ He has a right to them because they were given to Him by God the Father: they were elected in Him before the foundation of the world. God could have left all mankind to perish, as He left the angels which kept not their first estate but according to the good pleasure of His will, He chose in Christ, a number which no man can number from among all nations and languages and tribes. They are His therefore as the Father’s gift, as we find Himself declaring, “Thine they were and Thou gavest them Me.” They were given to Christ in the everlasting Covenant of grace in a past eternity and Christ willingly and lovingly received them in order that He would suffer and die in their room and place. He purchased them with His precious blood. He made an atonement for their sins and paid all their debts to the uttermost farthing.

They are His sheep in this respect that they are persons who have been saved by Him, saved by His grace. They came into this world as children of wrath even as others; they went astray on the mountains of sin, of vanity and error. But, it is true of all who are Christ’s sheep, as the apostle Peter says, “For ye were as sheep going astray but now you are turned to the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.”

It was the Lord who found them; they had no desire themselves to turn to the Lord and if the Lord had left them, they would have continued on the broad road to everlasting destruction but the Lord sought them out. We read in one of the parables of the Shepherd

going to seek the sheep that was lost, and when He had found the sheep, He lifted it up on His shoulders and rejoiced because He had found the sheep that was lost. And in connection with that, Jesus said that there is joy in the presence of the angels of heaven over one sinner that repenteth. For all of Christ's sheep are brought to repentance; those who do not repent shall surely perish. Those who are His sheep shall hear His voice and through grace they are enabled to give obedience to His voice. "Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." If we are not giving place to that invitation we are proving that we are not His sheep, that we are not hearing His voice.

In bringing His lost sheep to Himself we find Christ saying, "I am the door. By Me if any man enter in he shall be saved and shall go in and out and find pasture." It is by entering in by the door that any sinner is saved. The day in which the sinner closes in with Christ, in that day he is saved with an everlasting salvation.

We notice that when the Shepherd found the sheep that was lost that He lifted the sheep onto His shoulders. It would appear that the sheep could not walk, that it lay down to die but the Good Shepherd lifted up the sheep on His own shoulders. The sheep was now resting on the shoulders of the Shepherd and that is true of the sheep that enters in by the door, that day that he is resting on the finished work of Christ. He cannot rest on anything of his own, he is resting on the finished work of the Good Shepherd.

Now we have heard the marks that are true of the sheep of Christ. We should consider if we have these marks. Many people profess to be Christ's sheep but are not of His sheep. We have here the marks which Christ Himself gives of His sheep. He says, "My sheep hear My voice," and Christ's voice is to be heard in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. "They are as new born babes seeking

the sincere milk of the Word, that they may grow thereby.” “They hear My voice and I know them.” He knows them. “The Lord knoweth them that are His.” He knows all their troubles and trials and afflictions. Other people may not know what they are passing through, but Christ knows their trials and afflictions. Job’s friends could not enter into his trials and afflictions but this was a comfort to Job as he confessed, “The Lord knoweth the way that I take and when He hath tried me, as gold I shall come forth.”

We find Christ in one place saying, “I know thy poverty and thine afflictions, but thou art rich.” “For blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of God.” He knows them in this sense that He loves them. Concerning each of them He says, “Yea I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.” And the everlasting love of a triune God to your soul is revealed in that you were turned from your evil ways to the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls. And their desire is now to follow Christ in this world.

“My sheep hear My voice and I know them and they follow Me.” They follow Him in His doctrines – His teachings. We read of many who professed to be Christ’s disciples and for a time they showed great zeal in following Him, and wanted to make Him a King. But when Christ began to teach them the doctrines of His word, they said in connection with these doctrines, “This is an hard saying, who can hear it?” They went back and walked no more with Him. They could not endure sound doctrine. They were not the sheep of Christ. And persons who cannot endure sound doctrine are not the sheep of Christ. They do not follow Him in His doctrine. But when Christ asked His disciples, “Will ye also go away?” Simon Peter answered, “To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.”

These doctrines which are an hard saying to the multitudes are to their souls the words of their eternal life, and they follow Christ out

of the places where there is no pasture for their souls. For His sheep will not follow strangers but will flee to Him. Persons who show that they are strangers to the work of the Holy Spirit in their souls and who do not preach the Gospel in its purity, they flee from such, for where Christ is not honoured this people cannot remain. For in all things He must have the preeminence and He leads His people out of the places where they should not be. He calleth His own sheep by name and leadeth them out. And when He putteth forth His sheep, He goeth before them and His sheep follow Him for they know His voice.

And there are times when His sheep find themselves in such places where there is no true pasture for them. That is brought before us in the Song of Solomon when the Bride of Christ found herself among those who had no true pasture for her soul. They were at rest but she could not be at rest. We find her saying to the Lord, "O, Thou whom my soul loveth, tell me where thou feedst thy flock and where thou dost cause thy flock to rest at noon. For why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions." She is here making distinctions between those whom she calls the flocks of Thy companions, and those who are not. They claim to be Christ's sheep, but the pasture wherein they feed cannot feed their soul. "She found no rest there."

The Lord said to her, "If thou knowest not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth. Separate from them and go by the footsteps of the flock." And you will find the pasture and the rest beside My shepherds' tents. For there My shepherds are—those who have entered in by the door. I have commissioned them to feed My sheep and to feed My lambs, and therefore if you are seeking pasture for your soul, seek it where My shepherds have their tents.

He goes before them and they go forth outside the camp to follow Him bearing His reproach. "They follow me, and I give unto them eternal life." It is because He gives eternal life to their souls that they

seek to follow Him in this world and that they are seeking the pasture to feed their souls.

“I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish.” Satan and unbelief tells them that they shall perish. To meet their fears and the temptations of Satan, Christ says that they shall never perish and He says elsewhere, “Fear not little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.”

They shall never perish. That implies that they shall persevere unto the end, for they are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation. “Neither shall any man pluck them out of My Hand.” They are in His keeping and He shall keep them to the end, “The Lord thee keeps, the Lord thy shade on thy right hand doth stay. The moon by night thee shall not smite, nor yet the sun by day. Henceforth thy going out and in God keep for ever will.”

Are they not a happy people who are Christ’s sheep in this world? At the Great Day of Judgement there shall be the separation made between the sheep and the goats; between the righteous and the wicked. Christ shall put the sheep on His right hand and the wicked on His left hand and He shall say to those on His right hand: “Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world. But to those on His left He shall say, depart from Me ye wicked into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.” And these shall go into everlasting punishment but the righteous into life eternal.

Now in the light of that Great Day—the Great Day of Judgement, we read “that God commands every man everywhere to repent because He hath appointed a Day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man Whom He hath ordained, whereof He hath given assurance to all men in that He hath raised Him from the dead.”

The day of our death will be to us a judgement day. In view therefore of death and judgement, God commands every man to

repent—to turn to the Lord and to plead for mercy. We read, “This poor man cried, God heard and freed Him from all his distresses.” May we be seeking this blessing, that we be found among Christ’s sheep and Christ’s lambs, for Christ has lambs in His flock, and Christ is still saying in the Gospel, “Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not for of such is the Kingdom of God.” And He took them up in His hands and blessed them. And Christ is able to give a blessing to young children, where the Gospel is preached. He alone is able to give the blessing, and whom Christ blesses that person is blessed for time and for eternity.

“Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.”

*Preached in Zimbabwe 1972*

## “LOOK UNTO ME, AND BE YE SAVED”

*Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by Myself, the word is gone out of My mouth in righteousness and shall not return, That unto Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength; even to Him shall men come, and all that are incensed against Him shall be ashamed. In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified and shall glory.*

Isaiah 45:22-25

**I**n verse 22 the Lord is calling on all the ends of the earth: “**Look unto Me, all the ends of the earth, and be ye saved**”—a gracious invitation, followed by a declaration concerning Himself: “I am God and there is none else”. Let us notice:

1. **The declaration:** “*I am God and there is none else*”.
2. **The invitation He is extending to all the ends of the earth:** “*Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.*”

3. The invitation will not go forth in vain; there shall be fruit. The fruit of this invitation we have in this confession in verse 24: ***“In the Lord have I righteousness and strength”***. This is the confession of all who look to Him and are saved with an everlasting salvation.

**1. The declaration: “*I am God and there is none else*”.** He is the great “I am”, the self-existent Jehovah, God Himself alone, the almighty Creator of the ends of the earth, and the One who upholds all things by the Word of His power. He does according to His will among the inhabitants of the earth. He has foreordained for His own glory whatsoever comes to pass: “My counsel shall stand”. Nothing can thwart His purposes.

