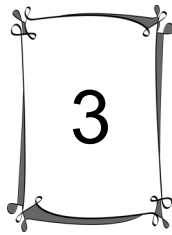


The background of the slide is a scenic landscape. A paved road curves through a valley, bordered by a fence. To the left, a railway track with overhead power lines runs parallel to the road. The trees are in autumn, with yellow and orange leaves. In the distance, a large mountain peak is visible under a cloudy sky.

# **Sermons of Robert Murray M'Cheyne**

**3. Sermons on John 1:11, 12 and 14  
'Christ Despised and Rejected,'  
'True Believers the Sons of God'  
and "The Word Made Flesh"**

Sermons  
of  
Robert Murray  
M'Cheyne



‘Christ Despised and Rejected,’  
‘True Believers the Sons of God’  
and “The Word Made Flesh”

## Christ Despised and Rejected

*“He came unto his own, and his own received him not”*

**John 1:11.**

In this chapter John describes the coming of the Son of God into the world, and His rejection by those whom He came to save, in three different ways. In verse 5 he says, “The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.” When Jesus came to this world, it was like the rising of “the bright and morning star;” but the heart of men were covered over with murky vapours, like those that settled over Egypt in that night when the “darkness might be felt,” so that the heavenly radiance of Immanuel was not allowed to shine upon their souls. To those that knew Him He was “the light of men,” “the morning Star,” “the Sun of righteousness,” the “morning without clouds;” but all the rest of the world comprehended it not.

Is it not still the same? “We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.” On many souls Christ has arisen with healing in His wings, so that we can say to them, “Arise; shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon thee.” But, ah! the most have never admitted the sweet, soft, peace-bringing beams of Jesus to shine into their dark hearts. “The God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into them.” They know not whither they are going. Their feet are ready to stumble on the dark mountains. “The path of the wicked is as darkness; they know not at what they shall stumble.”

Again, in verse 10, it is written, “He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.” Strange visit to this fallen world! He who “hung the earth upon

nothing” — He who said, “Let there be light, and there was light” — He who “formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life” — He “by whom were all things created that are in heaven, and that are on earth” — that glorious being came to His own world, “God manifest in the flesh.” Surely all his creatures will run to worship and adore Him. Surely they will “worship and bow down; they will kneel before the Lord their maker.” Not so: “the world knew him not.” They knew Him not at His birth. He left the hallelujahs of the heavenly world for the manger at Bethlehem. A few shepherds from the fields of Bethlehem came and kneeled to Him; and the wise men saw and adored the infant King; but the most despised Him. “He is despised and rejected of men.” “she wrapped him in swaddling-clothes, and laid him in a manger, for there was no room for them in the inn.” They knew Him not during His life. Few believed on Him. They called Him glutton, wine-bibber, deceiver. Once they sought to cast Him over the rocks. Often they plotted to kill Him. He that had all things now wanted every thing. “Certain women ministered to him of their substance” (Luke 8:3). He had no money to pay His tribute. The creatures of His hand had a warmer bed than He. “The foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.” “Every man went to his own home; Jesus went to the mount of Olives.” Another time He sat wearied on a well, and said to a poor woman, “Give me to drink.” He that was God over all, blessed for ever, could say, “I am a worm and no man.” The world know Him not to this hour. The offence of the cross has not ceased. The way of salvation by Christ for us is still despised by most. He who is a sanctuary to all them that believe, is a stumbling-stone and rock of offence to most. O my soul, canst thou believe on Jesus when the world despise Him? Canst thou be one of the little flock? Canst

thou enter in at “the strait gate, and walk on the narrow way,” with an unbelieving world on every side?

Again, in verse 11 it is written, “He came unto his own, and his own received him not.” In John 19:27, the same words are rendered more fully, “*to his own home.*” To see the full meaning of the passage before us, we must adopt the same reading here: “He came unto his own home, and his own family received him not.”

