

THE WAY TO SERVE GOD ACCEPTABLY

A SERMON

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“That all people, nations, and languages should serve him.” Daniel 7:14

WE read, in the 9th verse of this chapter, of the thrones being cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit. These thrones that were cast down mean, of course, not that which the learned have told us, thrones of the earth, but it means heavenly thrones were cast down, namely, the truths of the gospel were cast down; they are the thrones of the people of God. Hence, they are represented as being raised up to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. So that the love of God, the electing grace of God, the salvation of God, the promises of God, these become as it were thrones by which the Lord raises us up into fellowship with himself. Now these thrones were cast down, so that when the Savior came, he found all sorts of human dignities and human inventions put into the place of the truths of the gospel. And then, as they had cast down the truths of the gospel, Jesus Christ cast down their traditions, and put the truths of the gospel, I was going to say, into their place, and raised up the truth. And as they had cast down these spiritual and heavenly thrones, the consequence was that the true meaning of the Old Testament was lost sight of. But when the Savior came and took the Old Testament in hand, he opened the Holy Scriptures unto the disciples, and showed that the great theme of the Old Testament was himself. “Beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, he explained unto them the things concerning himself.” So it says here, “The judgment was set;” that is not the final judgment, it does not mean that, but the judgment in the Savior’s day; he came and sat in judgment, and rejected that which was not of God, and established that which was of God. And so “the judgment was set, and the books were opened.” And the consequence was, when these books were opened, that Daniel was enabled to read out those revelations of the blessed God concerning Jesus Christ, that should prove to be the salvation of sinners unto the ends of the earth, as says our text, “That all people, nations, and languages should serve him.”

It is not my intention this morning to speak of the numerical extension of the kingdom of Christ, or the accumulations that shall go on until the last chosen vessel be gathered in, and then down shall come the world, and there shall be an end of time. My chief object this morning will be to show, first, *what it is to be a true servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

First, then, *what it is to be a true servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.* And I shall also notice this part under two main parts. First, that to serve him consists in receiving him in the understanding of his

truth, and in love to him; and then the second part of the service, in which we may include every part, consists in abiding faithfully by him. In these two things we may include all parts of the service of God: first, to receive Jesus Christ; and secondly, to faithfully and constantly abide by him. If then we are to receive him, in what relations are we to receive him? There is, in connection with our text, a four-fold representation of the Lord Jesus Christ, and he must be received in all those representations of him in order for us to become the true and acceptable servants of God; for "God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth; and the Father seeks such to worship him." So that you see here that the persons who receive him must be spiritual persons; for "the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." And all the things of the Spirit of God are embodied in the Christ of God. Here is then a four-fold representation given of him here. Daniel saw that he came in the clouds of heaven. These clouds of heaven I take to mean the testimonies or predictions put upon record concerning him. Hence you observe in the 12th of the Hebrews, that all those witnesses, whom the Apostle had enumerated in the 11th chapter, are in that 12th of the Hebrews called a cloud of witnesses. So then, Jesus Christ coming in the clouds, I understand by that, that he came with these predictions; so that there is not any one prediction of the Old Testament which the dear Savior did not in his humiliation accomplish; at least, not one prediction relating to that humiliation which he did not in that humiliation accomplish. And you will observe this to be one essential part of the knowledge of Christ. Hence it is said in the 1st of the Revelation, "Behold, He comes with clouds," that is the same idea, "and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen." Now let us understand this. "And every eye shall see him." We must take that verse I have just quoted, first as the language of mercy; and then, after we have taken it as the language of mercy, or as Gospel language, we must then take it as the language of judgment; and in taking that one verse in those two contrastive senses, we shall see the truth of what is there declared, that every eye shall see him. First, we must take it as the language of mercy. "Every eye shall see him;" that is, shall see him as answering to ancient predictions. And bless the Lord, we do. I trust that some of us have entered a little into the feeling of the eunuch, when Philip began at that beautiful chapter, the 53rd of Isaiah, and preached unto him Jesus, setting before him the blessed Redeemer, that he exactly answered in what he suffered, that he exactly answered in what he achieved, that he exactly answered in his reaching heaven and making intercession for transgressors, that he exactly answered, not only to that chapter, but to all things written of him. And when the eunuch was favored to see this, to see how sin was put away, he saw Jesus as a Savior, and his heart rejoiced, and he longed to have an opportunity by some act of obedience to show that he loved him. "See, here is water; what does hinder me to be baptized? And they both went into the water together." And the eunuch did not regret it; he went on his way rejoicing. Now then, let us take a little encouragement here, if we can, in relation to the knowledge of Christ; that "This is the will," says the Savior, "of him that sent me, that everyone that sees the Son," that thus sees as answering to ancient prediction, as coming in these testimonial clouds of heaven, "every one that sees the Son, and believes on him." How pleasant it is when by his own sufferings we are persuaded of the truth of his Messiahship; how pleasing it is when, by a clear revelation unto us of what he has achieved, we are drawn into an understanding of what he has done, we are drawn into an approbation of what he has done, we are drawn into the love of what he has done. "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me;" that is, everyone that thus sees him. This is one step towards becoming a true servant; because you cannot carry on the second branch of the servitude, namely, of abiding by him, unless you understand what there is to abide by. I say, you cannot certainly serve him acceptably except