At the beginning of the chapter, there is an example of the Lord fulfilling His counsel. The Lord revealed to Isaiah that He was to raise Cyrus for the purpose of overthrowing Babylon. He revealed it to Isaiah 200 years before Cyrus’ birth. It was of the Lord’s ordering that Cyrus was king of Persia—he was the Lord’s anointed in that way. He was the instrument in the hand of the Lord for the overthrow of Babylon although he did not know the living God. The Lord was promising here that He would go before Cyrus and subdue the nations before Him and make the crooked places straight. According to historians the gates of Babylon were of brass and iron, but the Lord would go before Cyrus and these gates would be broken. When Babylon was captured by Cyrus the Babylonian treasures were brought forth. The Lord says that it was for David’s sake—for the good of the Church—that He was to overthrow Babylon. The prophecy was fulfilled to the letter. His counsel did stand and Babylon was overthrown. As it was the counsel and purpose and pleasure of the Lord to overthrow Babylon, so it is His pleasure to overthrow the mystical Babylon, the Church of Rome (Rev 18).

In His sovereign dealings—“Verily Thou art a God that hidest



Thyself”—God appeared to be hiding Himself in the day of her distress, in her captivity, and this was her confession. So in Psalm 44, “O wherefore hidest thou Thy face?” There are times when the Lord appears to be hiding Himself; His people are conscious of it and this, therefore, is their cry:

“For poor oppressed, and for the sighs of needy rise will I”.

Also in connection with this declaration: “I am God and there is none else”, He shall fulfil all His pleasure. In that revelation of Himself, He speaks of Himself as the judge in verse 23. Paul quotes this in Romans and applies the words to Christ. He was appointed to be the judge. He rose and revived, that He might be the Lord both of the living and the dead. “But why dost thou judge thy brother, or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgement seat of Christ” (Rom 14:9,10). “So then everyone of us shall give account of himself to God.” Verse 23 is based on the declaration: “I am God and there is none else”, and it brings before us that God the Son is the judge—a proof of Christ’s Godhead.

The Hebrew believers were judging the Gentile believers with respect to meats; the Hebrews were distinguishing between clean and unclean meats and the Gentiles were not. The Hebrews were judging them—acting uncharitably and making them miserable. The Apostle was telling the Hebrews that it was “a good thing that the heart be established with grace and not with meats.” (Even Peter was sticking to that distinction). **Meats** were of the ceremonial law and that law was fulfilled in Christ; it belonged to the past. For the Hebrews to be harassing their fellow Christians was to act uncharitably and hence they were rebuked in this way: “Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died”. They were setting the Gentiles at naught.

In the light of the fact that Christ is judge, let us not therefore judge one another any more. He will judge the world in righteousness.

“God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent.” The day of our death will be to us as the day of judgement. The fruits of charity, forbearance and long-suffering are required of all to whom the gospel comes. Before we come to the judgement seat we have set before us the throne of grace, and also the invitation based on this revelation: “I am God and there is none else”, “a just God and a Saviour”. In the light of that revelation, He, in His beloved Son, extends the invitation: “Look unto Me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth”.

In the revelation given here, He speaks of Himself as a just God and a Saviour; Christ is a Saviour because He is God the Son. No finite creature could be a Saviour for perishing sinners. When Christ is preached as one who is not the eternal Son of God, He is set forth as a false God. “Great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh”—not God the Father, but God in the person of the Son, the second person of the Trinity, “the brightness of the Father’s glory and the express image of His person”. Christ is not a Saviour at the expense of God’s inflexible justice. He was made under the law that He might, as the substitute of His people, magnify the law and make it honourable, and He endured the curse of the law in His death. By His obedience unto death He met the claims of the law and satisfied them. He was the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. His resurrection, ascension and glorification are proofs that He finished the work and glorified God in all His attributes.

**2. Christ is sending forth this invitation: “Look unto Me . . . and be ye saved”.** He is the exalted Saviour, able to save to the uttermost, mighty to save. “There is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved.” The invitation implies that we are lost and stand in need of this salvation that is in Christ. The Word makes it clear that we are lost by nature. On account of the fall,

we are “born in sin and shapen in iniquity”. The heart is deceitful and desperately wicked. Nothing holy can come from our nature. There is not a particle of love to Christ in man as he is born into this world, but love of sin and of the world. Where the love of the world reigns in the heart, there is proof of the carnal mind. However honest a man may be, if in his heart he be a friend of the world, he is an enemy of God. “Because I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” We are condemned already—prisoners on whom the sentence of death has been passed and waiting the day of execution. Nothing can save from the condemnation of the law but faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are lost in this respect, that we are on the brink of a lost eternity; there is nothing between us and it but the breath in our nostrils. If death finds us Christless, it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, for who can dwell with everlasting flames? It is to sinners who are lost by nature, state, life and conversation that this invitation is sent: “I came, not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance”. This invitation is extended to the ends of the earth. None is excluded. It is not based on election, which is hidden, but on what is revealed. The invitation is based on the revelation which the Lord is here giving of Himself as a just God and Saviour. “Look unto Me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else.” It is extended to all the ends of the earth, and from that we may understand sinners who have gone to the “ends of the earth” in sin—that is, to the very limit, as Manasseh did. What a notorious sinner he was! What lengths he went to in seeking to stamp out true religion in Jerusalem! He caused the streets to run red with blood and offered his children to Molech. He was not ignorant; he sinned against light and knowledge, for he had a godly father. One might think there was no hope for such an abandoned sinner, but he was brought to look to the Saviour. Many notorious sinners since then have, in the mercy of God, looked to Him:

“They looked to Him and lightened were:  
not shamed were their faces.  
This poor man cried, God heard, and saved  
him from all his distresses.”

This invitation is to sinners who are tottering on the brink of the grave but are still in the room of mercy. He is able to save to the uttermost; there is proof of that in the conversion of the thief, blaspheming the Saviour as his life-blood was ebbing away, and a life of crime behind him. One would say that surely he was abandoned but, though he was at the ends of the earth as far as natural life was concerned, the Lord plucked him as a brand from the burning. He said: “Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom”. And Christ said, “Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise”. What a proof of His purpose to save: “I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save”. To say otherwise reflects on Christ’s power.

“Macrath Mhor”<sup>1</sup> said, “You have a warrant to offer Christ to sinners while soul and body are still united”. No one is excluded from this invitation. If Christ were not extending this invitation to you personally, you would not be charged with neglecting it. “How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?” Christ is, therefore, calling on sinners individually when He is addressing all the ends of the earth. They have the warrant of the truth to look to the Saviour for salvation. He is not only offered to penitent sinners but to the greatest sinner out of hell. Christ is offered to you, and that offer is not based on your repentance or your concern or want of concern, but on the revelation He is giving of Himself as a just God and a

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1 Gaelic for “Big Macrae”. John Macrae (1794-1876) was minister successively in Lewis, the Black Isle, Greenock and Lewis again.

Saviour. He justifies the ungodly who believe in Jesus. John Bunyan was greatly concerned that he would be cast out. In one of his books there is the following conversation:

“But I am a great sinner, sayest thou. *I will in no wise cast out*, says Christ.

“But I am an old sinner. *I will in no wise cast out*, says Christ.

“But I am a backsliding sinner. *I will in no wise cast out*, says Christ.

“But I have served Satan all my days. *I will in no wise cast out*, says Christ.

“But I am a hard-hearted sinner. *I will in no wise cast out*, says Christ.

“But I have sinned against light. *I will in no wise cast out*, says Christ.

“But I have sinned against mercy. *I will in no wise cast out*, says Christ.

“But I have no good thing to bring with me. *I will in no wise cast out*, says Christ.”

The exhortation, “Look unto Me and be ye saved”, is based on His revelation of Himself as a just God and Saviour. The late Rev Neil Cameron said at Raasay: “What, sinner, have you got against Christ that you are not receiving Him?” Mr Cameron repeated this twice, and someone in the congregation said afterwards that should Mr Cameron have repeated it a third time he would have got up and said that he had nothing against Christ but that he had this against himself, that he could not receive Christ as He would desire to. The Lord “will accomplish the desire of those that do Him fear”. “For ye were sometimes darkness but now are ye light in the Lord.”

