

Unto all Them also that Love His Appearing

By Rev. Archie Cook 1788 - 1865

2 Timothy 4:8 "And not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

Translated from the Gaelic language.

THEY are few in number who believe in the preciousness of the day of grace. There are millions today in hell who, throughout eternity, will be saying, "Oh, if only I had one more day!" They would travel on their knees to the uttermost parts of the earth for one offer of mercy. They are presently in the world who will yet have this cry, "Oh, if only I had one more day!"

The Apostle, after he had gone through many severe conflicts, was now saying triumphantly, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me" - yes, that the righteous Judge will give me - "at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:7-8). From the day the Lord met him on the way to Damascus, this was his cry: "O wretched man that I am!" (Rom. 7:24). He faced trouble after trouble, temptation after temptation, but Oh what a song he had at last: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." He left these words for the strengthening of the Church of God until the Day of Judgment. For this reason, he said, "Not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." When speaking from these words previously, it was our intention to show:

1. A few marks of those who love the second coming (or appearing) of the Lord.
2. Some of the things that will be revealed which will make His second coming dear to His Church.

3. That it is the duty of every gracious soul to love the second coming of the Lord.

As you know, when we were speaking formerly on these words, we were saying that, before one can love the second coming of the Lord, there must be a winning over of the assent of that soul to the way of salvation, as was the case with the leper: "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean" (Mt. 8:2). There was no great faith there; there was no assurance, but there was hope. Now, with regard to the soul who attains to this, we cannot say (according to God's Word) that he will be lost; but with regard to the soul that comes no further, we have no warrant from Scripture to say that he will not be in hell. Further, those who love His second coming, as we were saying, were seeking assurance of their interest in Christ, and attending the means in seeking this assurance. However, one will only come to this as other things are made empty to him. As long as the creature has something else which gives him peace, it is not possible for him to seek his peace in God. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Mt. 6:24). It is only insofar as other things are made empty to the soul that the creature will come to this.

To go to the second head, that is: some things which will make the second coming of the Lord wonderfully delightful to the saints.

Firstly, a wonderful revelation of the creation will be given in that day. In all that He did for His Church from eternity His purpose was to exalt Himself in the eyes of the soul. Every holy creature has pleasure in meditating on God's works, but we are so blinded by sin that we are able to see very little of His works; this is why the Holy Spirit likens sinful creatures to the brute beasts (Isa. 1:3). There is mystery in everything created by God, and the revealing and unfolding of these mysteries are among the things that will be seen in that day - especially the way in which God left His own stamp on everything that He created. If we were to see God's stamp on the blades of grass, we would find it hard to tread on them. It is because we are so ignorant that we are as bold as to be capable of abusing the works of God. The day is approaching in which fear will be seen and experienced! We read of "when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job 38:7). Why - simply because of how God has revealed Himself in the creation.

Man was created as a wonderfully excellent creature. We are incapable of understanding anything of this excellency. There is no one on the earth who

would not be ashamed to be alive if this were revealed to him. That this will be revealed to them will constitute part of what will make His second coming pleasant to the saints. Man in his first estate was the channel between heaven and earth. Man's body was taken out of the earth, but the form of that body will be wonderful when revealed in that day. One of the divines said that this was the created form that the eternal Wisdom purposed to take to Himself.

The different way in which the soul was created - it was just by the breath of God. The unity that exists between soul and body is wonderful: the soul seeing with the eyes of the body, hearing with the ears of the body, and feeling with the body. For let the soul depart, and the body will be as dead as any other piece of the earth.

There will be a revelation of the image of the new-created soul, and how that image shone out through the body in such a manner that every creature honoured man and was obedient to him. There will be a revelation of how the holy soul was able to love, as his fountain of happiness, the One who gave him being.

It will be revealed how man was taken into covenant with God and into communion with his Creator. Communion with God is wonderful. Wonderful that God would give Himself over to the soul to be to him as the fountain of his happiness for time and for eternity, and that on a covenant foundation! On what did that depend? On obedience to God: to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength and with all our mind. Now this would be incumbent on man, although there were no covenant. It was incumbent on man to render obedience to the One who gave him being, to love Him for the excellence that is in Him; for there is excellence in the Creator capable of giving eternal happiness to all His creatures. Thus, obedience was incumbent on man, and this was added: "This do, and thou shalt live" (Lk. 10:28). Now it is in this that the nature of sin is understood, and that will be revealed on that day: how man despised God's threat, how he endangered his eternal happiness for a thing of nought, and how he lost all his happiness for that. That will be opened up on that day, and it will be seen how man brought himself into a miserable state through sin. Without that, how could the excellence of His sovereignty shine forth?

