

and with garments rolled in blood:' but that war which Christ shall have against the hypocrites in Zion, and those that are ignorant of him, and will not close with him, it shall be with fuel of fire and eternal indignation. O what will be your thoughts, suppose you, when Christ shall come with that two-edged sword of the fury of the Lord to enter to fight with you? It is no delightful exercise: O that ye were not almost but altogether persuaded to be Christians, and that once Christ may conquer you with that two-edged sword that proceedeth out of his mouth, that so you might subject yourselves to him, and make him the object of your faith. Now to him that hath engraven upon his 'vesture, and on his thigh, that he is the King of kings, and the Lord of lords,' we desire to give praise.

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TWO

## SERMONS

CONCERNING THE

# GREAT SALVATION.

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### SERMON I.

HEB. ii. 3. *How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.*

**T**HIS everlasting gospel which is preached unto you. is that glorious star, which must lead us to the place where blessed Christ doth lie. This gospel and glad tidings of this great salvation is come near unto you; and Christ is standing at the everlasting doors of your hearts, desiring that ye would open unto him. There is that one great request which heaven this day hath to present unto you, and it is, 'That ye would at last embrace this great salvation freely offered by him.' It is the thing for which ye are called to mourn this day, that since the beginning of your own days, ye have stopped your ears from that sweet and chanting voice of this blessed charmer, 'Ye would never dance to Christ when he piped, neither would ye weep to him when he lamented'

But to come to the words, which we have read to you, the

apostle, in the former chapter, hath been discoursing most divinely of the matchless and incomparable excellencies which are in our blessed Lord Jesus; and in the first verse of this second chapter, he draweth forth an exhortation from his former doctrine, which in short is this, 'That they would take heed to the blessed doctrine of the gospel; and not at any time to let it slip out of your minds:' and that they would keep his gospel as a jewel of great price, and would not sell it, but that they would be induced to buy it. And this exhortation he presseth by two arguments.

The *First* argument is in the second verse, where he saith, 'If the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward,' &c. that is, if the transgression of the law, which was delivered by the ministry of angels, and every disobedience to it was so severely punished, let that provoke you to take heed, that ye transgress not the precious gospel which was spoken by the Lord himself.

The *Second* argument is in the words which we have read unto you, and it is taken from the certain and infallible stroke of the justice of God, which shall come upon those who slight this great salvation: it is impossible (saith he) that there can be a city of refuge for those who slight this great salvation.

Now, in the words which we have read, there are these six things to be considered.

I. *First*, That it is an incident to the hearers of this precious gospel and great salvation, to slight and undervalue it. This is clearly presupposed in the words, otherwise there had been no ground, or access for the apostle to threaten so terrible things against the slighthers of it.

II. The *Second* thing to be considered in the words is, that the stroke and ruin of those who slight this great salvation, is certain and infallible, it will surely come upon them: this is clear from these words, 'How shall we escape?' As if he had said, there is no imaginable way for us to escape, if we neglect this so great salvation. We may have a city of refuge when we are pursued by the law, or when we are pursued by afflictions, and we may escape when we are pursued otherwise by the justice of God; but if once we slight this great salvation, there remaineth no city of refuge, no door of escape left open for us; for where will the person flee that slightheeth so great salvation?

III. There is a *Third* thing whereof we shall take notice from the words, that the stroke of the justice of God cometh justly upon them who slight this great salvation; and truly it is a most equal and reasonable stroke; which is also clear from the words, 'How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?' Were

he puts it home to their consciences. As if he had said, Think ye not that it is just and righteous, that, if ye slight this great salvation, there should not be a door of escape left open unto you? He putteth the question home to their conscience to answer, yea, or no.

IV. The *Fourth* thing to be considered in the words, is this, That the slighting this great salvation is a sin that hath many aggravations which attend and wait upon it. And it hath two aggravations from the words which I have read: The *First* great aggravation is in the word of the text, 'great salvation.' As if he had said, If it were not a great salvation, ye might have some cloke or excuse for your slighting of it: but seeing it is such a great and eternal salvation, there is now no cloke left for your sin. The *Second* aggravation is from the certainty of this salvation, in these words, 'Which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him:' viz. his apostles. Whereby he telleth them, This great salvation is no notion nor fancy, but a most certain, sure, and real salvation, which yet they slight.

V. The *Fifth* thing whereof we shall take notice from the words, is this, That there are no persons, (be who they will, minister or people), who slight this great salvation, that shall have a door of escape; hence it is, that the apostle putteth himself among the rest, saying, 'How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; that is, how shall I Paul escape, if I neglect so great salvation, and so frustrate the grace of God?