Thomas Shepherd said, “If you have a hope that your soul is savingly enlightened in the knowledge of Christ, you will go to the grave mourning over your ignorance of Him”. That is in accord with the Word of God; even the Apostle says, “That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection”. God’s people are conscious of spiritual darkness; they often walk in darkness and have no light. They more often find themselves in darkness than in light, which is a cause of mourning to them. “O send Thy light forth and Thy truth”. “But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings.”

“Who doth redeem thy life, that thou  
to death mayest not go down.”

That promise shall be fulfilled: “The Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended”. (*The Lord* here is Christ in all His fulness as Saviour, mighty to save.) Pray that the Lord would give you that faith which would enable you to close in with Christ as He is offered to you in the gospel, and that it would be your cry, that you cannot close in with Him as you would desire. “The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

**3. This invitation did not go forth in vain**, but in every age there have been those with this confession: “In the Lord have I righteousness and strength”. It shall take place, for it is the purpose of the Lord. They shall be gathered from north, south, east and west as the fruit of Christ’s atoning death. “He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied.” This is the confession of all who look and are saved: “Surely, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength”.

Those who have that confession are convinced that no flesh

shall be justified in God’s sight by the works of the law. They saw themselves lost, condemned, hell-deserving; they have discovered that they did not have the strength to lay hold on Him. They were enlightened in the knowledge of Him who is the end of the law for righteousness. They were enabled to close in with Him as the portion of their souls—as their wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. And this is the proof of it, that they have looked to Him. This is their confession: “In the Lord have I righteousness and strength”, but they confess also that all their own righteousnesses are as filthy rags. The language of their souls is, “That I might be found in Him, not having my own righteousness”. They are fully satisfied with Christ’s finished work; they have no strength of their own. “Without Me ye can do nothing.” They exercise faith in Christ as their Lord and, in laying hold of Him and His strength, He is made unto them their wisdom and sanctification. Their strength is God alone. If one is in a state of condemnation, he does not have this confession. They who are justified in Him give Him the glory:

“Not unto us, Lord, not to us,  
but do Thou glory take”.

And they ask, “To whom shall we go, Thou hast the words of eternal life.” An old Christian once said, when speaking at a Fellowship Meeting: “There are only two classes here today, those who have Christ and those who do not have Him. Those who have Him have their fears until the day of their death as to whether they have Him or not, but those who do not have Him will not know until the day of their death that they are without Him.” “Ye are they which have continued with Me in my temptations.” “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” The gospel shall be preached to all ends of the earth.

“All ends of th’earth remember shall,  
and turn the Lord unto;  
All kindreds of the nations  
to Him shall homage do.”

The promise of the Father to the Son shall be fulfilled:

“Ask of Me, and for heritage  
the heathen I’ll make Thine”.

The ingathering of the Jews shall take place in the day when the spirit of grace and of supplications will be poured on them. The gospel of His grace shall not return unto Him void.

Are we seeking to be among those who have this confession on the way to eternity: “Surely in the Lord have I righteousness and strength”? “Come, for all things are now ready.” “Look unto Me and be ye saved.” We are to look and cry to Him for salvation, for we are, of ourselves, lost in state and nature and on the way to a lost eternity. The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost. What a blessing if souls are closing in with the free offer of the gospel! “The Master is come and calleth for thee.” Mary rose in the exercise of faith in the One who gave the invitation and is alone able to give power to make sinners willing. That power accompanied the command:

“O daughter, hearken and regard,  
and do thine ear incline;  
Likewise forget thy father’s house,  
and people that are thine”.

*Preached at the Inverness Communion  
26th January 1973*



## EVERLASTING LIFE

*“Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.”*

John 6:27

**A**t the beginning of this chapter we have an account of the miracle that Christ performed in feeding a multitude with five loaves and a few fishes. After He had performed this miracle He sent His disciples across the sea towards Capernaum. We are told of the storm that they encountered on their way while Jesus Himself remained on the land. Darkness fell and Jesus had not come to them. We are told that Jesus saw them toiling in rowing. He was fully aware of the difficulties they were encountering in the path of duty. It was the Lord Himself who had set them upon this course. It was in obedience to His command that they crossed over to the other side. It was in the path of duty, in the path of obedience to their divine Lord and Master, they encountered this storm. “The wind was contrary unto them” and they were “toiling in rowing” as we read in Mark’s Gospel. To make matters worse darkness fell upon them, and Jesus had not come.

When they had rowed for about thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, drawing nigh unto the ship and they were afraid.

They thought it was a spirit that they saw and were afraid. Jesus said unto them: "It is I; be not afraid. Then they willingly received Him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went." It is true spiritually at times in the experience of the Lord's disciples, that in the path of duty they encounter storms of diverse kinds. They meet with, as it were, contrary winds, something contrary in their providence, things going against them. They are therefore tempest-tossed in soul. They have darkness too. Everything seems so dark and unpromising. They are there toiling in the dark, toiling in rowing and almost on the point of giving over, but we see that the Lord came at the fourth watch, that is, about three o'clock in the morning, and spake these comforting words to them: "It is I; be not afraid". He was in full control of the situation, for He sits King upon the floods and ever shall, and He shall bless His people with peace. (Psalm 29:10,11). He spake peace to them at this time, "It is I; be not afraid", and the storm was changed into a calm at His command and will. The disciples did not give over or turn aside from the course they were on. They continued on the course the Lord had set them. That is left written for the good of His people that they would persevere and that the Lord will come in His own time. "Weeping may for a night endure, at morn doth joy arise." (Psalm 30:5 Metrical). They safely reached the other side.

The day following when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that Christ was not there, they took boats and crossed over to where Jesus was. "They came to Capernaum seeking for Jesus" (verse 24). That is, the multitude or numbers of them whom He had miraculously fed with the five loaves and the two fishes. When they had found Him on the other side of the sea, they said unto Him, "Rabbi, when camest thou hither?" (v. 25). Addressing Him as Rabbi, they appeared to acknowledge Him as their Lord and Master. After Christ had performed the miracle in miraculously feeding them, they said, "This is of a truth that prophet that should

come into the world.” (v. 14). They professed to acknowledge Him as the promised Messiah and as proof of their zeal they followed Him across the Sea of Tiberias to where He was. Their desire was to make Him their King. To all appearances they gave evidence of being genuine disciples. They addressed Him as Rabbi, as Master, and said, this is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world. Outwardly they appeared very promising but we see that before Christ finished His discourse to them, as that is recorded for us in this chapter, they said in connection with the doctrines which He preached, “This is an hard saying; who can hear it?” (v. 60), and they “went back and walked no more with Him” (v. 66). They were like the stony ground hearers who continued for a time. They could not endure the doctrines which He preached and that is true of persons who may have been disciples in appearance only. They may appear to have a zeal for a time and make a profession for a time and go great lengths, it may be, in following the Lord as this multitude did, but the Lord will test or put to the trial everybody’s faith, of what nature it is. When they were tested by the doctrines which Christ preached, they could not endure these doctrines and accordingly went back and walked no more with Him. If it is not doctrines that people will find “a hard saying”, they will find some other excuse. Oh, we cannot put up with this. This is far too hard and we are not going to submit to this. They make one excuse or another and they go back. They go back to perdition. “If any man draw back my soul shall have no pleasure in him.” God forbid it should ever happen to any of us who are under the preaching of the everlasting gospel, that we should turn from the truths of the Gospel and go back. However plausible our excuse may be, we can rest assured of this, that the day in which we turn our back upon the Gospel and upon the truth, we are setting our face on eternal perdition.

When the Lord’s people are tried, the more they are tried, the more they cleave closer to the Lord. When Christ puts the question,

“Will ye also go away?” the response of their soul is, “to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.” (v. 68). They cleave to Him. We find the church in one place confessing—

Unto thy people thou hard things  
hast shew’d, and on them sent;  
And thou hast caused us to drink  
wine of astonishment.  
(Psalm 60:3 Metrical)

But even then she was cleaving to the Lord, for her confession was—

And yet a banner thou hast giv’n  
to them who thee do fear;  
That it by them, because of truth,  
displayed may appear.  
(Psalm 60:4 Metrical)

His people seek to maintain and display that banner although they may be called upon to drink the wine of astonishment.

We would now notice what Christ said to the multitude who followed Him and what He is still saying to us—“Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.”