On this point, it will be revealed how man lost the fellowship and favour of God. Few today accept that anyone can be shut out from God's favour, but it will be

seen on that day that the whole of humanity lost their communion with God; then it will be perfectly understood, not only that he lost his communion, but he lost his ability to have communion with God. The Creator is holy, but we are sinners. The Creator is love, but we are enmity. He is light, but we are darkness - and it is impossible for darkness to have fellowship with light. What is to be understood by man being banished out of the Garden of Eden, with "a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life" (Gen. 3:24)? What can this possibly mean but that man has been banished from God's favour? It demonstrates that he can never come back on the basis of the covenant of works. Oh, what a sight the saints will get of that on that day! It shall be a sight that will exalt free grace throughout eternity. They will see how man lost dominion over the creatures; how they renounced their obedience to man. We read that the creature was unwillingly made subject to vanity. Every creature which did not sin stood on the side of God against man. The sight the saints will get of how these creatures were put under subjection, and not willingly. There is not a groan they utter that God does not understand, and it will yet be seen how the sweat and groans of the brute beasts will bring sparks of anger on souls throughout eternity. For they have a cry. Indeed, were it not how Christ stood in, the sun itself would withhold its light (Lk. 23:45). The saints will see that on that day.

It will be seen how man came to be so defiled and as wretched as an infant in its blood in the open field, without eye to pity or arm to help. Indeed, there is nothing in creation that did not have this cry to man, "I have no help for thee." Now the saints see that they themselves were in such a state as this (and you who will be eternally happy, ask that you yourself would be given an entrance into these matters, for, until then, your soul cannot be filled with thanksgiving).

The mysterious nature of election will be opened up on that day. The Scriptures tell us that there is such a thing as election, but there is little we are able to understand of that in this world. We read of "elect angels", yet what can we understand of that? But all things pertaining to the omniscience of the Godhead will be revealed in a wonderful way on that day. The election of the saints was from eternity. There is nothing in the world but is the opening of the womb of His purpose - "the womb of the morning" (Ps. 110:3). God saw from all eternity the world lying in its blood; every sin was open to His omniscience, for nothing is new

with God. Everything was manifest to Him from eternity (you there, hard rock that you are, were like that in God's sight from eternity). In this, then, the sovereignty of the Godhead will be revealed to the saints. If God had left the whole world to be lost, the excellence of the estate in which man was created would never be seen throughout eternity. On the other hand, if all were to be saved, the miserable state into which sin brought mankind would never be seen throughout eternity. Now what a view the saints will be given of the fountain of mercy and sovereignty in the sovereign God's choosing one here and one there in whom all the attributes of the Godhead will be glorified!

The nature of God's love will begin to be revealed to the saints on that day. This is a well, the bottom of which they will never reach throughout eternity, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love" Jer. 31:3). Why did God do this? Was there anything more in the creature to cause this to happen than there is in them who are in hell? Cannot the creature see his own shadow in hell and say, "Oh, I was once living in such sin! What has saved me from it" - nothing less than the secret purpose of God. They will see the end He had in view: that is to save them from sin and from the corruption of sin, and to make them holy. What awful monsters are in hell! Do you suffer from toothache? Are you not afraid that this is a foretaste of the worm that will be in your soul throughout eternity? Now it was in God's purpose to save them from that, and to prepare them for communion with God and His angels. In connection with this, the creature will see that God is the fountain from which all this flows - love and holiness flowing from God. What a sight they will behold then! Woe to the creature who is forgetful of eternity and forgetful of his soul! With this, the covenant of grace shall be revealed. Throughout eternity, the saints will have no cause to boast but in God. They may have reason to sing, "Thou art my hope ... my trust" (Ps. 71:5).

The mystery of godliness will start to be revealed. We read of the three Persons of the Godhead. It is a mystery, though the saints find fruit in it, but God begins by finding a channel through the Mediator - His mercy, compassion and love as it were gathered in and finding a channel through Him to never dying souls. They will see how the second Person of the Godhead undertook the salvation of the soul, and this is the wonder of the creation, that the Most High would go in the face of man's sin to deliver the soul; and in such humility the second Person would take bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh. Not only so, but that He

should take their infirmities upon Himself, who knew no sin; that immortality should suffer death, that in that nature He would be tired - yea, all their infirmities He took to Himself, and yet without sin.

That will be a wonderful revelation. The Saviour was partially concealed in the world for thirty years. It pleased the Holy Spirit to draw a veil over that until it will be revealed in glory: how He hungered and suffered until He faced death, "Without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9:22). Now that will be revealed to the soul, and he will see all things that he shall inherit throughout eternity because of the merits of Christ; indeed, everything that was in the eternal purpose comes his way as a consequence of Christ's death. "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests" (Rev. 5:9-10). Is it surprising that the poor saints who have had a taste of His love should be desiring His second coming?

