

Volume 3 Sermons – Sermon Number 15 - 2 Peter 3.15

Read also Genesis 6.5 – the account given of the world before the flood.

Jonah 3 and Romans 2.3-12,16

This is the subject, my dear hearers, with which I now desire to occupy your attention. The long-suffering of God and its character as intended for salvation to us.

When I last spoke to you from this place, that which I contemplated was the justifying of the character of our God in that his ways are equal while our ways are unequal, and that all the excuses by which men seek to extenuate their own guilt, if by which the endeavour to cast from themselves the responsibility which God attaches to them are all false and all doing injustice to God, and all casting on God the blame that belongs properly to ourselves.

I desire to follow up what I then said to you and occupy your attention with the long-suffering of God which is salvation - and I have read to you the passage which records the state of things before the flood and the feeling with which God contemplated that state of things, because of the relation that the flood bears to the second coming of our Lord, and because of the character of the present day as just that in which we are close and near his second coming and its judgment.

The state of things before the flood, and the situation of things before Christ's second coming, and the character of God's work in the flood, and the character of God's work in the second coming of Christ, we have been often contemplating in their connection with one another.

What I now seek to press on your attention is, first of all God's testimony concerning the condition of men, that the imaginations of the thoughts of their hearts are only evil continually, and then the feeling with which God contemplated such a state, that it repented God that He had made man in the earth and that it grieved Him at his heart.

Now you have here first of all God distinctly condemning the children of men at that period - you have here God charging against them all that all the imaginations of their hearts were only evil continually - we are not, for a moment, to suppose that those persons, of whom this was God's judgment, had the same opinion of themselves which God had of them. We are not to conceive that they saw themselves in the evil state in which God saw them - or that they were prepared to admit that all the imaginations of the hearts were only evil continually - we are not to conceive that they were prepared to confess it any more than men now are prepared to confess it.

Then what I wish you to observe is the character of the reasoning by which people seek to make out that it cannot be so very bad a state of things in which the world is, as it is often represented to be. It is often thought to be a sufficient answer, when it is said that the world is so bad, to say that surely *all men* cannot be so evil.

Now God has recorded for our instruction that He did see his own creatures in a state in which he was constrained to pass this judgment concerning them, and therefore we would be saying no new thing, if we were now to say of the men that are in the earth that all the thoughts of their hearts are only evil continually. It would not be the first time that God had come to this conclusion. We know that once before, this was the state of the world, and therefore that there can be no reason why it may not be so again. The mere fact of their being no exception made would be no reason against it, and a person holding the conclusion that the great multitude around him to be under God's condemnation, is by no means unlikely to be in the right. It has been the case once - it may be so again.

Again, it is said, that it repented God that he had made man, and that it grieved him at his heart. We must not take any liberty with these words, but just take them as we find them - And here we find God expressing repentance and sorrow at the state of his creatures - that he would rather, in respect of their evil state, wish that they had never existed. This shows quite clearly how true it is that a man may be in a state that is against the mind of God.

It is common for men to think that it is impossible that the will of God should not in every case be accomplished; but here we find God actually saying that he repented having made man on the earth, and that the same feeling is ascribed to God in respect of the state of men, which would be natural for us to feel if we have formed a plan and cherished a purpose, and were to be disappointed in it. If we see that a person has been at great pains with another to train him up for an object, and he fails in that object, and that the training does not serve the purpose, we would not think it strange to hear him say, "I repent that I have taken so much trouble with him. I feel grieved at my heart in

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regard to this person with whom I have taken such pains, and who has turned out so much the opposite of what I could wish”.

This is the kind of feeling to which this refers – and this is the kind of feeling ascribed to God while looking at the children of men, and on all the imaginations of their hearts, and perceiving them to be only evil continually - God was grieved at his heart because of what he saw. God felt a real and generous [genuine?] feeling on seeing the children of men in this evil state.

Another passage we read is the record of the preaching of Jonah to the people of Nineveh, and of that people repenting of their wickedness, from the king down to the meanest of his subjects. Observe here another mark of God’s character. It is said that when they believed that yet in 40 days Nineveh would be overthrown, and when they humbled themselves before the Lord their God - when they did not stand up to excuse themselves, and did not say to the Lord’s servant that cannot be – we are not so bad as to deserve all that, that then God repented him of the evil which he had purposed against Nineveh, and he did not do it. Here again we see God’s character that while God contemplated them in an evil state, and according to their deserts purposed his heart to deal with them, in that moment in which they turned to the Lord, and acknowledged him, and confessed their own guilt, in that moment God changed his purpose of destroying them.