In the *first* place we shall notice Christ’s command, “Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life” (v. 27) and *secondly* we shall notice the “meat” that Christ here speaks of as enduring unto everlasting life; and *thirdly*, the promise that He gives to those who labour for it, “which the Son of man shall give unto you” and He confirms the promise with what

He here declares concerning Himself “for him hath God the Father sealed”.

First of all the command which Christ is here giving, “Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life”. The first doctrine these words bring before us is the immortality of the soul. We are souls and we have a body. We dwell in this earthly tabernacle. At death the body shall return to the dust from whence it came and the spirit unto God that gave it. Now our bodies are sustained by the “meat which perisheth” but our souls can only be fed and sustained by the “meat which endureth unto everlasting life”. We read that when God created man, He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and Adam became a living soul. In the exercise of that life which he had in his soul he had fellowship and communion with God. Now this is not said in connection with any of the creatures which God created, that He breathed into their nostrils the breath of life, but only in connection with man, and man became a living soul. We know that in the day in which Adam sinned he lost that life, that spiritual life which he had in his soul, and came under the death threatened, “In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die”. (Gen. 2:17). Although Adam did not die a natural death that day, his soul came under the power of spiritual death, for he lost the image of God and his body became mortal, and that is how we are born into this world. We have bodies which are mortal and which shall return to the dust from whence they came. Our souls as we are by nature are under the power of spiritual death. Men are dead spiritually, dead in trespasses and in sins. They are dead Godward, dead spiritually, but are very much alive to the things of this life. Many, like the multitudes we referred to, may have a form of godliness, they may have a name to live and be very active in an outward way and yet destitute of the life of grace in their souls.

Although man is dead spiritually and totally depraved in his nature, and on that account, totally unable to will that which

is spiritually good, man is a rational accountable being; he is responsible unto God. The command here given emphasises man's responsibility, that he is responsible to give that glory to God which is due to Him as his Creator. He claims from man that obedience in accordance with the covenant which He made with Adam. His claims have not changed. The Saviour in this verse lays emphasis on man's responsibility in the light of the provision that God has made in providing salvation in His beloved Son, the bread of life which leads to everlasting life. It is in the light of that provision we are called upon to labour for that meat that never perishes. Men may make excuses and say what can we do, we are spiritually dead. By saying this they pervert the doctrines of God's word to their own destruction, but God will hold every person accountable unto Him. "Everyone of us must give an account of himself to God". These words clearly reveal man's accountability and man's responsibility to God. We are without excuse. A person who has squandered his money in drink or in gambling, may be totally unable to pay off his debts but this excuse will not stand. He is still responsible for these debts. And we are responsible for our sins. They are our sins and we will also be held responsible as to how we deal with the salvation which is freely offered to us in the gospel. That is clearly implied as we shall notice in the words of our text, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life". We shall be held responsible as to how we deal with that salvation which is in our offer. "For how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?". There can be no escape for us. Now when we are still on mercy's ground and this door of hope is set before us by the Saviour, how we should give an ear to what the Lord is saying to us. "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed." The command clearly does not rule out man's duty to labour for his daily bread,

here spoken of “as the meat that perisheth”. That command is still binding on sinners of mankind. “In the sweat of thy brow thou shalt eat thy bread”. We are to earn our daily bread in a conscientious way and not by gambling as many do nowadays. This is what the Saviour is emphasising and which is of paramount importance, that above all, we must “labour for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life”. However valuable and good in themselves the things of this life may be, they shall perish with the using. No matter how valuable our homes or our property may be or whatever we may have in this world, there is a day coming when we shall have to leave all. How solemn the thought to face eternity Christless, without the bread of life which endureth unto everlasting life! That is your danger and the greatest danger in this day of apostasy, that you will lose your soul for eternity. Give obedience to what the Saviour is saying. Do not give over until you entertain a hope that you have that good part which will stand you in good stead for eternity.

In the *second* place we shall notice the meat which Christ here speaks of which endures unto everlasting life. We find that Christ Himself makes that clear in this chapter. He says, “I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth in me shall never thirst.” (v. 35), and again he says, “I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world”, (v. 51). Christ makes it clear in these verses that He is the “meat” that endureth unto everlasting life; He is the “living bread” which came down from heaven; He is the “bread of life”. He also makes it clear that before He could be the bread of life on the table of the gospel for sinners, He must needs die. “And the bread that I will give is my flesh which I will give for the life of the world”. By His flesh of course He means His human nature and His human nature embraces a true body and a reasonable soul. He had life in Himself from all eternity as the Son of God. He was the

eternal Word as we read, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1), and “the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us”. He took to Himself the human nature that He might give His flesh for the life of the world, that He might give it in the way of sacrifice, for without the shedding of blood in the way of sacrifice there can be no remission of sin. The claims of God’s law and justice in connection with the eternal death Adam brought upon himself and on the whole human race, could be satisfied in no other way but through the obedience unto death of God’s eternally begotten Son in our nature. Christ here says to the Jews he addressed, “The bread that I will give is my flesh”. He will give it, as the words make clear, in the way of sacrifice. He speaks of His body being broken, “my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed” (v. 55). That is a clear reference to the sacrifice which He offered when His body was broken and His blood was shed for the remission of the sins of many. He gave His life for the life of the world, not for the life of the Jews only but also for the Gentiles. The Gentiles were spoken of as the world. They were outside the pale of the visible church but Christ gave His life for an elect world, for a number which no man can number. He makes that clear. To the Jews He said, “I am that living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world”. “The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” (v. 52). We find that Christ goes on to say “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.” (v. 53-56). He makes clear there could be no life, no meat that endureth unto everlasting life, that there could be no



bread of life apart from His atoning death. By His body being broken and His blood being shed, He procured eternal life for sinners who deserve eternal death. That eternal life He shall bestow, as we find Him saying in His intercessory prayer to the Father, "As thou has given Him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him."

That leads us to notice what is implied in Christ imparting eternal life to a sinner. Bound up in that life is that the sinner believes what Christ here says, "Whosoever eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." Christ not only procured eternal life for the soul but a glorious immortality for the body of those who believe in Him. "I will raise him up at the last day", that is to a glorious immortality and that awaits those to whom the Lord has bestowed the gift of eternal life in this world.

What is implied in Christ by His word and Spirit bestowing eternal life upon any sinner? Well, in connection with that, we shall quote the words of truth, "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 6:23). A sinner to whom the Lord gives this gift, imparting the gift of eternal life, is convinced of his need of that life. He is convinced that the wages of sin is death. The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord and that life is not bestowed apart from the sinner being convinced that his sins deserve eternal death. That conviction is wrought in the soul of the sinner. I am a sinner in God's sight and nothing that I have of my own will stand me for eternity. I cannot meet the claims of God's holy law and justice. I am bankrupt and unable to pay the debt in which I am and I deserve on account of my sins, the wages which I have earned, the eternal death due to my sins. That conviction is wrought in the soul of the sinner in effectual calling. The sinner is enlightened in the knowledge of Christ, and in that knowledge is made able and willing to receive Christ. That sinner now rests not on his own merits for he has none, but upon

Christ's merits. He rests upon Christ alone, as we find Samuel Rutherford saying,

I stand upon His merits,  
I know no other stand,  
Not even where glory dwelleth,  
In Emmanuel's land.

He believes that there is no standing place before God, the judge of all, but on the ground of Christ's finished work. They therefore believe in the atonement which Christ made, that in the fulness of time, He who was the eternally begotten Son of the Father, took to Himself the human nature and in the human nature suffered and died the just in the room and stead of the unjust. They receive the atonement, and plead the efficacy of Christ's blood which cleanseth from all sin. Where this spiritual, this eternal life is in the soul, there is a conviction bound up in that life that every sin deserves eternal death and damnation. Those who have this life in their souls could not listen to a gospel which denies eternal punishment. They are assured that such a gospel is not the everlasting gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, but a delusion from Satan as an angel of light. The doctrines here taught by Christ, that His flesh is meat indeed and His blood drink indeed, are life to their souls, that apart from Christ's body being broken and His blood shed, there could be no eternal life for sinners deserving eternal death. Where there is no mention of Christ's substitutionary death, His resurrection, His ascension and glorification at the right hand, there is no gospel. "All truth" as the noted Rev. Lachlan Mackenzie, Lochcarron said, "is not gospel truth". Where gospel truth is, there Christ, in the glory of His Person and His office as prophet, priest and king, gets the pre-eminence. These doctrines are life to the souls of His own.