VI. *Sixthly*, We would take notice of this from the words, That not only heart-despising of this great salvation, but even also the neglecting of it, hath a certain, infallible, and unspeakable ruin attending upon it.

Now before we speak to any of these *Six* things, which we have observed from the words, there are these two things whereunto we shall speak a little for clearing of the words; *First*, What is meant here by 'great salvation.' *Secondly*, How it is said that Christ was the first preacher of it.

*First*, We conceive, that by the great salvation, is understood the gospel; as is clear, Eph. i. 13. where it is called 'the gospel of our salvation.' And Acts xiii. 26. it is called 'the word of this salvation:' so that by the word of this salvation, is understood the gospel, and those precious offers which are contained in it. And we conceive, it may be called a great salvation in these eight respects.

I. *First*, It is called the great salvation, in respect of the price that was laid down for it; there being no less a price laid down to purchase this great salvation than the 'blood of the Son of God.'



From whence then doth salvation flow unto you? It comes running to you in a stream of the blood of the Son of God. This is clear, Heb. ix. 12. 'Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.'

II. *Secondly*, It is called a great salvation, in respect of the many difficulties and oppositions which he had in the way of bringing it about. What great impediments, suppose ye, lay in Christ's way, before he could accomplish and bring about this great salvation? Was not the justice of God to be satisfied? Was he not to die, and be made like unto one of us? Was he not to lie in the grave? And was he not to bear the torments of hell, before this great salvation could be accomplished and brought to pass? There were such impediments in the way of bringing about this great salvation, that if all the angels in heaven had been set to the work, they had been all crushed under it, had it been but that one great impediment, to satisfy the justice, and pacify the wrath of God, even that was a pass, through which none could go but the eternal Son of God; it was so guarded, that none durst adventure to enter it, much less could any win through it, save he only, 'who was mighty to save.'

III. *Thirdly*, It is called a great salvation, in respect of that high estimation which the saints have of it. O what an high estimation have the saints of this gospel salvation? There is no mercy they think comparable to this, all other mercies are but like Zoars, in comparison of this great mercy and gospel salvation.

IV. *Fourthly*, It is called a great salvation, in respect of those noble effects which this salvation bringeth about and produceth. Some of the great effects of the gospel David hath cleared, Psalm xix. 7, 8, 9, 10. Is not this a great effect of this gospel salvation, to bring us out of nature into an estate of grace? And that is an effect of this great salvation. Is not this a great effect, to make us, who are enemies, to become friends? And that is an effect of this great salvation. Is not this a great effect, to make us, who were moving in the way to hell, move in the way to heaven? And that is an effect of this great salvation. Is not this a great effect, to make us, who were far off, to be now made near? And yet this is the effect of this great salvation. And is not that a great effect, to make us, who were darkness, to become light in the Lord? And that is the great effect of this gospel salvation. Yea, I may say, time would fail me, to tell of the great effects of this great salvation. But, O will ye come and see, and that will best resolve the question unto you, what the noble effects of this great salvation are.

V. *Fifthly*, It is called a great salvation, in respect of the great

advantages which redound to the person who embraceth it. *First*, Is not heaven a noble advantage? And that is a gain which attendeth embracers of this great salvation. *Secondly*, Is not Jesus Christ a notable advantage? And yet he is the advantage which attendeth the embracers of this great salvation. *Thirdly*, Is not eternal communion with God a noble advantage? And that advantage attendeth the embracers of this great salvation. *Fourthly*, Is not eternal liberation from the body of death a great advantage? And that attendeth the embracers of this great salvation. *Fifthly*, Is not eternal singing in the enjoyment of God a great advantage? And that attendeth the embracers of this great salvation. *Sixthly*, Is not eternal seeing of God as he is, a great and noble advantage? And yet this (as all the former) attendeth the embracers of this great salvation. Would ye be honourable? Come and embrace this great salvation. Would ye be eternally happy? O then come and partake of this eternal salvation.

VI. *Sixthly*, It is called a great salvation, in respect of all other salvations that ever were accomplished. There was never a salvation, or victory obtained by any general or captain, unto a land or people, that could have the name of great salvation, in comparison of this.

VII. *Seventhly*. It is called a great salvation, in respect of the authority of it. We have spoken of the greatness (as to the meritorious cause) of it, and how great things it doth effectuate; and also in respect of the authority of it, it is a great salvation. Would ye know who is the author of this great salvation? It is Christ, Heb. v. 9. 'He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.' And must not this salvation be suitable to him who is the author of it? This is a most noble and irradiant beam of the majesty of the Son of God, the mediator, that he is the author of this great salvation.