you know what there is to abide by. And then that same verse of the 1st of Revelation I have quoted, "Every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him." Now there was but one person that pierced him, and therefore that must be understood to relate to notorious persecutors. Saul had pierced him, not literally, but in the sense, there intended, "Why persecute you me?" "They also which pierced him;" to denote that even notorious persecutors should see the Son of God, be drawn into a conviction of what he is, be drawn to hope in his mercy, be drawn to love his name. "They also which pierced him." And so now, if I am speaking to any, whatever enemies you have been to him, if you have cursed his people, and cursed his book, and cursed his name, and cursed his ways, and have blasphemed openly against him, and fear now that you have committed what, in common parlance, though the Bible knows of no such thing, is called the unpardonable sin, ah, remember then that "they also which pierced him," if they do but see him, they shall look on him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn and be in bitterness. And if you are brought to see what a wretch you have been, and brought to see into what Jesus Christ has done, look at Saul of Tarsus, and take encouragement; if you then see the Son, you see Jesus Christ as answering to these Old Testament predictions, and are drawn thus to approve of him, and to see how by him you escape all the wrath of God, "You have taken away all your wrath," and to see how by him you escape every threatening of the Bible, there is no more curse, and to see how by him you will escape ultimately every adversary and every adversity, and will come out at last on to the paradisiacal vantage-ground of eternal victory, and there stand a monument of the triumphant achievement of the blest Redeemer, and your soul prepared to join with the redeemed host to crown him Lord of all. If you thus see the Son, then it is the Lord that is doing this, for "if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost," and if it is not hidden from you, then you are not lost, but you have a hope of being saved. "And all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." Sure, to be the case. When a poor sinner sees his lost condition, and sees that "none but Jesus can do helpless sinners good," that man begins to weep, he begins to sigh, he begins to be unhappy, he begins to say, "What a fool I have been to prize the body and despise the soul! what a fool I have been to serve only this world, and have no concern for the world to come! what a fool I have been to be wrapped up only in creature things, and care nothing for my Maker, care nothing for my Judge, care nothing for the Savior! what a fool I have been! He will be convinced of this, and his soul will sigh out, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" Here, then, we say, "Even so, Amen." We rejoice when the Lord commands the light to shine into the hearts of sinners, that they may thus see Jesus, and begin to sigh after him, begin to mourn after him. John might well say, "Even so, Amen." This is one representation of Christ, then, answering to ancient prediction. But then I may perhaps make another remark upon those words, "Every eye shall see him." You observe, taking the words in the gospel sense, it is only the saved that shall see him in the progress of time. But then those words have a contrastive meaning. There is the judgment day to come, and those that do not see him so as to approve him, and to love him, and to hope in him, and to stand out for him here, those that do not thus see him here before they die, will all see him at the last great day and his greatest persecutors, many of whom will be among the lost, they shall see him, and shall weep and wail without any termination to their weeping and wailing, the fire shall not be quenched, and the worm shall not die. And yet to this solemn judgment the saints shall say, "Amen; even so, Amen;" because the judgment is righteous. And so, taking the verse first in the gospel and then in the judicial sense of the word, you will see that the words are true that "every eye," literally, of the whole human race, "shall see him." I am aware that all shall see him, the saved as well as the lost, at the last great day; but still that first idea I have advanced is a matter of great importance, of essential importance indeed, that if we see him not as the Son of God, if we see him not as