In that life in the soul there is repentance and the remission of

sin. The eternal life which Christ imparts to the soul in the day of regeneration, evidences itself in godly sorrow for sin which worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of. It is in Christ they have life, and in this life they have the forgiveness of sin. The spiritual death, the sentence of eternal death and condemnation under which they were, has been removed, for there is no condemnation to them who are in Jesus Christ. "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." In Christ they have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace. They are a people who seek to be fed, to be led and to be kept. These are the exercises of the life of grace in the soul. All such are under the shelter of Christ's blood. It is in virtue of the atonement which He made by His blood, for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul. Christ is set before us as the only refuge and hiding place from the wrath due to our sins. "I flee to Thee to cover me" is the exercise of grace in the soul.

They labour for that bread which endureth unto everlasting life in seeking to make their calling and election sure. Not all who have this life in their souls have an assurance of their interest in Christ. Assurance says as one of the old divines put it, "I believe my sins are pardoned through Christ". Faith says, "I believe in Christ for the pardon of my sins".

Christ says in connection with the person that eats of this bread, the person who in other words is living a life of faith upon Himself, "I will raise him up at the last day". Not only will his soul be made perfect in holiness at death and immediately enter into glory to be with Christ, but at the resurrection, his body will be raised and made like unto Christ's glorious body. Christ through His body being broken and His blood being shed, procured eternal life for the soul and a glorious immortality for the body.

**Lastly** we have the promise which Christ here gives in connection with the words "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for

that meat which endureth unto everlasting life”. In giving that meat, He speaks of Himself as the Son of man sealed and appointed by the Father to give the bread of eternal life to perishing sinners deserving eternal death. “And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son”. (1 John 5:11)

The multitude who ate of the loaves and fishes and who were labouring for the meat which perisheth, proved that they were wholly unconcerned about the salvation of their souls. It is to them that Christ made the offer of the meat which endureth unto everlasting life. It is because the bread of life was freely offered to them that they were called upon to labour for it. There are those who hold the view that Christ is not offered to sinners as such, but to sinners who are penitent and who give evidence that they are concerned about their soul’s salvation. In the beginning of the 18th century there was a debate held in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland on this question. There were those who questioned the free offer of Christ to sinners. Principal Haddow of St Andrews University, who was of this view, asked for one verse in the Bible which would prove that Christ was offered freely to sinners. One of the Erskines, either Ebenezer or Ralph, arose and quoted the words, “My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven” (John 6:32). Christ spoke these words to the Jews who murmured against and rejected His teachings. If Christ were not freely offered to us as sinners, we would not be condemned for rejecting Him. Our total inability instead of being an excuse as many vainly hold, is proof of our ruin and guilt. I may have mentioned what a godly minister in the past said, that as sinners we have forfeited all, even the right to live. There is only one thing under these broad heavens we have a right to and that is to Christ in the free offer of the everlasting gospel. You have the right and warrant to look to Him for salvation. Reject Christ and you will be lower than the devils in hell, as Christ and the salvation that is in Him was never offered to devils.

I will now quote what the great Dr. John Owen says in his precious treatise on “The Glory of the Person of Christ”. “Consider” he says, “the infinite condescension and love of Christ in His invitations and calls to you to come to Him for life, deliverance, mercy, grace, peace and eternal salvation—This I shall only say, that in the declaration and preaching of them, Jesus Christ yet stands before sinners, calling, inviting, encouraging them to come unto Him. That which is now proposed for consideration is the readiness of Christ to receive every sinner, be he who and what he will, that shall come unto Him. And of this we have the highest evidences that divine wisdom and grace can give to us. This is the language of the gospel, of all that the Lord Jesus did or suffered which is recorded therein;—this is the testimony of the “three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost”; and of the “three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, the water and the blood”; all give their joint testimony that the Lord Jesus Christ is ready to receive all sinners who come unto Him. They who receive not this testimony make God a liar, both Father, Son and Spirit. Nothing but cursed obstinacy in sin and unbelief can suggest a thought into our minds that He is not willing to receive us when we come unto Him. Consider the horrible ingratitude there is in a neglect or refusal to come to Christ upon His invitation, with the awful eternal ruin that will ensue. “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?”

“Some, it may be, will say, what then shall we do? What is it that is required of us? Take the advice of the apostle, “Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness. But exhort one another daily, while it is called today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.” (Heb. 3:7, 8, 13.) Today, even this day, is unto you in the offer of grace the acceptable time: this is the day of salvation. Others have had this day as well as you and have missed their opportunity; take heed lest it should be so with you also.

We shall conclude by quoting the words of our text, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed."

May He bless His truth.

*Preached in the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, Grafton,  
N.S.W., Australia on 11th November 1973.*

## APPENDIX 1

# INDUCTION SERMON

Sermon by Rev. James MacLeod, Greenock, preached at the Induction of the Rev. William MacLean to the Gisborne congregation in the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, Glasgow, on Wednesday, 7th November, 1962.

*“Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion: And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.”*

Jeremiah 3:14-15

**N**ow as the Lord may be pleased to enable us on this occasion we would desire to draw your attention to two or three things in connection with these words that we have read. The first thing that we would bring before you is that it is the Lord that is speaking here. Jeremiah was a most favoured blessed servant of the Lord, faithful unto death in his own day and generation, but you know Jeremiah passed into the eternal celestial heavens over two thousand years ago and as far as he was personally concerned when he passed out of time, his work was finished.

That is true concerning all the Lord's servants in all ages, but what we ought to be thankful for and praise the Lord for is, although the servants finish their course and their testimony in this world, the great and the glorious Head of the Church remains and remains now and will remain in the church militant until He will come again at the great day of judgment. The servant may go but the Lord Himself will not pass away. He will be with the church and He will remain with the church. I remember in this very congregation the late most eminent Rev. Donald MacFarlane saying in the course of a sermon, "Supposing there was only one soul to be fed with the gospel in the city of Glasgow, Christ would remain in Glasgow with that soul, that had need of the Bread of Life and of the Water of Life and of the spiritual nourishment that God has in eternal mercy and love provided for His people." The serpent can feed on dust but the child of God can only feed on the broken body and the shed blood of the Son of God.

Now first of all then, a word or two about those who were here addressed by the Lord, "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you." We will notice that first, and then there is a promise annexed to that if they should return, "and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion." Now you are not going to take these figures or numbers in a literal sense at all but as a promise from the Lord, that there would be men and women brought out of the captivity that were to serve God in their day and generation, not only in Israel in the days of Jeremiah and after his death and after the captivity but to this very hour. The Lord will not leave Himself without witnesses, without men and women that will witness on His side in their day and generation.

Of course, we have also to notice what He says concerning them, "I am married unto you." Now you know from an intelligent and rational point of view, the meaning of marriage, the union that is between a man and his wife, and the Lord uses that as a metaphor



here, to show how united He Himself is to His people, “I am married unto you.” They were a covenanted people, a people set apart by the Lord Himself. He gave them circumcision, He separated them from the other nations of the world and He dealt with them as a husband indeed and looked upon them as His own spouse, His own people that were dear and near to Him. “I am married unto you.” In fact, in passing, we could apply that for instance to ourselves in this sense. I suppose that the vast majority present here this evening are baptised people, both men and women, and in that sense the words of our text here “for I am married unto you” could certainly be applied to you.

Notice your baptism is the same as circumcision. It means that you are to be the Lord’s. It is a terrible and a solemn thing to take the vows of baptism on yourself because the vows that are implied in baptism are most solemn and serious. That was how the Lord was regarding them—“I am married unto you.” Now there is not a baptised person inside this building tonight but these words are applicable to that person, just the same as this people when circumcised on the authority and by the direction of Heaven, the Lord separated them from the nations of the world and the people of the world, as His own people. Now you take for instance your own baptism. What have you done with your baptism? What have you done with it? You took the most solemn, the most terrible and the most serious vows upon yourself, baptised in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. What have you done with it? What have you done with it?

Have you been serving the Lord and obeying His commandments and walking humbly in His divine presence? What kind of life, walk and conversation have you? Well, the Lord says “I am married unto you”. “I am married unto you”. As surely as He said to the Jews in the days of Jeremiah, “I am married unto you”, verily that could be applied in a most remarkable manner to Scotland during

the glorious Reformation when God in His infinite mercy, infinite love, infinite kindness, visited our native land by showers of divine blessing from one end of the nation to the other, and if there was a nation on the face of the earth that in that high sense was married to the Lord, surely the Scottish people were among that glorious army of whom it is written, "I am married unto you". "I am married unto you." Now my friends let us bear in mind that the Lord, sometime or other, and the time will not be far away of course, will ask you, you young man, young woman, you father, you mother, what have you done with all the blessings that I bestowed upon you? What have you done with them? Have you dealt treacherously with the blessings of the eternal gospel?