VIII. *Eighthly*, It is called a great salvation, in respect of the continuance and duration of it. It is not a salvation which is but for a day: but it is an eternal salvation, Heb. ix. 12. 'He obtained eternal salvation for us.'

Now the *Second* thing whereunto we shall speak for clearing the words, is this, viz. How is it said that Christ was the first preacher of this eternal salvation. We do not think that the words are thus to be understood, that the gospel, and this great salvation was never preached before Christ came in the flesh; but we think the meaning of the words may be one of these three, if not all of them.

I. *First*, That all the preaching of this great salvation under the law did come very far short in the point of fulness, in comparison of Christ's preaching of it; therefore is Christ said to

be the first preacher of this great salvation; as if he had said, I know Adam, he preached of this great salvation: and Enoch, he preached of this great salvation: and the twelve Patriachs, they preached of this great salvation: and all the prophets who went before Christ, and are now in heaven, they preached of this great salvation; but all their preaching deserved not the name of preaching in comparison of Christ; 'for never man spake as he spake.' Thus Christ was the first preacher of this great salvation.

II. *Secondly*, This may be the meaning of it, That Christ was the preacher of this great salvation, in respect of his clear way of preaching it; for he was the first preacher of it without types and shadows; he was the first preacher of it clearly and fully, with so much demonstration and power of the Spirit.

III. *Thirdly*, The meaning of this, that Christ was the first preacher of this great salvation, may relate to his appearing to Adam in paradise, when he became the first and great preacher of this great salvation, when he did speak that word unto him, 'The seed of the woman shall tread down the head of the serpent.' The first glorious preaching of this great salvation was, when Christ preached it to Adam in paradise. And that was the first and glorious morning of this blessed gospel.

Now we shall speak a little to the first of these six things, which we observed from the words, viz.

That there are many within the visible church, who are neglecters and slighers of this great salvation. Do you not all take with it? It is clear, Matth. xxiii. towards the close; and chap. xxii. 5. where these persons being invited to come to the marriage or feast of the gospel; it is said of them, 'They made light of it;' which are the same words in our text. And Luke xiv. 18. when they were invited to come, it is said, 'They all with one consent began to make their excuse.' And Isa. xxviii. 12. 'This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest, and this is the refreshing; yet they would not hear.' Now, is there a person here who dare deny this charge, That he is a sligh-ter of this great salvation? I confess, I am afraid that ye will not take with it; therefore I shall suppose eight sorts of persons who are slighers of this great salvation. And I charge you, as ye will answer to God one day, that ye search your hearts, whether ye be among the number (in the catalogue) of the slighers of this great salvation

I. The *first* sort of persons who are slighers of this great salvation, are those persons who go about to establish their own righteousness, and will not submit to the righteousness of Christ; in a word, it is that sort of persons, who think they may win



to heaven by a covenant of works, and will not take the gospel's way of travelling to heaven in the covenant of grace. And surely there is not a person here, who has not that cursed inclination to be as little obliged to Christ, for his salvation, as he can. We would go to heaven without 'the way,' which is Christ. And (believe me) there are many in this congregation, who go thus about to establish their own righteousness. And I shall propose six sorts of persons, who shall fall under the first rank.

1. The *First* sort are those who trust on their own civility, and think these will carry them to heaven. These are the persons who go about to establish their own righteousness. Say they, I defy the world to say any thing to me, I was evermore an honest man, and I trust therefore that I shall go to heaven. But I say to thee, O atheist that thou art, thou shalt never win to heaven by these means, till thou come to Christ with this, 'All my righteousness is as filthy rags.'

2. The *Second* sort are those, who build their confidence upon their denial of their good works, but yet come not this length, to make use of Jesus Christ.

3. The *Third* sort are those, who build their confidence upon their duties; they think they will come to heaven by their good prayers, by their reading, and by their fasting (like unto that Pharisee, Luke xviii. 11. 'I thank God, I am not like other men: for I fast twice in the week, I pay tithes of all that I possess:') but I say unto thee, thy duties will never bring thee to heaven, if Christ be not at the end of all the duties; nor can ye perform any duty without him.

4. The *Fourth* sort of persons, who fall under this first rank of slighers of this great salvation, are those who trust in their own convictions. If they have once been convinced of their sin and miserable estate, they think there is no more to do, Christ will never reject them; so they sit down and build their hope upon these convictions.

5. The *Fifth* sort of persons are those, who build their confidence upon their resolutions. Say they, oftentimes have I resolved to be a better man than I am: therefore I think (which is the fearful delusion of many) that God 'will accept the will for the deed.' But it had been good for many such a word had not been in the Bible, or that their cursed eyes had never read it. But know this, that though thou hast as strong resolutions as Peter, or as good wishes as Balaam had, if you never labour to bring them to practice, God shall say unto thee, 'Depart from me, I know you not.' Any of you who build upon your resolutions, ye built upon a sandy foundation, these being many times a 'goodness but like the morning dew.'