answering to ancient predictions, then I am quite sure we are not drawn to him, and know not what we have to abide by.

Again, Daniel says that this same Son of man “came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.” Now the Ancient of days here certainly must, I should think, mean God the Father. Here God is called the Ancient of days, and Christ came to the Ancient of days; that is, he came to God. He came to God in his life. He never once went away from God in thought, in word, or in deed. But we have done all three; we have gone away from God in thought, we have gone away from him in word, we have gone away from him in works. We are like sheep going astray; we have turned everyone to his own way. But Jesus came to God in his life; never went from him in thought, word, or deed. And remember that this, his perfect devotion to God, is for us; this life of perfect devotion to God is the way in which God justifies us; this is the righteousness of which you read, “Now to him that works not, but believes on him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” How the soul lays hold of the life of the blest Redeemer! Here am I, a poor, infirm, wandering creature; plenty of evil thoughts, and very few good thoughts; plenty of evil desires, and only just a few living and pure desires after God; so much of the old man, and so little of the new; so much sin, and so little grace; so much unbelief, and so little faith; so many rebellions, and so little love; I dare not depend on anything in myself. But when I look at the blest Redeemer’s coming to God and living to God for me, precious faith makes this righteousness mine, and here I stand as righteous as Christ is righteous; not one of my past, present, or future faults can ever be laid to my charge. “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifies.” Here it is, then, we are drawn into the knowledge of him; here it is we are drawn into the approbation of him. And remember that this Jesus Christ is nothing else but the expression of God’s thoughts concerning us; nothing else but the expression of God’s love to us; nothing else but the expression of that provision which the Lord has for us; for in him all fulness will forever dwell. Then, again, how he came to God in his death. Did he come to God in his death acceptably? Yes, yes! And the dear Savior looked upon his acceptance as an essential part of his glorification. He says, “Father, glorify your Son, that your Son also may glorify you. I have glorified you on the earth; and now, O Father, glorify you me.” I think this refers to his acceptance as a sacrifice on behalf of poor sinners. “Glorify your Son;” accept your Son as the acceptable sacrifice; and then your Son, when he has risen from the dead, will glorify you. Just, if you can, catch the idea. Here is the whole Human race, and amidst the millions of that human race not one man is to be found that can think a thought, say a word, or do a deed acceptable to the holiness, the law, and the justice of God. So that Christ stands here as the contrast to the whole human race. It was a delightful truth that Peter declared when he said, “There is no other name among men under heaven whereby we must be saved but the name of Jesus.” Here he was accepted; here then he said, “It is finished.” “Therefore does my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man takes it from me;” God accepts it as the sacrifice for sin, “No man takes it from me; I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down;” I am God as well as man; but at the same time I am not doing it upon my own authority, “for this commandment have I received of my Father.” Now then, here Daniel saw him coming in the clouds of heaven; he saw him coming to the Ancient of days in his life; he saw him coming to the Ancient of days in his atoning death. This is the person we are to serve, and this is that for which we are decidedly to stand out. And then, coming to the Ancient of days, I scarcely need remind you, means his entering into heaven. See what sweet, attractive views the Old Testament saints had of the Lord Jesus Christ; that he came to the Ancient of days in, as the apostle says, interceding for us. He is our forerunner. See how beautifully he