The Jews were, as it were, His own family; and when He came to them, it was like coming to His own home. It was He who called their father Abraham, and separated them from among the nations to be a peculiar treasure: “He said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie: so he was their Saviour. In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old” (Isaiah 63:8-9). He was the substance of all their types. He was the true pillar-cloud that guided their fathers, the true bread from heaven; He was the rock that followed them. He was the true Isaac the child of promise, the prophet like unto Moses, the David the beloved, the true Solomon the prince of peace. Though to all the world He may appear “without form or comeliness, having no beauty that they should desire him;” yet surely His own Israel will receive Him as “the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys.” Ah no! “*He came unto his own, and his own received him not.*” They cried, “Not this man, but Barabbas.” “Away with him, away with him, crucify him, crucify him.” “His blood be upon us, and upon our children.” The rulers derided Him. The very thieves railed at Him. They shoot out the lip, they wag the head, they give Him vinegar to drink.

To this day His own receive Him not. Ah! think, sinner, whom it is you are despising. Did you ever see the son of a

king lay by his robes and his glory, become a poor man, and die in misery, and all for nothing? Do you think the Lord Jesus Christ left His Father's love and the adoration of angels, and became a worm and died under wrath, and all for no purpose? Is there no wrath lying upon your soul? Have you no need of such a Saviour? Why then do you delay to flee to Him?

## **True Believers the Sons of God**

*“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name” John 1:12.*

When the Lord of glory came to this world, the most despised and rejected Him. Yet all did not. Isaiah cried, “Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?” And yet in a few verses after he adds, “He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied” (Isaiah 53: 1, 11). In like manner, John in this chapter tells us, that when Jesus came, “the darkness comprehended him not;” “the world knew him not;” “his own received him not.” Still, a little flock did receive Him. Their eyes were opened to behold His glory, their hearts to feel His love. They left their earthly all, and followed Him, they hung upon His lips, kept His sayings, walked in His steps, put on His righteousness, drank in His spirit; and “to them he gave power to become the sons of God.” There always has been, and always will be, a hidden church. As David was never to want a son to sit upon his throne, so David's Son and David's Lord never shall want souls over which to reign. As in Noah's day of almost universal corruption, and in Elijah's day of dark idolatry, there were some hidden ones that knew and loved the Lord; so in our day, in the darkest parishes of Scotland, you will find some hearts that kindle at the name of Jesus. In countries sunk in the

darkness of popery, you will find some heaven-taught souls groping their way to heaven by the strait gate and the narrow way. Christ will never want a vineyard on earth on which to show His love and care. He will never want a witnessing church to proclaim His grace. “Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18).

How clearly these words show that to receive Christ is the same as to believe on His name. Many souls find great difficulty in knowing what faith is. Satan seems to make great use of this in some hearts, in order that he may divert their anxious soul from the great object of faith to look at the workings of their own mind. The Bible makes no difficulty in the matter. At one time it is described as *coming* to Jesus: “I am the bread of life, he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst” (John 6:35). Again, it is called a *laying hold*. “Who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us” (Hebrew 6:18). In another scripture it is called *submitting*. “They have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God” (Romans 10:3). In other parts of the Word of God it is called *looking to Jesus*, *calling* upon the name of the Lord, *hearing* that the soul may live, *knowing*, *cleaving* to the Lord. In one and all of these the meaning of God is, that the heart is made willing to be justified through the blood and obedience of the Lord Jesus. O! it is the truest and most lasting joy in the universe when Christ is fully revealed to the soul, and when the excellency of the way of salvation by Christ is made manifest; the heart is often so filled that the tongue cannot speak. It is “joy unspeakable, and full of glory.”

Sinner, have you received the Lord Jesus Christ? Has your heart melted at the sight of the heaven-provided Saviour? Have you known the gift of God? Have you seen and delighted in the

*finished work* of Christ? If Christ had to come and die, you might say, perhaps He will not go through with it. But He has done it. It is more than eighteen hundred years since He agonized in Gethsemane, and poured out His soul upon the cross. "It is finished." His whole work, as Surety in the place of sinners, is finished. The whole undertaking is completed. Nay more, God has accepted it. He has declared it from heaven: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" — and that any sinner is welcome to draw near by Jesus. O! I am willing to be found in Jesus, let your soul reply; I am willing to stand under the shelter of the one Mediator to all eternity. What satisfies God satisfies me. "Who shall condemn? It is Christ that died."