6. And the *Sixth* sort of persons, who fall under the first rank of slighers of this great salvation, and wherein the evil is most subtle, are those who build their salvation upon their graces; these also go about to establish their own righteousness. But I say to thee, thy graces cannot be the foundation of thy hope, although they may be as evidences to strengthen thy hope. Now, are there none here who fall under this first rank of slighers of this great salvation? Or are there none here who will confess that they have gone about to establish their own righteousness? I say to thee, who will confess, put a rope about thy neck, and come to Christ; for he is a merciful King. I say to thee, come to Christ with this, 'All my righteousness is like filthy rags.' And if thou wilt come with this in sincerity, he shall say, 'Bring forth the white robe, and put it upon him.' If thou canst be brought to speak that in sincerity to Christ, there will be no more betwixt Christ and thee, but, 'Come and clothe him with the white robe.'

II. *Secondly*, Those persons slight the great salvation, who delay their taking hold of the precious offers of the gospel; for there are many (when we preach this gospel, and when we hold out the great salvation unto them) who say, 'I will follow Christ, but I must first go home and bury my father; and so they delay to take hold of this great salvation. But I say to you (whoever ye be) that thus delay to take hold of this great salvation, ye are the slighers of it. Is there a person within these doors, who dare but acknowledge that he hath slighted this great salvation, and delay to embrace it? O tell me! What do your consciences speak? Are there any but they must acknowledge they come under the second rank? And I say to you who have thus delayed, will ye yet embrace it? I say even unto you who are old men (now past sixty years, and have slighted this great salvation so long) yet this day this great salvation is offered unto you. What say you to it? O! what say you to this offer? Are you saying, I must now delay, (and not receive this great salvation) till my harvest be by and over? I say to thee, that the harvest of the wrath of God is ripe, and shall put in his sickle, and cut thee down, I will say no more to thee who thus slights this great salvation, but this, 'Why stand ye all the day in the market-place idle and doing nothing? O will ye at last be induced to take and embrace this great salvation, before it be hid from your eyes?'

III. *Thirdly*, Those persons are the slighers of this great salvation, who compliment with Christ when they are invited to come and partake of it, and say silently to the minister, or (rather to their own consciences) 'I pray you have me excused at this time,' as these, Luke xiv. 18. but I would only ask at such



Have ye any lawful excuse, why ye will not come and partake of this great salvation? Is there any person here that hath any lawful excuse to present? I shall never take this off your hands, 'have me excused: but be sure of this, it shall never excuse you, but accuse you. Therefore I desire that those persons, who have slighted this great salvation, by complimenting with Christ, that they would compliment no more with him at all, but now embrace it.

IV. The *Fourth* sort of persons, who slight this great salvation, are those who give way to discouragement and unbelief, so that they will not come and partake of this great salvation. I say, such of you are slighers of it; and Christ will esteem you such. Oh! if ye knew the worth and virtue of this great salvation, there would not be a temptation you could meet with, that would hinder you from embracing it; but if ye could not answer these temptations, ye would not own them. I say unto such under-valuers and slighers of the great salvation, as discouraged persons, and those who stay long in the place of the breaking forth of children, that when ye cannot answer your objections, which hinder you from closing with Christ, I intreat you disown them, as if ye had heard them not. Say ye, think ye this lawful? I say, it is both lawful and expedient; for it was the practice of believing Abraham, 'He considered not his own body,' being dry as an old stick, 'nor the deadness of Sarah's womb.' He did not consider these things which might have been objections to keep him from believing; he might have started at these two objections. Alas! I am old, and that objection could he not answer. And my wife is past child-bearing, neither could he answer that objection. What then did he with them? He slighted them both, and considered them not. *Secondly*, I would say this to you, who thus slight it because of discouragements, if ye did know the worth of this great salvation, which is in this gospel of redemption that is offered unto you, although ye had an army of objections to go through, ye would go through them all, to get a drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem.

V. The *Fifth* sort of persons, who slight this great salvation, are those who will not do so much as take care, and give pains to hear this great salvation offered unto them; for there are some persons, who, if they come to the church, desire to sit farthest off, and so never take care to hear a word of this great salvation; and are such dreadful slighers of it, like unto those mentioned, Jer. vi. 10. 'To whom shall I speak and give warning, that they may hear! behold their ear is uncircumcised. and they cannot hearken. Jer. vii. 24, But they would not hear. Jer. vii. 10. Who say, we are delivered to do all these abominations; yet they did

come and stand before him, in the house which was called by his name.