Now these two instances of God’s dealing with men, and God’s speaking concerning men are connected with each other by the fact of Noah’s preaching to the people before the flood “The long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah,” so that the world before the flood, as well as the people of Nineveh, had opportunity of repenting and of humbling themselves, and if they had repented as the people of Nineveh did, they would not have been overwhelmed in the flood. He was the same God who looked on the world before the flood, charged as it was with a great load of sin, and repented of having created man upon the earth, and was grieved at his heart because of their condition, who is the case of Nineveh, when they humbled themselves, believing in God, and proclaiming a fast, and putting on sackcloth from the greatest to the least of them, repented of the evil which he had purposed against them, and did it not.

And the oneness of God’s character in both cases to the people before the flood, and to the people of Nineveh, is shown. Here we see the goodness and the severity of God; the goodness in the case of those who returned to it, the severity in the case of those who received his warnings in vain. And hence God is no respecter of persons – there is no favouritism with God – if we are to expect Him to deal with men according to his own righteousness. The Jews thought themselves a favourite people; and therefore thought to escape God’s severe judgments; but in point of fact the kindness which God showed them, when they despised that kindness, only increased the severity of God’s judgments. And this is the continual dealing of God with man - and this is taught by all God’s goodness, not that such and such individuals are God’s favourites; but that such and such characters God desire to see, and such other characters God hates and abhors - and that God deals with men in kindness and love - seeking to have that *in* them, over which alone he rejoices - seeking to have that taken out of them, over which he grieves.

Now of this character of God’s dealings with man it arises that the long suffering of God is salvation. If there were some who had a place in God’s kind regards, and others who had no such place, then the long-suffering of God could not be accounted salvation, and God could not take credit to himself so to speak, for his forbearance or long suffering towards us. But if it be the fact that there is a readiness in God to receive back everyone into his favour then, of course, every moment in which God has withheld the just punishment of sin, and invited men to return, is to be accounted of as salvation.

The meaning of the saying “accounted” salvation you will better understand if I turn your attention for a little to the opposite way in which men too often account of it. The long-suffering of God is accounted *indifference* by men in their natural state or it is accounted as something which implies that their sin is not so very great and awful as it is sometimes said to be. These are just two ways in which people cast off God’s long-suffering either by imagining that God does not trouble himself much in respect of our state and feelings, and does not take any very deep interest in us at all – or else they understand it as implying that men cannot be very bad, and so deserving of wrath and judgment. They find the account of it, either in God’s apathy or in the fact that there are excuses for man’s guilt, which God takes into account and that, because of these God is long suffering.

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In either of these views it is not at all seen as long suffering. There is no real enduring of the contradiction of sinners against himself, there is no real feeling of one who is moved and stirred up to bring immediate destruction upon those whose contradiction he is enduring. Now the expression “long suffering” implies that there is in the mind of God that which if it were to come for th at any moment would overwhelm with misery those who are the objects of it, and that is God’s hatred of sin; and “long suffering” implies that there is a feeling in God which controls that other feeling, so as to cause him, to withhold his judgments and spare them a little longer.

If we conceive of long suffering as indifference, then it is no longer true long suffering. Now the reality of God’s long-suffering is taught us in the long suffering of Christ. No person can doubt that one who prayed “Father forgive them for they know not what they do” for those who had hated him and persecuted him, but all the time he was among them going continually doing good, did manifest long suffering. Now we have in Christ God revealed. We are to see in Christ God manifested in the flesh, and we are see God’s long suffering in the continual feeling of Christ towards his enemies, and in that love which still remained in spite of all their enmity - and all their persecution of Him – we have revealed to us the exceeding love which remained in God, notwithstanding man’s enmity and rejection of his goodwill towards them. Thus do we come to see the long suffering of God.

But of we follow our Lord from the condition of suffering here below tit the condition of glory in which he is yet to be manifested as judging men, and if we see him who prayed “Father forgive them...” afterwards saying, “Depart, you cursed...” then we have still in the Lord Jesus Christ the revelation of God’s character, and we find that feeling with which God regards man’s sin, and which sooner or later will have its expression on every sinner who does not repent having also its expression in our Lord Jesus Christ – So that the character of God is fully revealed in Christ first so loving men that he bore with their contradiction even unto death, and then seeing him judging those very persons for whom he thus died, and assigning misery unto those who have not repented to give glory to God. The long suffering of our God is to be learned by us seeing the sufferings of Christ understanding that the object for which Christ died for us was that he might redeem us from all iniquity - and the character is summed up here in that it is a long-suffering which is salvation.