They will see the union there is between man and the Saviour. He speaks of it as the bond between the vine and the branches, as the bond between man and wife. It is no union of personalities, but it is a union by which they shall inherit the love of God. They are in the world, but as soon as they believe and obtain forgiveness, they have union with Him. Is that not wonderful! He in glory and they on the earth, yet enjoying His love! You, who are not of this union, are only as a wooden leg, and little of the substance of the body reaches you! The saints see this union in such a way as satisfies the soul throughout eternity; in union with Him as a husband.

They will see this union as the bond that Christ has with God, which they shall have throughout eternity. How wonderful are these words, "Thou ... hast loved them, as thou hast loved me" (Jn. 17:23), and, "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. 4:6). They will see God's image restored to the soul, and, on that day, they shall see the Holy Trinity opened up like the unchanging fountain which they shall inherit throughout eternity! Are things not going to be revealed that are worthy of love? Oh, pitiful creature, who is forgetful of eternity, what an awful sight you will see opened up before you on that day!

The providences which met with the saints in the world shall be revealed on that day. Many a dark providence met with the saints going through this world, but they will all be revealed on that day, and they will therefore be greatly filled with wonder, saying, "He hath done all things well" (Mk. 7:37). Indeed, they shall see that if things were any other way, they would not be for their good, and they see how everything worked together for their own good. Poor creature, let this fruit come to your soul, and it will make this world a very empty place for you until the day of your death. Let a drop of this come to your soul, and it shall make you strangers and sojourners in this world. Is it not a precious thing to be able to say at the end of one's journey, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:7, 8). You in whom is the love of the world, it is no wonder that you will have that cry beckoning you to your death, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" (1 Ki. 21:20). But the providences shall be revealed.

I notice that, when the Lord comes effectually to any soul, that creature begins to use the means which the Lord has prescribed. The Lord has appointed means, and He honours those means. When God's Spirit comes to the creature, that soul will realize his sinful neglect of the means, which could separate him eternally from God. The Lord will leave him at the means until he tires himself, and comes to the feet of free salvation. He will do this to the objects of His love, and though it be His purpose to tire them out of the means, it would not be His purpose to tire them of the means. It is the work of the Holy Spirit of grace to be opening up the way of salvation, and again this is the fruit of the intercession.

What moved the Saviour to do this - was it not His very own compassion? This is revealed in the Scriptures, but no one can see it with the light of nature. But when the Spirit of grace comes to the creature, he will look to Christ for salvation. Now here I notice that His dealings with His own people differ so much as to put a darker countenance on the providences. At times He may give assurance of His love to some. That is what was a comfort to the Apostle: "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Tim. 1:12). Now that was from a sovereign act of God. There are some who are left full of doubts and fears. We read of some who

“through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb. 2:15). That was a secure state, but not a joyful one; it is often the condition of Christ's children, so that some would consider giving up this hope. We read of “weak hands” and “feeble knees” (Heb. 12:12), and this leaves them as broken creatures. Now this is a dark condition for them. Nevertheless, their eye is set upon Him for salvation. But I notice further, that no sooner do some of God's people get a drop of spiritual joy than something else connected with their condition snatches it away, perhaps some natural desire or a temptation, or perhaps a cross to bear, and it may deprive them of the only spiritual joy they may be capable of having.

Now, my friends, it is not easy for the soul in such a state to comprehend that there are other people who are acquainted with such events too. Now how precious shall the revelation of this matter be for the soul who has been truly bruised? There are some of God's people whom eternal wisdom has seen fit to keep poor in this world. Some were rich, but often they were stripped of the world and brought to that condition where they survived from hand to mouth, while the world enjoyed all the comforts of the world. Indeed, there were those in need who “wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth” (Heb. 11:38). Now would they be willing to look upon those things as a mark of love? Would they not be more likely to look upon them as a mark of God's wrath against their former sins, and thus their wound flowed unceasingly.

Many a dark providence like this was experienced by the saints. Indeed, there were some who - perhaps in what they were looking to for comfort - received but a worm that was transformed into a cross to be borne. Whatever comfort they may have had, there was something at its root that kept them mindful that this world is indeed a wilderness. Everything in this world was marked out from all eternity; there were the devils themselves and their own temptations, in addition to the carnal world. Their lot was marked out from eternity. My friends, when we look on things externally, we murmur. But once a little of this is revealed, the murmuring is quelled. How little of this we are able to understand, but it shall indeed be revealed on that day, and how the Saviour Himself was exercised spiritually in such trying circumstances which can only be described as being an everlasting fountain of sweetness to the soul. How little of this they are able to

see in this world! They may see a little of it; some found it in prayer at a throne of grace, but all that was the fruit of the endless ocean which is in God.