VI. *Sixthly*, These persons are slighers of this great salvation, who, when they hear it, are not so much affected with it, than if we were reading unto them the most senseless history of Thomas the Rymer, or some other old fable; like unto those mentioned, Jer. vi. 10 'The word of the Lord is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it.' I would pose you all, as in the sight of the Author of this great salvation, men or women, did you ever set yourselves (or took ye ever any pains) to bring up your hearts to the love of this great salvation? Was it ever the rejoicing of your hearts, that Christ died and rose again? I do certainly believe it, and I am persuaded, that there are decrees past in heaven against many of you. 'That in hearing ye shall hear, but not understand; and in seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive; for God hath made your hearts harder than the flint or adamant; so that ye shall refuse to return when he doth exhort you. Believe me, if so I may speak, I think that there is as much probability that the stones of the wall would hear (if we would speak to them), as soon as many of you.

VII. *Seventhly*, These persons are slighers of the great salvation, who did never complain that they wanted a right to this great salvation. I hope some of you are now convinced that ye never came within the compass of this great salvation; I say not unto you, If ye did never spend an hour in secret weeping and lamenting, because ye had not a right to this gospel-redemption, it is but too probable you never yet had a right to it. Yea, know it, that such of you would little care to let precious Christ depart without any grief of heart; I think, if this were voiced within this house to-day, Whether or not shall Christ go and depart? I doubt, if there would be many heart-dissenters, though many tongue-dissenters. Oh! I fear there would be many hearts here saying, O Christ, depart and go thy way. Yea, there are many Gadarenes here, who prefer their kine and swine to precious Christ, and would beseech him to go out of their coasts.

VIII. *Eighthly*, These persons slight the great salvation, who never took pains to engage their hearts to take hold of Christ and the gospel. Christ is near to you this day: the great salvation is near to you, and is now, even now offered unto you; therefore are there any who will take pains to lay hold on it? I obtest you all who are here, by the beauty and excellency of him, who is Author of this great salvation, that ye come and partake of it; I obtest you by all the joys of heaven, that ye embrace this great salvation. I obtest you by all the terrors in hell, that ye embrace it. I obtest you by the promises of the everlasting covenant, that ye embrace it. I obtest you by all the curses

that are written in this book of the covenant, that ye embrace it. I obtest you by the love that ye owe to your immortal souls, that you would once be wise, and come and partake of this great salvation. May I now have it, sayest thou? Yea, I say unto all, ye may have it to-day, ye may be partakers of it before ye go hence. And so, before I proceed any further, I do, in the name and authority of him who sent me here to-day, and is the Author of this great salvation, freely offer it unto you; therefore take it off my hand, embrace this great salvation offered to you to-day. But I know there will be eight sorts of humours within this house to-day, in relation to this great salvation which is now offered unto you.

1. I think there will be some of Gallio's disposition here to-day, that will care for none of these things; yea, there are many here who will not give a fig for the rich offer of the great salvation; but, I say, cursed be that person who puts on Gallio's temper to-day, that will care for none of these things.

2. I fear there will be many of Pilate's humour here to-day, who will say, they find nothing against the man; yet will cry out, 'take him and crucify him;' they find no fault with Christ, and yet will be content that he be crucified. Now, can we say any thing against Christ, who is the author of this great salvation: Produce your strong arguments. Are there any here who have any thing to say against him; I am here to answer in his name. I hope there is not one here who hath any thing to say against the Author of this great salvation; and why then do ye not take him? See unto yourselves, that there be none of Pilate's humour here to-day, that will cry out, ye find nothing in Christ why he should not be received, and yet will be content that he be crucified.

3. There will be many of the Jews here to-day, who cry out, 'away with Christ, away with Christ, and give me Barabbas.' But oh! what a hellish word is that, Away with spotless Christ, away with transcendent Christ, and give us the world? Now, are there any here who will be so gross slighers of this great salvation! Will ye slight this great salvation, and embrace your idols, which shall once prove a crown of thorns unto you?

4. There will be some of Felix's humour found here to-day, that will say, 'O Christ, go away at this time, and I will hear thee at a more convenient season.' But I say unto you, who will not hear me to-day, nor embrace this great salvation, I shall defy all the ministers in Scotland to assure you, that ye shall get another offer, if ye send me away to-day, there is not one that can or dare engage that the great salvation shall be in your offer any more; therefore, I say, let none of Felix's temper be



here to-day, that will say, 'They will hear Christ at a more convenient season'

5. There will be some of Balaam's temper to-day, who will desire 'to die the death of the righteous,' and to have their 'last end' like his; yet they desire not to live the life of the righteous. But I say unto you, 'Ye shall never die the death of the righteous, if ye live not the life of the righteous.'