Well now, it is for your own soul and conscience to answer that question. Now the Lord in His infinite mercy is still striving as He was striving with them and He is still striving with us as a people and as a generation, not only in Britain but in other parts of the world. The Lord is striving with this generation in a most wonderful way. You know recently that millions of people were, as it were, trembling, afraid of what might happen at any moment<sup>1</sup>, and like an earthquake something universally moving the masses of human beings from one end of the earth to the other end as it were. Well, that passed away, at least for the time being. We do not of course encourage anyone to think that that is the end of it. No, far, far from it, because we are a most rebellious generation and we are fighting against the Lord and against His Son, Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of God and there is a universal war against heaven. Well, my friends, let us rest assured that God shall visit us for our sins and for our departure from the living God and from His word. Verily that will take place, but as we have said already. He will have a remnant, a people to serve Him,

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1 The crisis which developed between the U.S.A. and Russia over Cuba.

a people to love Him and to obey Him and to seek His glory, and I believe that they are today perhaps more scattered throughout the whole world than in any other age of our own history. I believe that the Lord's people, a remnant of the Lord's people, are found not only in Britain but in Australia, Africa, India and in many other parts unknown to us. Now that is the remnant, that is the one out of the family, the two out of the city that the Lord has been keeping alive, and they are alive and conscious of their need of salvation and of being saved with an everlasting salvation. Wherever they are on the face of this earth, they have one thing in common. It does not matter whether the man is black, white or yellow, old or young, they have one thing in common and that is, "Oh that I would have Christ for my Saviour, for my salvation. Christ as my Saviour and that my sins for Christ's sake would be blotted out eternally from the presence of the Lord."

Now wherever they are, they are of one mind and one desire and one Spirit in that connection. So that is a unity, not a Roman Catholic unity, nor a World Council of Churches unity—that is only rubbish! There can be only one sense of unity and that is in the truth of God in Jesus Christ the Son of God, through union with Him. Some people think that because they are professing religion—there are millions and millions professing religion—does that show they are God's people? Far from it. No. The union that the Holy Ghost creates in the human soul is with Christ and that union can never be dissolved world without end. In the day that the soul is united or as it says here, "I am married unto you," united by faith to the Son of God, that soul is united to Christ for time and for eternity. It is an indissoluble union through being born again, through being regenerated and made a new creature in Christ Jesus. Now He is calling upon us, "Turn, O backsliding children".

Now my friends, the Protestant religion is at a very low ebb and I am not going to say much about that. In our day, in Britain and

elsewhere, the glorious gospel and the glorious privileges that God bestowed upon us, in Germany, in the low countries and in Britain and in many other parts, are today, as some of you are well acquainted with, in a very low condition indeed. But alas! alas! alas! we must come nearer home. Come to Glasgow, to our towns and cities in our own Scotland. Go to Stornoway or to Aberdeen, Edinburgh, these large, large cities. Oh, how low the cause of Christ is in Scotland today! We are in a backsliding condition and in a sense we are yet addressed as His children. "I am married unto you" and verily He was married to Scotland. "I am married unto you." But see the condition we are in. For instance the Lord's Day is one of the clearest evidences of our nation's departure from God. In fact if things will continue as they are, very soon there will be no Sabbath at all. Now I may not see it but I am going to make reference to it and just a reference. If Britain joins the European Roman Catholic Nations, you can visualise the time when you will have the continentals running over Scotland on the Lord's Day from Kyle of Lochalsh to the Isle of Skye or to Lochinver or up as far as Wick. I am visualising that and why? Oh, because we have provoked God and we are provoking God. But now as I have said already, the Lord will have a remnant that will be witnessing on His side, maybe few in number and often considered of no value and no importance. Now that is the way that the devil will look at the witness of the Lord and the way he looked at Christ himself, but let me remind you briefly that in the days of Noah, the whole world was against Noah while he was building the ark. Ah yes, but who was the witness on the side of the Lord? Noah, certainly Noah. Who was the strong man at the end of the day? Was it the publicans, was it the drunkards, was it the blasphemers? Were they the strong men when the flood came? No, they were drowned, but not Noah. Noah was on the side of the Lord and the Lord was on the side of Noah.

See now, you come down to the time of the martyrs in our own

beloved land. Oh, to all appearance everything was to be destroyed. The reformed religion of our fathers was to be destroyed and everyone that professed Christ and the crown rights of Christ as Lord and God of His own church and the courts of the church, were to be burnt alive or drowned in the sea like Margaret Wilson and Margaret MacLachlan, in the Solway. To be drowned off the face of the earth. But was it a losing battle though? No! No! Is it a losing battle for the servants of the Lord within the bounds of the Free Presbyterian Church today? No! and a thousand times NO! As it was said about Athanasius who withstood the might of the empire and the emperor in his day and the forces of the whole empire and the church—it was said about that most outstanding man of God, “the world against Athanasius and Athanasius against the world.” A single man—one man—in his day and generation, but Athanasius was the man at the end of the day who was the victor and his enemies overwhelmed and overthrown. Why? Well if God be for you, who can be against you. If the Lord is on your side and if you are one of the Lord’s people—you might be a poor servant girl or a helpless young woman or a helpless young man as far as that is concerned, no support from the world, none at all from the cursed religious world, none whatever—Ah my dear young man, my dear young woman, if the Lord God of Heaven is on your side, there is no power in hell or out of hell that can master you or overwhelm you or destroy you. As it is written, “If God be for us, who can be against us?” Who can be against us? Surely the Free Presbyterian body—a small body of people as far as that is concerned—surely we had over and over and over again that fulfilled in the history of our own church. But I am not going to dwell further on that.

Now I said that Protestantism was low in Europe and low in Scotland and low in this generation, very low indeed, but there will be men and women that the Lord God of Heaven, through His eternal and well beloved Son, by the mighty and irresistible power of

the Holy Spirit, will bring to Zion, that is into the church of God and He will establish them upon the finished work of Christ as the rock of ages and even their very enemies witnessing to the fact that "there is no Rock like our Rock and the enemies themselves being judges." And there is no sword like the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God in the hand of the Holy Ghost. And He will bring them to Zion and He will bring them into the church and He will establish their goings in His own church by His word, Spirit, grace, mercy, love and power, and then shepherd them and keep them and protect them until they will pass out of time into eternal glory. Oh, infinite power my friends is on your side. You are here in the seat tonight, a poor, poor sinner and as weak as the water that flows down the mountainside as far as your strength is concerned. And do you know this, I am telling you in the name of my glorious Saviour, that the three persons of the ever adorable Trinity, are engaged in your salvation. Mountains may depart, hills may be removed but His loving kindness shall not depart from you, neither shall the covenant of His peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on you. And that is the gospel of our Saviour Jesus Christ and that is the gospel that is still among us as far as we are concerned. You see this is really the very meaning of the gospel that we have the gospel of the grace of God and we have it in this way. Here is a sinner, the sinner in himself is as black as pitch. See, he is just black. Ah, that is true. That is true! He is just black and he cannot see one white spot in his soul or in his person or in his life. Nothing but blackness. Well, that is the sinner that we present the gospel of Jesus Christ to, to save him with an everlasting salvation and who will present him as holy, harmless and as undefiled in the presence of the Eternal as if he had never sinned against God at all. That is our gospel, the gospel of Jesus Christ. Like the woman that was caught in the very act of adultery and when the Pharisees came to condemn her, Jesus said, "Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord.

And Jesus said unto her, “Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more.” That is the gospel. “And I will bring you to Zion” and He will bring them from Africa, from New Zealand, from Australia, from India, China, Russia and He will bring them to Zion and He will establish every one of them in His Zion by His Spirit, by His gospel, by His word and by His life. He will establish them there and He will also unite them together. You know yourselves and you that are young shall see more of it, how small the world is getting today. How small it is. How near every part of the face of the earth is to us today.