The gracious soul needs things which will break and bruise him to prevent him from getting his contentment in this world, and the Lord may make use of one sin to break him away from another sin. On that day it is revealed how He preserved them from destroying themselves and from things that would be an agony to them. How mysterious are the sins to which man is open in this world, and no one able to save him from them but the Saviour Himself. How wonderful was the long-suffering with which He bore with them in this world. My friends, it takes very little to awaken a murmuring in the soul. Consider the Church in the wilderness; did she ever take a step without rebellion or murmuring? Now was there anything in any of them but that which is to be found in every gracious soul in the world?

When this is revealed, and they will see that all things were working together to bring about their eternal glory, then shall they see the fulfilment of those words, "And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will 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" (Zech. 13:9). Now, when all that is revealed to them, will it not be a wonderful sight? Will they not then confess that He did all things well? What, when He took the world from you, did He do well? Oh, He did all things well! When He laid His hand on your body, did He do well? He did all things well! When He took your child from you, was that well? He did all things well! When He removed His presence from you and left you as a broken creature from means to means, weeping over a hard heart and an unfruitful spirit in the means of grace, did He do well? He did all things very well, all those things which were "but for a moment" work "for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4:17). He did all things very well!

The Judge will bring to light how His own people were exercised in their own tribulations, and when He reveals this, heaven and earth shall proclaim how right His judgment was, by making them possessors of His crown. On the other hand,

the great Judge will bring to light the hidden things of the ungodly, and when that is revealed, every creature in heaven and earth will put their amen to the righteousness of His judgment that orders them to hell.

There shall not be a dark providence the saints will meet that will not be revealed on that day. Indeed, the compassion that God had for them in their sufferings will also be brought to light. Those things are hidden in this world, but shall be revealed on that day. You who are causing one of them to sigh; you are in danger of causing God to sigh and of putting another drop of wrath into your own cup. It is not possible for a man or a devil to touch a gracious soul without touching God, and thereby putting more wrath in his own cup. It were better that all the authorities of Britain were pursuing you than that a gracious soul were complaining of you at a throne of grace. Remember the millstone: "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Mt. 18:6).

But now to conclude:

1. Let us remember that this is not our permanent dwelling place, for death will come and change all, and it often comes to the ungodly while they are uttering, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease" (Lk. 12:19), just when the nest is warm. You are here, and so much in a hurry with things pertaining to the body. You give no time to considering that you have a soul, but, poor creature, that will be of no comfort to you in the world of spirits. Many a poor creature goes through this world without as much as a care about eternity. They are today in hell who have done so, and "what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mt. 16:26). How awful are

these words, "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is

comforted, and thou art tormented" (Lk. 16:25). You who only have the world, what will you do when you see it on fire? The cry you will have: "Oh, that I were wise and that I had made choice of the good portion." Eternity, eternity, eternity! When millions of years have passed, Eternity will be just the same. Oh, eternity, eternity, eternity!

2. Although it is not possible for the creature to change himself, yet every creature has sin which he is able to desist from as a creature of reason; and it is as creatures of reason that God deals with us. You who are alive in a sin you know of, and who hold family worship, are but mocking your soul and mocking God. Indeed, you are mocking God. As long as that lies on your soul, you will not understand the power in God's Word until the day of your death. Oh, that we would take notice of the following, "Be sure your sin will find you out" (Num. 32:23). Although you would be buried in the depths of hell, sin will find you out, and it shall be as a dart in your soul throughout eternity, crying out for God's wrath.

3. You who are considering eternity, desire that nothing will be a comfort to you until the Day of Judgment is a comfort to you. If the love of sin were broken in your soul, God would cease to be dreadful to you. You get the love of sin broken in your soul, and the thought of the Day of Judgment will give you comfort. You will then see the terrible accursed things that go on in the world being manifested, and Christ's poor ones will put their amen to that sentence, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Mt. 25:41). These are the last words that the ungodly will hear from God throughout eternity, "Depart from me ... into ... fire"; yes, "into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Let Christ's poor ones bear their troubles with patience.

Finally, eternity is long enough, and you who have received the spirit of repentance, the day is coming when God will wipe away every tear from your eyes, and you will obtain the fruits of attending the means. What is that? It is nothing other than inheriting Himself throughout eternity. Oh, the awful eternity!

How poor the soul who-sells it for naught in this world! The nature of these words will yet be seen. They that be wise shall shine as the sun and as the brightness of the firmament in their Father's kingdom for ever and ever. Amen.