speaks upon this. When the Savior speaks of taking us there, to where he is, he does not mingle up, with that happy transition you and I shall soon realize, he does not intermingle with that transition the slightest reference to any fault on our part whatever. Really there are so many find-fault people among men that it is quite refreshing to go somewhere where you are not found fault with; it really is quite refreshing, quite comfortable. And so, the Savior says, "In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myself; that where I am, there you may be also." Not a word about their faults; no, no; bless the Lord! So, there is the mansion; there is the Person going to the mansion; there is the assurance he will come again; there is the assurance that he will take them to himself. Here, then, is this wonderful Person that came in the clouds of heaven; here is the same wonderful Person that approached in his life and death, and in his intercession in heaven now approaches, the Ancient of days; here he is, then, in an order of things exactly answering to what he is.

The third representation of him is, "And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom;" then comes the text, "that all people, nations, and languages should serve him." "There was given him dominion." Now, this is founded, as you are aware, upon his mediatorial work. And Jesus Christ conquered, righteously conquered, the god of this world, the devil. Jesus Christ conquered the world, conquered sin, and conquered death, and hereby "he has power over all flesh, that he might give eternal life," now, mind, "to as many as you have given him." Do you like this? Ah, saith one, that savors of election; to give eternal life to as many as are given him. Well, if you disapprove of that, you cannot be his servant, you cannot serve him. If your language is, Well, I do not like that, then you are not his servant.

There is glory given to him. There is eternal life given to Christ as his right; "he dies no more; death has no more dominion over him;" he lives, "and abides forever." It is given to him to live forever. He is the only King that has immortality; he is the only Priest that never dies; he was the only Son that conquered death, God's only begotten Son. So that he thus gets glory, the glory of living forever, in a fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore. "And a kingdom." What is the dominion, and what is the kingdom? You will observe that this dominion and this kingdom entirely answer to what he is. "His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

Now, then, to sum up the whole, let me reason with you two or three minutes before I go on to the next part of our subject. Can you say, That Shepherd that is responsible for the sheep, and that has made it impossible for the sheep to perish; can you say, Is that Shepherd my Shepherd? Can you say, That Priest that is a Priest after the power of an endless life; that Priest that has by his one offering perfected forever them that are sanctified; that Priest who by his sacrificial excellency shall by his mystic breastplate present, or rather actually and personally, at the last great day all for whom he died, without spot, wrinkle, blemish, or fault of any kind; can you say, Be that Great High Priest my bode, my life? And can you say, That King that shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, that King to whose kingdom there is no end; that King that will bow everything before him until all his enemies become his footstool; he must go on conquering and to conquer; can you say, This King is mine? Again, that Husband does not allow any separation between his original love and the ultimate presentation in perfection of the object of his love; he loved the church, there is the origin; ultimately presents the same church without fault; that Husband spoken of in the 54th