It is coming before my mind just now that many years ago I was down in London and along with one of our elders the late Mr Robert Sinclair, who had a good knowledge of science. I was listening to Mr Baldwin<sup>2</sup> as he was then, in the Albert Hall. We had some men up at the North Pole during that winter and the men who were up at the North Pole could hear Mr Baldwin from the platform in the Albert Hall, London, quicker than those people that were on the gallery. Mr Sinclair said that they could hear Mr Baldwin’s voice, thousands of miles away, sooner than those on the gallery. Most extraordinary!

Well, I just refer to it in this way—see how the world is coming as it were closer and brought into one place. And that is how it will be during 1000 years of the millennium. The gospel will embrace every son and daughter of the elect of God into one glorious universal family, that is universal in the sense of wherever they may be. That is the gospel for you. “I will bring you to Zion” and He will establish them in Zion and He will keep them in His Zion. Now, this is what I am going to say and I am leaving this part of my text, and that is my friends, the day is black in Britain, but there will be a glorious dawn and if the Lord’s people encourage themselves in the Lord their God, this dark threatening night shall pass away and the morning

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2 Baldwin a former Prime Minister.

will come. That is the morning of the glorious light of God's word penetrating into the hearts and consciences of men, women and children. I believe, as it is written in the Psalms, even sucklings will be praising the name of the Lord. Was it not the mother of James Renwick who left on record that the first thing she ever noticed was the little infant lisping prayer. Aye, but he sealed the grace of God in his heart by his blood when he was about 25 years of age.

Now the next part then is the promise—"I will give you pastors according to mine heart." I will give you pastors, or shepherds if you like, I will give you pastors or shepherds according to mine heart. Now that is an infinite kindness from the Lord. When the Lord will give pastors for His people that will feed them with understanding and knowledge. Now what must be the first thing that is true about a pastor. Well, the first thing that must be true concerning a pastor, (we call them ministers but they are often called pastors in the New Testament as well), the first thing that must be true concerning a preacher of the gospel is, he must have common sense, for the Lord would never send out an imbecile or a person that has no common sense. And that is one of the first essentials, common sense, common sense, common sense!

What is the next essential? The man must be born again, born from above, regenerated by the Holy Ghost and made a new creature in Christ Jesus and united to Him by faith in the Word of God. Now as to the time when he is regenerated by the Holy Spirit, that is a matter that is between his own soul and God. It is not at all necessary for any man or woman or child to know the exact time of that glorious, marvellous work of the Holy Spirit that is carried out in regeneration in the soul. It is so secret and so imperceptible as far as that is concerned, that it is compared to the bones that grow in the womb of her that is with child. And so it is in the work of regeneration. It is a work that is done by the Holy Spirit, by His creative power. The Word of God in the soul brings that man or



woman to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and enlightens their minds as to their state and nature, their fall in Adam, their own fall, their sinfulness and their transgressing God's law and so on. And He will make sin very, very bitter to such, to some more, to some less. But they are brought savingly and graciously in the divine power and wisdom of God to believe inwardly. The tongue perhaps does not move at all and I believe often that is the case and it is not necessary for the tongue to move or to utter one word. But it is in the heart, in the understanding, in the conscience, in the will, in the affections, in the desires. And that soul is brought savingly and graciously and mercifully to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. What was impossible, utterly and absolutely impossible for him to do or for her to do, is now possible and so possible, that a regenerated soul never did anything in this life so sweet and so comfortable and so heavenly, as to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and to close in with Christ in the Word of God by the Holy Spirit.

Now this must show itself in their life, walk and conversation during the rest of their sojourn in this world. The vanities of the world must now be given up. The concert, the dance, Sabbath desecration, cursing, swearing, the vain song, mods and all that trash and buffoonery of the devil must now be evicted out of the soul, out of the life of that man or woman for time and for all eternity. They are new creatures in Christ Jesus, old things are passed away. That man or woman would prefer to die than to go back to the life that she or he had before the Lord mercifully, graciously and affectionately dealt with them. Never again! Now that is finished! That is finished! That is finished now and will be finished forever. This is a man that the Lord is setting aside now for another work altogether which never before entered into his heart. And what work? For the work of the ministry of the Church of God in the world. Had he not a desire to be a minister of himself? No! terrified at the very thought of it. He could never think of such a thing until the Lord in His

infinite mercy, infinite love, revealed to him what His purpose was concerning him, as in the case of Moses. Well, if you refuse, forty years in the wilderness for you. You go to that college for forty years and then brought back to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt.

Now, “I will give you pastors according to mine heart.” These are men that are now according to God’s own heart. They are His children, born again, made new creatures in Christ Jesus, and as far as their state and nature and relationship with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are concerned, they are the children of God. Now this child of God is to be sent out to be a pastor for the people of God to feed them with knowledge and understanding. Now he must have this wonderful gift from God—understanding and knowledge. What knowledge? Knowledge of what the Lord did for him through the Gospel of the grace of God, sound, Scriptural, holy, sanctified knowledge of the Lord’s dealings with his own soul.

See how vividly and clearly the Apostle Paul enumerates on many occasions how the Lord in His infinite mercy, infinite love, dealt with him. He could now speak to the Church of God with knowledge of God’s dealings with him and you hear him saying “knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men”. Why? He had knowledge of the terror of God’s Law.

What did he pass through during these three days between the Damascus road and the street called Straight? Ah, he could say afterwards “knowing therefore the terror of the Lord”. None of your modern God of love! That is not the God that they have to preach and to teach and to set before the people, but the God that drowned the world of Noah and burnt to ashes the world of Lot in Sodom. The perfect, infinite, holy, unchangeable, eternal God of heaven is not a God of one isolated attribute, as if there was nothing in God but an attribute of love. God is the God of infinite attributes. He is God, perfect in all the attributes of His glory. He is certainly the Lord God, merciful and gracious, but He is also the God that will not spare the

man or the woman that will continue in sin and go into eternity without hope in God. God shall turn them down into hell with the devil and his angels for ever. None of your flattering God. No, no, no, no! That is dishonouring to God and it is contrary to the very revelation that He has given of Himself.

“I will give you pastors” after my own heart, men that will be born again, men that will be made new creatures in Christ, men with gifts and graces, knowledge and understanding, to declare to their fellow men the whole counsel of God, the whole Gospel. Law and gospel, gospel and law. Men that believe in the fall of Adam and preach the fall of Adam as sincerely and as honestly as they will preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to their fellow men. Moreover, they must be men who believe in the whole counsel of God as revealed in the Bible from the Book of Genesis to the Book of Revelation which is the Word of God, where God’s mind is revealed. Now, He says “according to mine heart,” according to my mind.

Where is the mind of God for us to know? In the Bible. In Genesis as well as in Revelation. There is the mind of God. Now these men are men that must now teach and instruct according to the mind of God in His own revealed Word, inspired by the Holy Ghost. They must not add anything to it nor take anything from it, but to make known the whole counsel of God to their fellow men. No fear or favour. No. As our blessed reformer John Knox said “Give me a pulpit and give me an audience and I will convince the people of Scotland of the truth of the Gospel” and so he did under the hand of God.

Now again, they are Pastors according to the mind of the Lord and they are for the people, to instruct the people in knowledge and in understanding. They must understand the Gospel for themselves and be able to preach that Gospel and, moreover, to defend it if necessary, by the very blood that is running in their veins. I say if that is necessary. Did not our fathers and mothers in Scotland defend the Gospel for us even with the blood of their veins, when

18,000 were sacrificed to the blood-thirsty enemies of Christ's cross? Yes, they defended the Gospel that we have tonight in Glasgow and that we hope to leave with our children. That is the Gospel they were defending, and that is the Gospel that the revered Rev. Donald MacFarlane defended in the Declaratory Act Free Church Assembly in Edinburgh in May 1893 and that is the Gospel we have tonight and may God grant that it will be in the Free Presbyterian Church until Christ will come in His glorious power back again to Scotland. And woe betide the man or the woman that will put a finger on the gospel. God shall dash you down into hell with the devil and his angels. And you put your finger on it or your tongue, your evil tongue on it, and God will burn your tongue in the flames of hell. See, the Gospel is the most precious thing we have under heaven, the pure, unadulterated Gospel that can save the soul of man, the soul of my son or the soul of my daughter, the soul of my grandson or my granddaughter, and that can save them for all eternity. Oh, the preciousness of it, the sweetness of it, the glory of it. Well! Well!