It is a feeling in every person’s heart, and to which he is continually prone to listen that there is in God - in his condition as God – in his being exalted above all capacity of pain or endurance in his being in no degree dependent on us for anything, something which puts him beyond reach of being affected by our conduct as to make it anything wonderful that he should bear with us! Now this was the very error which the work of God in Christ was intended to remove. If we carry with us continually the conviction that Christ is God, then we see in his “sufferings”, not what was felt by God during a short time when he appeared on the earth, in our nature; but we see what is continually felt by God in regard to sin. It was then only that he was suffering actual pain – it was while he dwelt in this our flesh that he suffered actual pain; but they are the same feelings at all times in the heart of God. It would have been no profit for us to be taught that during certain number of years Christ had these feelings towards men in their natural state – either of love to them or of condemnation of their sin – but if we are taught that what is expressed here by his bitter tears is always the same in the heart of God, that he is the same yesterday today and forever - that he is the very loving God he was then see to be, then are we taught true knowledge of God by the sufferings of Christ.

Now it is in this same way that we are taught it is long suffering, and that in fact there is continually a mind and feeling of God towards our sin which moves Him to our destruction - a continual feeling which moves him to repent that he has made man on the earth, and which grieves him at his heart - there is continual disappointment in the heart of God in respect of us, in every moment of our sin – that he has made us for his holiness, for his own glory and that in every instance in which he sees ius unholy there is in the heart of God just bitter disappointment – there is an earnest, an incessant desire disappointed – and there is a movement in the heart of God which but for his love and but for his desire to bring us out of that evil state would immediately destroy us. If we knew that all the workings of our minds are continually exposed to God, and that the working of his mind, in so beholding us, if it were to come out would be to overwhelm us in everlasting destruction, then we would see how long suffering come to be our salvation, because it takes us away from being exposed to this feeling in God.

There are only two ways of escaping from this feeling. One is its ceasing on the part of God altogether, and God being reconciled to our evil state – in that case we would be saved from God’s hatred of sin because that hatred had ceased to work. The other way is that God should withhold the

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expression of it for a season, and that season make provision for our being so changed that that feeling did not touch us. This latter way is the way God uses to us. He has not taught us that He is a different God now from what he was when he repented that he had made man upon the earth – we are still to see him the same God having in him this which is ever marking destruction for every soul of man that works evil – but it is taught us that there is space provided for us – a space for repentance, and that he has himself made provision for us that we should repent. This is the thing we are taught.

This is that thing which I speak to you as the forgiveness which you have in the blood of Christ – this is the thing of which I speak to you as the pardon for your sins which you have through the shedding of the blood of Christ for you – this is the space for repentance. You are not taught that you may now sin with impunity, because Christ's blood is shed for you – that would be the same thing as saying that the hatred with which God regards sin was exhausted by the blood of Christ, and that no longer exists – But you are told that the wrath of God is suspended and that thus an opportunity of returning to God is furnished for you. It is quite a different thing to say that when I see Christ made a curse for me I see God's hatred of sin declared, and in order that I may benefit by this lesson God pronounces to me the forgiveness of my sin, and gives me an opportunity of returning, from saying that Christ has suffered for me, and because he suffered I shall never suffer – from saying that the curse was borne by Christ and because borne by Him it shall never be borne by those for whom he bore it. And this is the error that is the source of so many evils in the whole system of opinions which men are holding concerning the wrath of God. But this is the truth that while it is impossible that God should cease to hate sin, it is equally impossible that he should cease to pronounce tribulation and wrath upon every soul of man that does evil – that while it is equally impossible that he should not ultimately pour forth the vials of his wrath on all those who continue in enmity to him, yet it was possible for God to suspend the expression – it was possible for him to withhold it for a time and to give space for repentance. And this suspending of God's wrath – this space for repentance – is the good news preached to you in the Gospel.

Now, my friends, it may appear to you a small matter, when we reduce what was procured for you by the death of Christ to a space for repentance; but it is your assurance of God, and of what has thus been put within your reach, that makes you feel so. If you understood, first, what it is that God feels towards sin, you would find that one moment's suspension of the expression of it, is a wonderful thing – If you knew that God is looking on your sin not with indifference – not without disapprobation, but with a holiness, to which every movement of sin is utterly opposed, and which utterly abhors all sin, you would see that it must be some mighty thing that comes between this feeling in God, and the destruction of the sinner and that keeps off even for a time, the breaking forth of the wrath of God/ But further, if, on the other hand, you knew what the good is that is contained in the space for repentance, you would see it altogether worthy of the price paid for it.

In point of time, no doubt, the space may be very short – perhaps only an hour – but in point of value, it is to be estimated by the eternal consequences of taking advantage of it. If I am shut out by a barred gate from a paradise in which is every blessedness – and if that gate is opened though but for five minutes, the opening of it puts all that is in paradise within my reach. I am not to measure the value of the opening of that gate by the length of time it remains open, but by the benefit I receive by going in. And so seeing the favour of God open to me in Christ Jesus, in its true character, I will value the space for repentance, not by the length of time it continues but by the exceeding blessedness of walking with God in newness of life, which it puts within my reach.