But what good shall I obtain by receiving Christ? Hear the divine answer: "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." An awakened soul is seeking only rest, peace with God, forgiveness of sins. But Christ gives far more. He gives the child's place in the father's love. We are by nature children of wrath, a generation of vipers, children of the wicked one; but the moment we consent to put on the glorious righteousness of Immanuel we become adopted sons of God: "God sent forth his son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Sinner! do you know what it is that God offers you in the gospel? Though you are a viper, under the curse of the broken law, and your heart more like Satan than God yet the holy God offers you a place in His bosom, He sent forth His Son to make room for you, to take you into the son's place. What are all the joys of sin compared with this? What are earthly titles compared to this? Sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. Surely you must be deceived by the god of this world, if you are willing to remain a child of the devil rather than become a child of God.



There is still fuller blessing contained in these words. Those who receive Christ receive power to become adopted sons. This is blessed, this is wonderful. But those who receive Christ receive power to become real sons — sons by a new birth. It is good to be an adopted son, but ah! to be a real son of God, having the same spirit, features, joys, this is the full bliss of being a Christian. When a rich man adopts a beggar boy into his family, and takes him for a son, he not only clothes him, and feeds him, but he educates him as his child. He puts him under a teacher to rid him of old habits, to put a new spirit in him, the spirit of his own child. This is what God does with all that receive Christ. When a sinner flees to Christ, God not only puts the best robe on him, and embraces him, and seats him at His table, but he sends forth the Spirit of His Son into his heart. The same almighty Spirit that dwelleth in His own bosom, and in His Son, the Spirit that was given to Jesus without measure, He sends into the poor pardoned sinner's heart, to make him a son indeed, “born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” Surely if men knew what God is willing to do for them in Christ, they could not so lightly esteem the Rock of their salvation. O sinner! God is willing to take out your old alienated heart, and to give you the heart of one of His own weaned children. He is willing to give you the Spirit of Christ, to change you into His image, to make you like Him now and in eternity. Surely it may be said to every soul that despiseth Christ, “Woe unto thee, O Jerusalem! wilt thou not be made clean? when shall it once be?” (Jeremiah 13:27).

### **“The Word Made Flesh”**

***“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth” John 1:14.***

You remember, brethren, when Philip went down to Samaria, it is said that he preached Christ unto them, and there was great joy in that city (Acts 8:5, 8). You remember that the apostle Paul says, “I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:2). Now, brethren, it is really the case that the only object in the world that can give peace to your soul is “Christ, and him crucified.”

Those of you who are not awakened are in a great mistake in this matter; you think you have to find out something good in yourselves; you little know, dear friends, that you are seeking rest in the creature, which if you could find it, you would make out that Christ has died in vain. It is for this reason that I have chosen this text tonight, though it is so deep and full that I approach it with fear and trembling; yet certain am I that if anything will give you peace it is the getting a sight of his glory, “the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” It is just beholding his glory.

The first truth that is laid open here is the humiliation of the Son of God. It is laid down to us in two parts. First, “The Word was made flesh.” Second, “He dwelt among us.”

### **1. The humiliation of the Son of God consisted in his being made flesh.**

I do not stop to inquire why he is called “the Word.” I would just remark that as the word of a man expresses the mind of a man, so Christ was revealed that he might express the mind of God.

Let us consider what is meant in his being made flesh.

It is not meant that *he really took a body without a soul*. We know that Christ, as he dwelt among us, had not only a body, but a soul — a loving, human soul: “Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for

this cause came I unto this hour” (John 12:27).

Now, brethren, I do not so much insist upon the word “soul,” as upon “what shall I say?” Ah, this expresses the tenderness of a human soul. Speaking with reverence, I would say, there seems to be a holy perplexity in his mind: “Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death” (Matthew 26:38). And then the next verse shows he had a human will: “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.” From these passages, it is obvious that when it is said, “The Word was made flesh,” it is not meant that the Godhead was united to a human body without a soul.