6. There will be some of you here to-day, who, I hope, at least will be of Agrippa's humour, that will say, 'Thou hast almost persuaded me to be a Christian.' I say unto thee, O wilt thou quickly out with that word, 'almost,' and put in that word 'altogether,' and say, 'O precious Christ! thou hast altogether persuaded me to be a Christian.' However, if thou come no greater length, I intreat thee to come this length, that so thou may cry out, 'I am almost persuaded to embrace Christ the great salvation,' and it may be ere long ye will come further.

7. There will be some of Judas's temper here to-day, 'who will betray Christ for thirty pieces of silver.' Yea, some would sell Christ, heaven, their idols and all, for less than 'thirty pieces of silver.'

8. I think there will be many of Esau's profane temper here to-day, 'who will sell their birth-right for a mess of pottage.' Now, will ye enquire at yourselves, Am I the person that will give my birth-right for a mess of pottage? Doth my heart say, I will sell my birth-right, because I am hungered and ready to die? What will it profit me, give me a mess of pottage, and I will quit my birth-right? I know there are not a few such here to-day; therefore I intreat you, enquire at yourselves, What is your humour? O shall the great salvation, that ye have slighted so long, be slighted this day also, and shall there be none to embrace it? Oh! enquire and stand in awe, lest the wrath of the Most High pursue you.

Now, I shall give you these seven considerations, which may provoke you not to slight, but embrace this great salvation.

1. The *First* consideration, That the not embracing of this great salvation, is one of the greatest acts of folly that can be, Jer. viii. 9. 'They have rejected the word of the Lord;' (and immediately it is subjoined) 'and what wisdom is in them? And so Solomon doth assure you, they cannot be wise who neglect this great salvation, Prov. i. 7. 'Fools despise wisdom and instruction.' Therefore may I not say unto you, be who ye will (though ye were the greatest heads of wit in all this place), ye are but stark fools, as long as ye neglect this. But would ye be wise indeed, and wise unto eternal life? Then I intreat you, come and embrace this great salvation.

II. The *Second* consideration to provoke you not to slight the great salvation, is this, that the ruin and destruction of the slighers of it is the most certain and infallible, Jer. xi. 11. where, speaking of slighting the covenant, which is indeed the same great salvation, there is a *therefore* put in the threatening; 'Therefore thus saith the Lord, behold, I will bring evil upon them which they shall not be able to escape.' I defy you all, who are slighers of this great salvation, to find a back-door when justice shall pursue you. For there is no door to escape, if ye embrace not this great salvation; but the earth will disclose your iniquity, and the heaven will declare your sin.

III. *Thirdly*, Let this consideration provoke you not to slight this great salvation, that Christ is exceeding serious and earnest that ye would embrace it. And I think that Isa. xxviii. 23. speaketh out this exceeding seriousness, where four times he beggeth of his hearers that they would give ear and hear his voice, saying, 'Give ye ear, and hear my voice; hearken, and hear my speech.' What needeth all these exhortations, but that Christ is most serious that they would embrace the great salvation. And O that there was a person here to-day as serious to the bargain as Christ is! But, be who ye will that slight this great salvation, believe me, the day is coming wherein ye shall cry out, 'Alas! for the slighting of it.' Wilt thou therefore think presently with thyself, O thou sligher of this great salvation, what thou wilt say of thy slighting of it, when the devil shall be leading thee in through the dark gates of hell? O sligher of the gospel, how many alases wilt thou cry, when thou shalt be passing through these dark gates into thy everlasting prison? Wilt thou not then cry out, O me, sligher of the everlasting salvation! Whither am I now going? Alas! now for my slighting of the gospel. And as thou passest through, thou shalt meet with numbers of miserable comforters. There is not one in that prison that can comfort thee: but many dreadful alases shalt thou then both cry and hear, if thou embrace not this great salvation.

IV. *Fourthly*, Let this provoke you not to slight the great salvation, That ye will get it for a very look. O ye within this house to-day, ye will get this great salvation for one look, Isa. xlv. 22. 'Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.' For a very look ye will get this great salvation; and do ye ever think to get to heaven at a lower rate?