If you look back at it in this way, you will see that it was altogether worthy of the price paid for it – because it is purchasing for man not a few days respite from misery: but because it is putting within man's reach the means of escaping the misery altogether and of entering into the joy of his Lord. This long suffering of our God is to be esteemed as salvation – this space for repentance is to be accounted salvation, because it puts all the blessedness of the household of God within our reach.

Now my friends I would very shortly state, what I have so often started to you before, what the character of this space is – and how it is truly a space for repentance – and what the character of the long suffering of God is, and how truly it is a long suffering which is to be accounted salvation.

1. The character of the space given us for repentance is contained in the statement of the result of the work of Christ that he made peace through the blood of his cross Read through now Ephesians 2.14-18.

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In these verses, particularly verse 18 “that through Christ we both have access by one Spirit to the father” there is given us a description of the space for repentance. It is the same that referred to is Hebrews 10.19-20 where the apostle, after having argued the superiority of the sacrifice of Christ to the sacrifice of law, concludes with the statement, that we have “access into the holy place by a new and living way...having therefore brethren boldness to enter by a new and living way which he has consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh”. This new and living way of access into the holiest is that which is described in saying that we have through Christ, by one spirit, access to the Father.

Now what is contained in these statements? This is contained: that in Christ Jesus we have this provision for our returning to God, that, through the shedding of his blood our being sinners is no longer such a thing as to prevent our being received back to God – that while our character, as having broken God’s law marked us as those who had forfeited his favour – and while we could not cease to be the persons who had deserved the wrath of God for ever, unless we had ceased to be the same persons who had sinned, yet that the shedding of the blood of Christ took away this from us, and made us no longer a matter of necessity that we should be tasting of the misery due to sin; but made it consistent with the holiness of God that we should subsequently enjoy the favour of God - so that then it might be enquired how people who had offended against God were now enjoying the favour of the Lord their God, and how it was the case that they were not now monuments of the evil of departure from God, that there is this answer given that for them the blood of the Son of God was shed that therefore the courts of God’s house were no longer polluted by their presence there- that the favour of God was not fitted to teach men to sin - that there was a perfect consistency between their enjoying the light of God’s countenance, and the fact that their once having departed from God.

Those who see not this have yet low notions [ideas] of the difficulty which stood in the way of our being received into God’s favour – that we need more than repentance, that we could not be received into God’s favour without its being first of all being revealed what God’s estimate of our departure was.

Now this is all accomplished through the shedding of the blood of Christ. No one now is in the light of God’s love but through the shedding of that blood for him – and seeing it was the shedding of the blood of Christ for him that which removed the barrier between him and God, his presence in the courts of heaven cannot cause the slightest doubt of God’s condemnation of sin. Now understand that it was by his cross that Christ slew the enmity [hatred] – removed the middle wall of partition, and that there was a real hinderance to our returning to the enjoyment of God, arising from our being sinners, which Christ has removed by the shedding of his blood. But the removal of this was not all that we needed – therefore it is said that the way by which we have access to the holiest is a *living way*. And now we have not only the opportunity of returning, but the provision of the “Spirit”, in Christ for us, to enable us to return – Christ has the holy Spirit for us to enable us to draw near to God. This is contained in the space for repentance. Mark this – consider not that it was not enough for you that you should receive the pardon of your sin – that removal of the sentence of the law of God forbidding your approach to God was all that was necessary, for there existed another fearful barrier in the corruption of your whole nature, and in the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life, being all opposed to the will of God.

Here was a mighty obstacle quite distinct from your condemnation. There was in your personal corruption a mighty barrier. And when it is told you that you have liberty to come to God you are not told all you need to be told. Therefore, the space you have for repentance in Christ is not merely the remission of sins – but the gift of the Spirit in Christ. And you are taught that as universally there is forgiveness in Christ, so universally there is the spirit of Christ - and that as there is in his blood pardon for all men, so there is in his resurrection strength for all men to come to God – and that there is no person who can say my having broken God’s law excludes me, so no person can say my having a wicked heart excludes me – but every person ought to say, there is forgiveness for me, and the strength that is in Christ removes the hindrance arising from my corrupt nature.

Now observe what the space for repentance is – it is not merely a word saying you may come back – but it is a condition into which you have been brought by the shedding of the blood of the Son of God – a condition into which you have been brought by the resurrection from the dead, and by his receiving of the Spirit for you it is that God has made a provision; so as that when he says, “you may come” you are in circumstances to come back – and when He calls on you to repent you are in a

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condition to repent. It would be a mere mocking of our misery if it had been but a word – but if God has made abundant provision for our returning, then it is a joyful sound to us when he says, “Return!”