Again, you are not to understand that it was a sinful body. The word “flesh” is often used in this sense, thus: “... the flesh lusteth against the Spirit” (Galatians 5:17). Some have thought so, but it has not always this meaning; thus, in Ezekiel 36:26 it is said, “I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of *flesh*.” And, again, we know quite well from the Word of God that Christ was holy. The angels said at his birth: “That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35). And we know that in his manhood he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners (Hebrews 7:26). And we are expressly told that the one thing in which he differed was that he was without sin (Hebrews 4:15). And we are told that in dying, “He offered himself without spot to God” (Hebrews 9:14). Now, we know that it was his human soul and body he offered up to God. So it is true that his humanity was holy.

I come now to the real meaning of the words — that — he who was the second Person in the Godhead, became one with a holy human soul, and with a body with our infirmities, such as thirst, pain, capable of tears, weariness, suffering etc., for so much is implied in the word “flesh.” “All flesh is grass.” This

is spoken of our feebleness. “The Word was made flesh.” Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh. Perhaps some of you may ask why God was manifest in the flesh. There were three great reasons.

The first was that *he might obey the law of God in the same nature that had broken the law*. When the devil had got man to trample the law beneath his feet, as if it had never been, he thought that the law would never lift its head again. Now, the Word was made flesh that he might obey it; and so it is said, “God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law” (Galatians 4:4, 5). I remember explaining this once before to you. First, that he was made under the law that he might obey it. And then, he was made under the curse of the law that he might endure it.

Now, it is to the first of these that I now speak, namely, that Christ might obey the law, and do more honour to it, than if it had never been broken. This was one of the great reasons why he became flesh. If it had not been for this he might have visited the earth for an hour. But the reason why he had to stop so long was to show that it was a good law.

You know, brethren, if you look across the world, and if you take God’s holy law and shed the light of it over the world, there is something overpowering to think how fearfully his law has been broken; think of all the Sabbath-breaking there is in the world, and all the thefts, swearing, adultery, etc., all of these streaming over the world, and blotting out, as it were, the law. And oh, brethren, it is sweet to think it was worth the condescension of the Godhead becoming flesh to obey the law, so as to show to men and angels and devils that God’s law was so much more honoured, than if it had never been broken.

The second reason why the Word was made flesh was *that he might die* — that he might bear the curse of the law:

*“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the*

*angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man” Hebrews 2:9.*

*“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” Hebrews 2:14.*

In these two verses it is distinctly said that the Word was made flesh in order that he might die. You know, brethren, if he had remained in the bosom of the Father he could not have suffered — for the divine nature cannot suffer; but in order that he might die he must be made flesh. The reason why he took upon him a body was that he might bear the curse. You know we are under the curse; now, Christ took upon him flesh, that he might bear the curse.

I would just mention the third reason why he was made flesh. It is *that he might have sympathy for men.*

*“Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God” Hebrews 2:17.*

Brethren, there are no persons that can have compassion as those who have felt like us. You know God said to the Jews, You shall be kind to strangers: “for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Exodus 23:9). So God says to Christ, “You know the heart of a man.” This was one reason why he was made flesh. Those of you who are afflicted believers, you know what it is to have a friend that was tried in all points like as you are.

**2. I come now to the other part of his humiliation, “He dwelt among us.”** In the Greek it is, “he tabernacled among us, as in a tent.”

It is believed by divines that there is here an allusion to the tabernacle in the wilderness. And just as the tabernacle was the meeting place with God, so Christ is the meeting place between a sinner and God.

But further, it implies his going from place to place. You know this was the case with the tabernacle; so this was one of the parts of the humiliation of Christ. He was not only born, but born in a low condition, and his life was one of poverty. Why did he this? One reason was that he might sanctify affliction. Some say, "I have not clothes to come to the church with." My brethren, do you not know that Christ had not where to lay his head? Ah, my brethren, this is one reason why he dwelt among us as in a tent. Away with your excuses that you cannot come to the church because you have no clothes; Christ was poor, though he might have chosen a palace. But here we see the glory that burst through his humiliation.