of Isaiah, “Your Maker is your husband; the Lord of Hosts is his name; and your Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called;” and in that same chapter swears, as his matrimonial oath, that he will never be angry nor rebuke them; “For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from you, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, says the Lord that has mercy on you;” can you say, That Husband be my heavenly Husband? Can you say that you fall in with all this? Can you say this is the spirit you possess, the spirit of faith in these eternal things, the spirit of love to this God, the spirit of decision for this God? If this be not your spirit, but if your spirit be a free-will spirit, or duty-faith spirit, it is not of the gospel; duty-faith stands in opposition to the gospel of God. We live in a day when, whatever prospers, the multitude run after it, and will run after it. Well then, what am I to do? Why, the devil is the most prosperous parson that ever lived; got the whole human race to listen to him; transformed as an angel of light. It is not a question whether there are a great many that see as you do, or whether there are but few that see as you do; the question is this, Do I see Jesus Christ for myself as answering to ancient prediction? Do I see Jesus Christ as coming to God in a life of perfect obedience, by which I am justified? Do I see Jesus Christ as coming to God by an acceptable sacrifice, by which my sin is put away, cast into the depths of the sea, blotted out, forgiven and forgotten; that God is on my side in all the perfections of his nature? Do I see Jesus Christ as able to cleanse me, clothe me thus with his own infinite worth and worthiness? Do I see the Lord Jesus Christ in the eternity of the characters that he bears, that he is the same yesterday, today, and forever? Do I thus see him, and hereby is my affection drawn to God, and so real that I stand out for him? Is this my spirit? If so, then it is the spirit of the gospel, it is the spirit of faith, it is the spirit of love, and power, and of a sound mind. And you will stand out for him earnestly, and honestly, and decidedly.

This great matter of eternal salvation was a matter of infinite concernment with God, he gave his dear Son; a matter of infinite concernment with Christ; a matter of infinite concernment with the Eternal Spirit. And if we are born of God it will be a matter of concernment with us, and so far from our trifling with it, it will be our care, and burden, and trouble, that we have so little earnestness, that we have so little power, that we are so little devoted to God, that while those things are so worthy of all our thoughts and affections, that we are so little concerned about them. I have dwelt here rather longer than I intended, but I could not get away. It is my lot to be at home in thus thinking upon the excellencies of the dear Savior; my soul becomes wrapped in them, and I feel like the chariots of Amminadib, and could depart to enjoy them in their purity and eternal perfection divine. You cannot serve him if you do not understand this. There are all sorts of ceremonies and doings. I will not occupy your time by telling you the infinite contempt in which I hold the ceremonies of Puseyism, Popery, your Conferences, Church of Englandism, all the devices of men. I hold them all in infinite contempt; I despise the whole of them; I reject the whole of them, and take my stand under the shadow of the cross, and I want nothing for my soul’s eternal welfare that I do not find there; and when there is some deficiency there, then I will send for human tradition, for human invention; but not before. No, my hearer; let us sweep away all human authorities, and have no authority in these eternal matters but the authority of the Creator, the authority of the Judge of all, the authority of the Bible; that shall be our standing-place. Some of you do not like me to speak so of the Church of England. I do not care a single rush, a single straw. You may get up and walk out of the place, and never come in again. I would rather offend the whole of you than my conscience should accuse me of being afraid to speak against the damnable inventions of men that are put into the place of the everlasting gospel. Never sanction one of them,

if I know it, in any shape or form whatever. We want decision in serving him. You must stand out decided for him, and you must so see the value of him, and feel so much interest in him, as to be prepared, if needs be, to part with your earthly possessions; as to be prepared, if needs be, to part with your personal liberty; as to be prepared, if needs be, to part with your natural life itself.