Now, my dear friends, God never speaks the word ‘return’ without having made a provision, therefore, beyond the present day of grace there is no longer space for repentance – no longer the provision for repentance. And no longer the call to repent, and when the judgment is come God no longer says, “Return”, but “depart you cursed into utter darkness!”

Observe therefore that when God says, ‘Repent’, ‘Be ye holy for I am holy’, be perfect as your father in heaven is perfect’ while he is speaking such words to us – the children of men – he is speaking not merely as man would say a word he is entitled to speak, but he is using a word that He never would have uttered if He had not made provision for our being what he calls us to be – it is a word which he never would have spoken unless he had furnished us in Christ all things pertaining to life and goodness. This space of repentance is therefore in other words, the Lord Jesus Christ revealed as our living Head, who has overcome all our enemies – accomplished our liberty – and who has in him for us all we need to enable us to give glory to God.

Now my friends, I would ask your attention to the value of this space given you for repentance, with reference to the circumstances in which you are now placed, as those on whom the ends of the world have come – as those who are living in the last period of the day of grace – as those in respect of whom God can truly say that that he may justly require of you all the blood of all the righteous who have suffered from the foundation of the world. There is a day when there shall be no space for repentance. Every day as it lengthens out an increasing wonder and excellence and glory to God. And in like manner it is an increasing of the responsibility of man. Every day of the continuance of this makes God’s glory the greater: because that we have still the opportunity of returning to God today after having been yesterday in enmity to God is a more wonderful thing than that we had yesterday of returning in reference to our former guilt.

There is another way in which this is likewise accomplished, to which we are less likely to attend, and it is the accumulation of the light and knowledge through the history of God’s past dealings with the children of men. God will hold us responsible for all that God has done in times past to reveal his own character. This is the meaning of the saying that the blood of the righteous, which has been shed from the blood of Abel downwards will be required of the generation of which our Lord spoke. How was it a righteous thing to require this? How is it righteous to require of you the blood of Abel – the blood of all the prophets – the blood of Jesus Christ and of Christ’s apostles – and of the blood of the martyrs who have suffered for the truth since our Lord arose from the dead? How can it be righteous in God to require this blood of you now living here?

You must know the righteousness of God in this awful demand. It consists in this that every new act of judgment on the part of God and every new act of rebellion on the part of man has been more a discovery of God’s character. All these things ought to have been instruction to you – these should have taught you what God is and what you are yourselves. They should have saved you from all the delusion of Satan, and from the corruption of your own natures. People escape from all this by saying that if they had lived in these days they would not have done as the people then did – this they say by way of respect to the memory of the prophets, building sepulchres and testifying that they honour those whom their father’s slew. We have had at no very distant period a monument erected to one of our great reformers, and those who erected it would never have suspected themselves of cherishing the Spirit against which that reformer spoke. But in this we have precisely the same thing over again as in the days of our Lord – constantly the acknowledgement of the excellence of the departed apostles, prophets, reformers and of all who were raised up of God to oppose the evil in former times.

But the very persons who so speak of departed excellence of those who have gone away may still be cherishing the very things which the Lord raised up these men to destroy. But this is man’s way of regarding the past. He admits that these men were good, and blames the men by whom they were persecuted, and so admits the excellence of those who suffered, testifying against those at whose hands they suffered. The person himself escapes from all feeling that shares in the guilt of those who are the persecutors – but God’s way is different.

He would teach us to see in the treatment of his servants from the beginning the continual proof of the opposition that has been from the beginning in men towards God, and He would have us

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taught by all that history records as that we should not be exposed to the delusion of thinking that the time would ever come while the world continues - the present evil world that is - in which good would be really eternal good, an in which the world would reserve its enmity for the truly bad. [Paul refers to this error in Romans 2.1] when he says "therefore you are without excuse..."

Now it is in this way my friends that all of you are exposed to the risk of being chargeable with all the blood of the righteous whose blood has been shed from the beginning – it is in this way that all this demonstration of the enmity of man to God – that all this demonstration of the deceitfulness of man's heart – that all this demonstration of its power to make him conceive it possible that he is serving God when he is killing God's servants – that all this may be in fact bestowed on you in vain and that after all this teaching you may be found joining in the judgment of the world's thinking that that which is good will be esteemed in a period when it is quite out of the question that goodness should be esteemed and wandering from a correct estimate of the state of things as if you had received no such instruction from experience.