V. The *Fifth* consideration to provoke you not to slight this great salvation any more, is this, there is not one of you who is a sligher of it, but your slighting of it shall increase your immortal bonds; man or woman, be who thou wilt, when thou art slighting this great salvation, thou art but plaiting a cord



wherewith to bind thy soul eternally in these unquenchable flames, Isa. xxviii. 22. 'Be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong.' I say therefore unto you, old men, mock not, lest your bands be made strong. Old women, near unto your graves, mock not, lest your bands be made strong. Young men, be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong. Young women, who are in the flower of your time, mock not, lest your bands be made strong. But now, alas! will there, for all this, be a person here to-day who will be a mocker of this great salvation?

VI. The *Sixth* consideration to provoke you not to slight this great salvation any more, is this, Ye know not but that your days may be near a close. I say, ye know not but the day of the preaching of this great salvation may be near a close. What knowest thou, O man, or woman, but this shall be the last sermon that ever thou shalt hear concerning this great salvation? And yet, for all this, shall we be sent away without one consent to embrace or receive it? O! will ye be persuaded to look to Christ, and so to take him?

VII. The *Seventh* consideration to provoke you not to slight the great salvation, is this, that there is a fivefold salvation comprehended under this great salvation.

I. The *First* is this, come and partake of this great salvation, and thou shalt have salvation from thy idols: and hereby do I proclaim liberty this day unto captives. I am sent forth this day with the keys of your prison-house, to open your prison-doors unto you, if ye will embrace this great salvation. I say unto you, O ye prisoners! come forth and shew yourselves, for the keys of your prison-house are with us, to open your prison-doors unto you; therefore, O come forth and embrace this great salvation. Will there be any, shall I think, here that will refuse to come forth? O! go forth, and flee from the land of your captivity, and from the house of your bondage.

II. Thou shalt have salvation from thy darkness, and from thy ignorance. I say unto you, who understand no more of God than the stones of the wall, I command you to come forth, and partake yet of this great salvation; and unto you shall light arise, even the day spring from on high shall visit you.

III. If ye will come and partake of this great salvation, ye shall have deliverance from all your fears. Dost thou fear that thou shalt be poor? Come and partake of this great salvation, and thou shalt be delivered from it. Art thou afraid of hell? Come and partake of this great salvation, and thou shalt be delivered from that fear. Art thou afraid of the wrath of God? Then come, I say, and partake of this great salvation, and thou shalt have redemption from that, and all thy fears; 'With him is plen-



teous redemption, and he can make thee quiet from the fear of evil.'

IV. If thou wilt come and partake of this great salvation, thou shalt have deliverance from all thy anxieties, and from all thy care: ye are now careful and anxious about many things, come and partake of the great salvation, and it will make you careful but only for the 'one thing necessary.'

V. If ye will come and embrace this great salvation offered unto you this day, ye shall be helped before ye go hence, to sing that song, 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory?' Now, O will ye come and embrace this great salvation? And ye will be more than conquerors through Christ, who loveth you. Are there, therefore, any here to-day that would have victory over the devil, and over their own hearts? Then come and embrace this great salvation, and then your victory is certain.

But now to press home this great salvation upon you a little further, there are nine sorts of persons who are invited to come and partake of this great salvation offered this day; and I charge you, answer to your names, when ye are called, and delay not to come.

I *First*, I invite and call here to-day, all who are willing to come and embrace this great salvation. Now, are there any of you here to-day who are called *willing*? then I invite you to come and embrace this great salvation, Rev. xxii. 17. 'Whatsoever will, let him come.' But, oh! are there none here to-day, who are named *willing*? I entreat you, if there be any, do not deny your name, but come when ye are called, and embrace this great salvation.

II. *Secondly*, Those persons who thirst for it are invited to come and partake of this great salvation, Rev. xxii. 17. 'Let him that is athirst, come.' Now, if there be any here who are named *thirsty*, let them come and partake of this great salvation, and they shall be satisfied.

III. *Thirdly*, Are there any moneyless folk here to-day? Let them come and partake of this great salvation. Are there no moneyless folk here to-day? I mean not that money or coin in your purses, but want ye money? that is, want ye righteousness? then I pray you come and partake of this great salvation. I say, Are ye so poor, that ye have nothing but the fear of hell? Then I pray you come. If there be any here who have nothing to commend them to Christ but necessity; I say unto all such, O come, come, come, and partake of this great salvation.

IV. *Fourthly*, Those persons are invited to come (and I wish there were many such here), who are *weary*: but, oh! are there none here to-day who are called *weary*? Are ye not weary in

pursuit of your sins? If there be any such here to-day, I say unto you, O weary folk, come, come, come, and partake of this great salvation, and of this excellent gospel redemption that was purchased at so dear a rate.

V. *Fifthly*, Those who are heavy laden, are invited to come (and I think all of you may answer to this name), 'are ye heavy laden?' O then come. But are there none here who are heavy laden with sin, with misery, and estrangement from God? If there be any such here, I say unto thee, old man, or young man, be who thou wilt, O come and partake of this great salvation.