*"The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth."*

Some may perhaps ask, "When he became flesh, did he cease to be God?" No, he did not. "Then did he entirely veil his glory?" No. "Then did all see it?" Oh, no, "We beheld it." True, his glory was seen by some that did not believe on him. When angels saw his glory, you remember there was a star that appeared at his birth — outward, carnal eyes could see that star. And you remember as he sat in the temple disputing with the doctors, they were astonished at his words — all the world could see that glory. And you remember at the marriage of Cana of Galilee, he made the water into wine — outward, carnal eyes could see that. So with all his miracles. But this is not the glory spoken of here; at least it is not all the glory. What is this glory then? I answer, it was the glory of the divine

perfections: divine wisdom, divine love, etc.

*There was the glory of the divine wisdom shining through him.* Who could see it, but those whose eyes were open? Brethren, in all that he did he was bearing the sufferings of many. And oh, brethren, have you seen this glory? For this is the glory of the only begotten of the Father. Have you seen this glory? For this was the glory that shone through the Word made flesh. It was not only the star; it was not only the wisdom he showed in the temple; it was not only the miracles; it was not these so much as the plan of redemption — the scheme he accomplished, when he said, “It is finished.” It was *that* that showed his wisdom.

*There was the love of the only begotten of the Father.* His very appearance in the manger at Bethlehem showed the love of the only begotten of the Father. Have you seen that love?

I would now begin to ask you the question: Have you beheld that glory? John says, “We beheld it.” The first moment that a sinner is brought to peace is when he beholds a divine person bearing the curse due to him for sin. Then the soul says, “Here will I rest.” Have you seen that glory? I know you cannot see it till your eyes are anointed.

### **3. Last of all, the provision found in Christ: “Full of grace and truth:”**

Perhaps some here are saying, If Christ is so glorious, I cannot come to him. I can only say, with Peter, “Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord” (Luke 5:8). If it is true that all the perfections that dwell in the Father dwell in Christ, then I cannot come to him — How can I come to him? There is but one answer to that: “He is full of grace and truth.”

I do not know if I can make it plainer; but the meaning is just this, that he is full of grace — grace for those that deserve wrath. Once he sat in Levi’s house with publicans and sinners

— how could they sit beside him? Ah! the reason was, “He was full of grace.” Brethren, I think I could say that you could not imagine a more suitable Saviour than he is.

And then he is full of truth. “The law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John 1: 17). The law was a shadow, Christ is the substance. All that is in Christ is truth. The pardon he gives is true pardon. The peace he gives is true peace. Brethren, will you come to him?

I would now invite all heavy laden sinners to come to him; and I would give you two reasons why you should come. First, he is full of grace. Second, he is full of truth. My brethren, you need a divine Saviour, and yet you need one full of grace. Brethren, what Saviour can you imagine to yourself if Christ does not do? How graciously does he invite you to come.

*“Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price”* Isaiah 55:1.

And if you will not come, then he comes to you and says:

*“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me”* Revelation 3:20.

How full of grace he must have been who said, “Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of man” (Proverbs 8:4).

Consider how long you have lived without him, trampled on his blood, despised his invitations, and yet he has waited all that time.

Consider how long you have provoked him since you were awakened, making him a liar by not believing his Word. Consider how long he has stood.

Brethren, he is full of grace, though he is full of glory. Will



you not let him save you? Is it much he asks of you? Will you not allow him to justify you? Ah, brethren, if you do reject so gracious a Saviour, “How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?” (Hebrews 2:3). Surely, brethren, an eternity in hell will not be too much for those who despise the blood of Christ.

I beseech you, brethren, that you receive not the grace of God in vain. You do not know the guilt of that man who will go away tonight despising Christ. You do not know the guilt and danger of despising him who is so able, as well as so loving a Saviour. Amen.