But how should God judge so severely your failing to receive this instruction? Because your ignorance is wilful, and therefore you are without excuse – It is your *choosing* the darkness rather than the light that leaves you inexcusable. You have no excuse for not understanding, inasmuch as these men were your brothers, bone of your bone, and flesh of your flesh. You have been that they did what they did, when you ought to have seen in your own hearts what would sufficiently explain it. You have been astonished that the Jews could reject the miracles of Jesus Christ and could put him to death, when you should have known in your own hearts principles which would have produced the very same effects; but for the preventing grace of God; and the person who knows his own heart knows that he may fairly be called on to confess all the guilt of the world because he has that very heart of enmity towards God from which has flowed all the evil that is in the world. The un-renewed man excuses himself and thinks that this evil is to be ascribed to something very different from what is in himself. It is there that he is proving himself to be without excuse. He ought to have seen that his own carnal heart is enmity against God that in his natural state he did hate the Lord – and that anything like love to God or his neighbour is foreign to his heart and it put there only by the Spirit of God.

But how does the Lord require this of us? How did He require it of the Jews? By fearful judgments on their nation as a nation. If this be so, then this is given us for our warning – we may believe that He will require it of us in like manner. It is wonderful that people should impose so eagerly upon themselves as to think it a sufficient reason for laying aside all the thoughts of the Lord's second commandment that the hour of death is the Lord's second coming to them.

Now my dear friends what I say is that it is very wonderful that people who are accustomed to attach such importance to the interests of their countrymen and kindred and families, in every other point of view should not feel it in this. Is it not the fact that men think it a slight thing and be indifferent to the prospects of their kindred, or their country or of the world? It would be thought a most extraordinary thing in a father to say, "I may die tomorrow and therefore I don't care what will happen after that event." It would be thought extraordinary of a native and inhabitant of these regions were to say, "I don't care what the history of this kingdom will be – I don't care whether an enemy conquers us, or our liberty is lost – because I may die tomorrow." It would be thought an extraordinary thing if a man should say, "I don't care what the history of the world will be – I don't care thought all the arts and the sciences should be lost, if the world should fall back to barbarism, and ignorance, and superstition. If men should be guilty of the most horrid outrages – I may leave the world tomorrow and what care I for the history of the world? Such a man would just be reckoned a monster.

Now I ask you, what is the reason when a person speaks of such a change in the history of the world as we say shall take place at the coming of Christ – what is the reason when a person speaks of such a judgment upon the nations as we declare will be then that you should think you have nothing to do with it – the hour of your death is everything to you. How would you think if it were said that in a short time the Emperor of all the Russia would pillage and destroy your country – would you not judge that it was right in you to think about it, and to inquire whether this was likely to take place or not? And yet when you are told that it may be in the space of a very short time that the Son of God may come, and overwhelm the country with destruction - how is it that you think that you have nothing to do with that? How is it that that event which has a far deeper and wider influence when ascribed to the doing of God, are events with which you have nothing to do?

There is a reason for this - and it is the same reason by which we explain how many parents would be much affected by seeing their children destitute of food and clothing, who at the same time are

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altogether unaffected by the ungodly state of their families. It is a fact that people will feel a deep interest in all the temporal concerns of their families, who are totally uninterested about their spiritual interests. What is the reason for this? Because in the one case God is shut out, and in the other case God must be seen. It is the appearance of God that man hates. Let the appearance of God be not in it, and then man will take an interest in it. But let God be acknowledged as God in it, and then it is unwelcomed and disliked.

But our liking or our disliking will never change the counsel of God, whose purpose is to take vengeance – and judge the world to manifest his wrath against every soul of man that does evil, for He will come to work those mighty changes on earth of which all the Prophets have spoken – I therefore entreat of you not to allow the sympathies by which you are bound to others – the interest you take in the land and country you live in; I entreat of you not to allow this interest to be used for the purposes of sin and never be used for the glory of God!

God wishes you to take advantage of these interests – He remembers everything in your condition, and refers to it in such a way as to make you take advantage of these things. Your God remembers that you are fathers – your God remembers that you are members of a community – your God remembers that you have interest in your nation, and therefore he speaks of the miseries that will come, and of the destruction that will come on communities and nations and families and would enlist all their feelings in his own service and would make, not merely your own feelings as to the importance of your own souls, but would make your feelings as to others, your feelings as to your country, and as to the world to come into his service to give interest to his words, and to fix your attention on what the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

It is a fearful and successful device of Satan to lead people to think that religious motives are not to be derived from the future history of the world. You find that the repenting in the case of the men at Nineveh arose from them believing a threatened judgment upon their city, and you find that the repentance of the Jews, when they did repent, was their believing that it was the Lord their God who brought up enemies against them, and when they did not repent and return to their God they were punished by the infliction of these threatened judgments, and by their sufferings those things that God said would come.