"I will give you pastors". Well, when we look back we were highly privileged in Scotland and in England with eminent, eminent, eminent pastors according to the mind of God. And we knew they were according to the mind of God. Why? Because they were preaching and teaching according to God's Word. That is how we knew. We know very well that Dr Owen, the great Puritan divine, the prince of theologians, was according to the mind of God in his preaching and teaching. We go back to his most precious writings on Justification by Faith, and on the Person of the Son of God, and the Glory of Christ and on the Person of the Father, and the work of the Holy Spirit. Incomparable! It is not to be found in any other part of the world or in the history of the Church that can excel that.

We now come down to our own beloved land and it was not a whit behind. We come to Boston's "Four Fold State of Man". Look at it like a mirror. There is man fallen, there is man on the way to

hell and there is God's wrath against him. Then he introduces the God-man, the Son of His love and he brings Him now forward as the Saviour of this lost and ruined man until he finally launches him into eternal glory. It does not leave him to be wallowing in the mire of this world. It lands him in eternal glory to be forever with the Lord. Now I could enumerate and enumerate and enumerate on these matters as far as the glorious and blessed gifts of God to us are concerned. But how ungrateful we are! Oh how ungrateful we are! Well, we should be grateful to God. We should be thanking God for the excellent men that He raised up in Scotland.

Now a word or two in conclusion as to how you are to distinguish between those that are the true pastors of the Church of God and the counterfeits or the false prophets. Well, you will always find that the false prophets are against and opposed to an infallible Bible, the Word of God inspired by the Holy Ghost. You will always find them rejecting and disputing their own relationship and the relationship of their people to the fall of Adam, which of course undermines the very foundation of grace itself. Now, you see, you will find today in Scotland, England, Ireland and elsewhere and on the Continent, men who cannot accept an infallible Bible and who cannot accept the necessity, the absolute indispensable necessity of the atoning death of Christ, of the virgin birth of Christ and His life in the world, His physical resurrection and ascension to the right hand of God the Father where He is at this very moment. While you are sitting there and I am in the pulpit here, my blessed Redeemer is at the right hand of God the Father. Now to His glory and to His praise let me bear witness on His side, that all who deny the virgin birth of Christ, His life and His physical resurrection, *are emissaries of the devil* and enemies to all righteousness. Enemies! Now, that is what we have to contend with. That is what the Free Presbyterian ministers are up against and that is what our fathers were fighting against and that is what we now are fighting against and we must fight against.

Do you think that I and my brethren have anything against our fellow countrymen and women as men and women, whether they are Baptist or so-called Free Church or so-called Church of Scotland or Congregationalist and so on? Do you think that we have any hatred or enmity to our fellow countrymen and women? NO! Absolutely not! We love our fellow countrymen and women and it is their eternal salvation and eternal benefit that we pray for and we desire and we try to set that example before them in our preaching and in our lives. Now here is the distinction then, and I think that that distinction a child can see now in our native Scotland. I question if the revered minister we had here in Glasgow (Rev. Neil Cameron), and he was a far-seeing man, and if the Rev. Mr MacFarlane whom I already mentioned, I question if they were seeing what we are seeing today. I know they were far-seeing and I know Dr Kennedy was far-seeing, and also Spurgeon who referred to our day in the most serious and solemn words possible that a man could utter. But yet were they seeing how far we have drifted away from God, in Scotland, in New Zealand, in Australia, in Canada, in England, in Ireland and so forth and so on.

Oh, there is infinite need of the witness of the Free Presbyterian Church to carry this witness to perishing men and women who have been deceived by false teaching, false professors, false ministers, men that know not the mind of God and are emissaries of the devil and enemies to God's people. Well, there is infinite need then of that witness on the side of the Lord, and you pray, you pray. We have a few young men (divinity students) just now and we are glad to see them. May God give them much of His Spirit, much of His grace and strength, to bear public testimony on the side of the Lord in their day and generation. But you praying men and women, you be praying to the Lord for more and more and more young men, that God would raise up young men in the Free Presbyterian Church. We cannot go to the secondary schools as they do in the other Churches

of Scotland and say, "Oh this is a quiet boy and this is a nice boy and this boy would do fine for college and this boy for the Ministry." No, we cannot do that, and God forbid that we should ever do such a thing, for the sending forth of pastors is in the hand of the Lord Jesus Christ. "The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest." Now, you praying men and women, do not give up praying to the Lord Jesus Christ. Do not look to the Synod or to the Presbytery or to your minister or to your elders at all. Their duty is the same as yours, but you pray and let me pray to the Lord Jesus Christ, that He would raise up young men in our church, that He Himself would regenerate and set apart for the work of the ministry. You know very well we have great, great need of that, great need of that, and the Lord can raise them up. But we do not want half-wits out of a secondary school or out of a university without the grace of God in their heart.

What we need is first, as I said, regeneration, and when they are regenerated, that the Lord would send them out. Not the one that I would say or that you would say, like Samuel when he went to anoint a King over Israel. He was going to anoint the first one. Ah, he is a fine looking fellow. Oh yes, a stalwart young man. Oh, but that is not him. Look at that one. Oh, he is fine. He has great gifts, that fellow. Do you know he has an M.A. and he has some of them in honours. Ah, what a fine, fine minister that would be. Rubbish! Rubbish! Never in the days of humanity will he make a minister. I will go to another place and I will look for a minister. Who is that? The tinker of Bedford, John Bunyan, and he was never in a college in his life but in the college of the Holy Ghost. I am not disparaging gifts and training and learning at all. There is not a man in shoes in Scotland that has more respect for learning than I have. But we must not put anything before the grace of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Grace, grace, grace, grace, saving grace, sovereign grace, free grace to the glory of God. That is what we need. And you be praying then that the Lord would raise them up in our church and they are in our church. They are in Glasgow and they are in other congregations as well, if the Lord would raise them up and set them apart for the work of the ministry. And verily my dear friends, you appreciate the fact that there is great, great need. See, the most of our number are aged ministers now. The need we have that the Lord would raise up others, that we could not only send one to New Zealand but a dozen of them to New Zealand and to Australia and to China and to the Jews and so on. That is what we look for, men raised up by the Lord, men set apart by the Lord, men filled with the Spirit of the Lord, men made by the grace of God able ministers of the New Testament church to spread the good news to the utmost bounds of the inhabited earth. Now, that is what we need and we are not grudging, we never did grudge, sending men to Africa to preach the gospel.

We never grudged anyone that was yet sent to Africa to preach the gospel to the heathen and we will never grudge any that the Lord Jesus Christ will send, although it would be a wrench taking them from us, yet we will never grudge anything for Christ. Everything and anything to Christ. Anything and everything to Christ. So we will never grudge anything to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Supposing He was going to take more from us and send them away, God forbid that we should grudge anything for Christ. And I think that I express the mind of the Church this night when I say, we are not grudging, this evening, we are not grudging that Christ is taking one of our number and sending him out to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ and to bear witness on the side of the Lord Jesus Christ and His dear people until we close our eyes in death.

You pray people, you pray now for ministers. We need them. You pray. Women you pray. Jeremiah was calling for weeping



women. Well, weep before the Lord then for ministers, but do not tell anybody in the world that but to the Lord.

Yourself alone in the presence of God be praying that the Lord Jesus Christ would raise them up and that He would send them out to preach the everlasting gospel of His grace and that He would keep the gospel among us in all its glory, excellency and beauty and heavenliness and sweetness and mercy. Ah, yes, the gospel is full of mercy. Ah, the gospel is full of mercy, full of mercy, full of mercy. Let us conclude.

## APPENDIX 2

Articles written by Rev. William MacLean and published by Westminster Standard.

### **Booklets**

Arminianism—Another Gospel 30 pages 1st Edition 1965

In the Footsteps of the Flock—A Memorial to Rev. Walter Scott 96 pages

The Providential Preservation of the Greek Text of the New Testament 43 pages

Christ's Kingship over the Nations—The Establishment Principle 28 pages

The Scofield Bible, Dispensationalism and the Conversion of the Jews 22 pages

The Scripturalness of Infant Baptism and of Sprinkling in Baptism 32 pages

### **Pamphlets**

Seventh Day Adventism—of God or of Satan? 4 pages

Christ or Antichrist? 6 pages

Mormons—Their Lies Exposed and Doom Foretold 4 pages

Easter, Lent, Christmas and the Cross (Unscriptural) 4 pages

Pentecostalism—of God or of Satan? 8 pages

Jehovah's Witnesses—Their Lies Exposed 6 pages

The Paganism of Cremation—4 pages

Christ or Freemasonry—4 pages

### **Tracts**

A Message from God to You!

Whiter Than Snow