And now, just a word or two upon this. In this same chapter these who were thus brought to know the Lord, and stood out decided for him, they had their trials to undergo. You have here the beast, the many horned beast. As to the four beasts historically, the four old empires, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome, any learned blockhead can soon understand that part historically. Volumes are written to show that these empires are referred to. Well, I know that is true; it does refer to those empires; but then we get only part of the meaning when we stop in the history of it. And then I know several learned men that have actually undertaken to tell us what the ten horns are here spoken of; what the ten kingdoms were; but they do not make them fit, never will. The devil is a many-horned enemy. The horn is the symbol of power, and the ten horns are a definite number for an indefinite; and so there is a variety of powers, and a variety of devices, and a variety of ways that Satan employs to shut up the kingdom of God. So, in this chapter you read that this horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them, that is, as to their bodies, killed their bodies. So far this, adverse power prevailed against the saints. Those words, no question about it, refer especially to times of persecution; does not matter whether it is Pagan or Papal, Puseyite or anything else, or duty-faith or anything else. I believe duty-faith is a system that contains in its spirit all the elements of Popish persecution, if it could gain the mastery. Prevailed against the saints. But as to their souls; couldn't prevail against their faith. No: Peter's flesh may fail, but his faith shall not fail; oh, no, no, no! "Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High." Just as they were down, in came the blessed God, in his eternity, eternal love, eternal choice, eternal decrees, eternal salvation, eternal victory, eternal life, eternal joy, eternal glory. Down went the devil, up went the saints; and then they rejoiced that they had stood out so firmly for the truth as it is in Jesus. "Until the Ancient of days came." How does he come? By the blood of Jesus Christ. Twelfth of Revelation, the saints were persecuted, the woman driven into the wilderness. So, you sometimes are now, if not by outward persecutions, by a great many tribulations, and sly, sneaky enemies. Ah! some of you, yes! Ah! say some, you should not say such words. I shall. I shall say whatever the Bible authorizes me; and I will not ask you, great men or little ones, or anybody else. But they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb. When Jesus appeared in the eternity of his achievement, then "they overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony." Mark that. Must hold the true gospel as well; for if you hold the doctrine of atonement, and yet set that gospel aside that gives the right representation of it, then you do not gain the victory. So you must have not only the atonement, but the word of your testimony, to know that that atonement has conquered the devil, that that atonement has wrought the victory, and that by this atonement God, without a drawback or without an exception, is on your side, having this word of testimony. And then by this atonement, and by this gospel, the soul is so united to God that you love God and love Christ above all other things. And so "they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." So, the man that serves Jesus Christ acceptably is the man that has grace to do it; "Let us have grace whereby to serve God acceptably." Why, dear me! Paul, if you lived in our day, you would hear persons say, Let us have a fine gown to serve God; let us have this ornament, and the other. You would hear people say, Let us have a parson, as though he had just come out of a band-box. And then the ladies can say, Dear me! did you notice how nice he looked? And if you

go into a Puseyite church, you see a man stuck up in the pulpit like an Italian monkey. I have as much reverence for a Puseyite minister as I have for a monkey. Indeed, I have more respect for the monkey; for the poor monkey does do his little best. But these devices of the devil are enough to disgust common sense. Now the apostle says, "Let us have grace whereby to serve God acceptably." It must be the gospel of grace, the election of grace, the spirit of grace and supplication; and having this grace, we shall thus hold fast the testimony of what Christ has done, love God supremely, and thus we shall not love our lives unto the death. All people, all nations, all languages, that serve him, must serve him in this spirit of faith, in this spirit of understanding, in this spirit of love.

Now a little further on in this chapter it says of this horned power, one of the devil's powers, that, "he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High." Just whisper, that is all. Who do you go to hear? So-and-so. Ah! he is a high-doctrine man. Who is that friend of yours? So-and-so. Ah, but he is a high-doctrine man. And who is that? So-and-so. Oh, that is a high-doctrine man. That is enough; it will cool their courage directly, depend upon it. It is against the Most High; it is against God, in the lofty going forth of his eternal counsels, that men are at war against the Most High; want to bring things down a little more to their own level. And against the saints of the Most High, when you come to stand, first, in the sovereignty of God, "sanctified of God the Father;" second, in the perfection of Christ; and third, in the work of the Holy Spirit; and let the creature have no hand in it at all. This is that high ground that they cannot endure, and so they "speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High;" but these saints of the Most High still stand out for God, and God ultimately delivers them and glorifies them. "And they shall be given into his hand" into the hand of the enemy, "until a time, and times, and the dividing of time." And then, by-and-bye, in comes the Lord again, down goes the devil, and his time is gone. "This is your hour, and the power of darkness." It is a little time; it will soon pass away; but the time of the saints shall never pass away. Ever is their lime, eternity is their dwelling.