I entreat of you to consider that the space for repentance which is given to you, which is the result of the shedding of the blood of Christ, and which is secured to you in the present place of Christ at the right hand of God, your high priest and advocate with the Father, you are to see as God's best gift to man, and you are to see it as a space for repentance which you are to improve by turning to the Lord as part of families, and part of a nation and you are to feel that God's judgments correspond with God's space for repentance, and that there is eternal wrath to be escaped on our coming back to God, so judgment on our families, and nations are to be escaped on these families and nations turning back to God. And now when you are seeing the desolation which may come in a moment over a people living in peace and comfort, and when you cannot infer the security of our won of that above neighbouring nations, it is important to call on you to remember your place in God's eyes as part of a country belonging to a nation and whose who are called upon to stand between the Lamb and the judgments of God.

Do not look for escape from threatened judgments to the excellence of our constitution – to the talent or knowledge of those who may have the government entrusted to them – do not look to escape from threatened judgments, to anything of this kind I know, and so that as a nation we are ripe for judgments in respect of deserving them and that if the purpose of God to inflict them be not changed they will come, and that if it be changed He will employ means to save us from such judgments.

And I therefore in my place as the watchman of God among you call upon you to look to this matter, and while the people of the land are so peacefully looking at what they conceive the resources they have within themselves, and saying that much may be accomplished by the wisdom of men, and by giving the people opportunity of using that wisdom which they think they possess in almost an almighty degree which will be able to control events, I beseech you, humble yourselves before the Lord your God, and see every day and every hour given as a space for repentance to our nation and let us plead with the Lord that He would turn the hearts of the people, and of the King, of all who are in power and of all the nations, so God may repent Him of the evil that He has purposed against us. I have of late directed your attention to the awfulness of seeing so many of those who ought to know other things looking for a Millenium, which they would call one of political liberty, and not looking for that Millenium which is to be brought in by the coming of Christ. And there is at present a feeling among the people of an approaching storm or hurricane and of light and sunshine beyond it, and

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that they flatter themselves that out of the confusion there will arise a peace, and a clear and beautiful state of things – but while men are forming an outline of the future which is very like that which God has revealed, the thing at which they are looking is not what God has promised. And it will be the case that the people will go on in this way who are not taught of God and the matter is waxing worse and worse, and they are comforting themselves with the expectation of the good to come out of the evils, when they expect the good, and are longing for it, they are dealing towards God in such a spirit of rebellion as to be heaping up the measure of their crimes. Men's hearts will be failing them for terror and yet the hour will overtake them as a thief in the night. There may be an expectation, but not such an expectation as to prepare for what is coming – it may be that the very people who are fearfully looking for these things that are to come upon the earth will be overtaken as a thief in the night, found not watching. It is awful that people will turn to every creature rather than the Creator and think it a right thing to study the conjectures of man in this matter, and will take up a newspaper with avidity to learn what are the appearances in this or that place, and what those who are there expecting and will not come to the word of God and learn of God what is coming, and learn of Him what will prepare them for what is coming. The signs of the times in respect of men's feelings and their avowed confidence in themselves, and professed worship of themselves, and in respect of their thinking that anything is accomplished without God is enough to make one's heart sink within him, were it not for the assured prospect of the glory that is beyond.

But our knowledge of what is coming does not, and is not intended to destroy our sympathy with our kindred, or our country and is not intended to give us a different consolation as if we should say to ourselves 'because we know that we ourselves are not afraid of the storm, therefore we need not mind though others should sink and perish, but just as our consolations abound so will our afflictions abound also, in respect of others and as we see....[words are illegible] which coming and anticipate more and more for that coming righteousness – so shall we feel more intensely for those to whom is granted the same space for repentance as to us, and for whom God has provided all that in the fullness of which we are rejoicing, and they are rejecting it all, and losing it by their own sin! My dear hearers, I would now say to you - and bear with me while I speak – you, the people of this place, the people of this parish, that I believe that unless you repent, and give glory to God, yours will be the fullest cup and the severest judgments of all the people of the land. I say it because I feel it needful to say it, I say it because I feel that it is the will of God that you should know your responsibility. The clearness and fullness with which these things have been set before you, and the warnings of the Lord coming in judgments, and the declarations of forgiveness made to you, will only aggravate your condemnation. These things are some of the many talents for which God will require you to give account and I do not say that it is/as having been the fact that God has spoken his warnings by my lips any reason why I should not tell you what your responsibility is – I constantly teach you that when God speaks to you, you are to know God's voice *by the thing spoken* – that he that speaks is to be just as nothing – that he is to be no more between you and the sun, so that you may see through it. Now, I expect that everyone who enters into the apprehension of the true place of the minister will know that when he speaks of your responsibility it is not of himself – of anything personal he is speaking - but that he is referring to what comes from God. Consider then that you have been taught what many in the land are not taught, that they set themselves against, and are encouraged also, too much in setting themselves against the love of God to you all – that Christ died for every one of you - that he shed his blood for the offence of every soul among you and that through the shedding of his blood you have the forgiveness of your sins - that through the shedding of his blood he condemned sin in the flesh - and by taking your very nature, by becoming bone of your bone and flesh of your flesh and by being the holy One of God in your nature and not by taking the nature of men as before the fall, but by taking the nature which you have, just as you have it, and in that nature glorifying God, and being the holy One of God you have been taught that this was through the eternal Spirit – through the eternal spirit he offered himself without spot to God: so that you have not only been told that the nature of man was holy in the person of Christ but how it was holy and how Christ presented himself without spot to the Father – that it was through the Holy Ghost.

This great work of Christ was not intended to as a mere display of the mighty power of the Holy Ghost – but was done for your sakes, that you might not only have forgiveness of sins through his blood but that the same Spirit which Christ received from the Father, and by which He overcame the world, the flesh and the devil, Christ should receive not for Himself but for us.

We are thus taught the entire provision for our being holy as God is holy, and you have been taught that according to this provision, God will judge you and that it is his purpose to come in the person of

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his Son to judge the earth and that he has called is to the continually looking for his event as a thing near at hand – you have also been told of earnest of your inheritance and the mighty power of God which is in the gift of the Spirit which is for the church that in the power of the holy Ghost she may manifest the power of God dwelling in her. Understanding then, that these things are true – that these things are the faithful sayings of God - I must regard you as being under a peculiar responsibility and as under a peculiar condemnation if you reject this truth of God. And every day and hour, God has lengthened out the preaching of these things among you, He has been adding to your responsibility.

And at this moment I do esteem you, the people of this place, those of you who have not repented to give God glory – those of you who have not believed the things spoken - those of you who are still ignorant of the forgiveness of your sins – those of you who are still ignorant of Christ having the Spirit for you – those of you who are still ignorant of the earnest of your inheritance – those of you who are still ignorant of the coming judgment and of the inheritance of the saints on life - that those of you are under a most awful condemnation that in on our sinful world.

Therefore I would now urge upon you to consider the astonishing grace of God, who is still waiting to be gracious, and his marvellous long suffering in that all your past rejection of and disbelief in his truth has not caused him to withdraw the light from you but in love to your souls he is still contending and struggling with you to bring you back. If it were indeed to the glory of God – if it were indeed to the salvation of your own souls, I feel that the importance of these things is such as would perfectly justify and make it a perfectly right thing that you should be told *individually* what you are. In the matter at issue, the saving of your souls, the judgment of men is little to be regarded – and I see no reason in reference to man's judgment why I should not tell among you individually who have repented and who has not. But this is not the thing to which I am called. It is not by speaking to you individually that God informs you of his love, but he would have you to know his love to you by knowing his love to all. And it is not by telling you of the wrath that awaits you with reference to yourselves individually that God would save you, but with reference to the *character* of such as shall be destroyed.

I would now speak to those who know this space for repentance, and have turned and are giving God glory, in respect of the love that is revealed to them in Christ - and I beseech you think of the time and the condition of the land. I see the awful responsibility you have through your knowledge of His name which alone is salvation.

My dear friends, it is painful to know that there is such a constant tending to fall back again into a condition of carnal peace and security even in those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

Though that which gives me peace is a love truly undeserved there is still a tending to fall into a condition of carnal ease instead, and sympathising with God's feelings towards perishing sinners. So then the value of the space for repentance.... [illegible]

...but from the word of God we know that it is now very narrow – because of the signs of the times we know that it is very narrow – because of the fulfilment of the prophecies we know that it is very narrow - and we know that this space for repentance is passing away, is now to be heard with a deep and peculiar feeling; because it is so very nearly past.

No doubt that in the abodes of blessedness hereafter there will be a perfect peace – but still it is a great mystery how people will be able to look back on the opportunities they have had of telling of the love of God, and the perishing of men to whom they have not improved these opportunities – it is a great mystery how they will be able to look back in peace in the season they have seen others about them not improving the space given to them for repentance, without warning them of the danger.

And while I believe that God will be glorified in the destruction of the wicked, so do I believe that the high glory of God is in their being brought to repentance – and while made to say hereafter "thou art righteous O Lord, who judges so", yet in this present day you will give glory to God in rejoicing in the forgiveness which is now in man, and being the means of bringing them back to God.

If you have been taught to value this space for repentance, and if you would see those around you, as those in respect of a similar charge may be accomplished then feel yourselves moved in speaking to others...

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