VI. *Sixthly*, Are there any here to-day who are called blind? I say, if there be any of you who think ye want eyes to see the precious excellencies of Christ, I invite you to come and partake of this great salvation.

VII. *Seventhly*, Are there any who are called lame here to-day? I say unto such, O come, come, come, and partake of this great salvation: for we are sent forth to-day to call in the blind, and the maimed, and the lame, that they may come and embrace this great salvation: therefore are there none here to-day who may be called such? Are ye neither blind or lame? I hope many of you will not deny that ye are such; therefore I say unto you, O blind, halt and maimed, come, come, and partake of this great salvation.

VIII. The *Eighth* sort of persons invited, are those who are sick; therefore if there be any sick folk here to-day, be who ye will, I say unto you, O come and partake of this great salvation; 'for the whole need not a physician, but the sick.'

IX. *Ninthly*, Are there any here to-day who know not their name, or their condition? I say unto you, O nameless folk, come and partake of this great salvation, come to Christ for the knowledge of your soul's condition; come as a nameless one, and he shall not reject thee, though thy case were so evil that thou could not give it a name; for of all that come unto him, he sendeth none away.

Now, where do you find your name and surname? O do ye not know it? I hope you may know it; therefore I entreat you to answer to it, and so come away, and partake of this great salvation.

But I am afraid there be many strong iron-bars in the way of some of you which ye cannot win over. Ah! how fast are some souls locked in Satan's snare? And therefore I shall speak a little for discovering of those bars, that hinder from embracing this great salvation, that so ye may be the better helped to remove them.

1. The *First* great iron-bar which keepeth folk from embrac-

ing this great salvation, is the bar of ignorance; and I am afraid that this, as a mighty bar, hindereth many of you; ye are ignorant of yourselves, and of the condition of your souls; ye are ignorant of the law, and of its severity; and ye are ignorant of the precious gospel in its condescendency. O pray unto God, that for Christ's sake he would break that great bar of ignorance: for till that be done, Christ may take up that complaint, Jer. v. 4. 'Surely they are foolish; they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God.' I say, this bar of ignorance keepeth you from embracing this great salvation.

II. The *Second* bar which keepeth many from closing with Christ, is the bar of presumption; for some will cry out, What need have I to embrace the great salvation? Have I it not already? But I say unto thee, O fool, thou art (by all appearance) yet in bondage. O that this evil bar of presumption were put away; for it is one of the greatest impediments which lieth in the way of your embracing this great salvation that is in your offer to-day; therefore I say unto you, if ye will come no further, I entreat you come this length, to confess that ye want this gospel-salvation, and that ye are indeed strangers to this redemption purchased by Christ.

III. The *Third* bar that keepeth persons from embracing this great salvation, is the bar of unbelief; ye believe not what we say to you anent this great salvation. I know that some of you are of the Stoicks and Epicures humour, who cry out, 'What meaneth this man? He seemeth to be a setter forth of some strange god.' But I say unto you, I am not the setter forth of any strange god, but it is Jesus of Nazareth whom I preach unto you. Alas! some of you thinketh this great salvation to be some morning dream, or some golden fancy: but I say unto you, it is neither a dream nor fancy, but a real truth that we preach unto you.

IV. The *Fourth* bar that keepeth persons from embracing this great salvation, is the bar of discouragement. This strong bar keepeth many so fast, that they cannot embrace this great salvation, though it be freely offered unto them. I shall say no more to you, who are these, but counsel you to do as those four lepers did, 2 Kings vii. 3. 4. who sat at the gate of Samaria, who said, 'Why sit we here until we die? If we say, we will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there: and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall into the host of the Syrians; if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die.' Even so I say unto you, that if ye abide in the state of unbelief, ye shall surely be undone; therefore go forth, for ye know not but God may work a great salvation for you; and if ye will not quit your un-



belief, and close with Christ in the offer of this great salvation, by faith, ye shall have no more to do, 'but eat and drink and divide the spoil.'

V. The *Fifth* bar which withholdeth persons from embracing this great salvation, is the bar of unwillingness; 'Ye will not come to me that ye may have life.' Ah! alas! that is an iron bar indeed by which all that are in hell have barred themselves out of heaven. Alas! shall ye be such wretches also? O what a dreadful sound is that? 'Wo unto thee, O Jerusalem, wilt thou not be made clean? When shall it once be?' Ah! 'turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die? Why will ye slight this great salvation?' O will none of you this day embrace it?

VI. The *Sixth* bar that withholdeth persons from embracing this great salvation, is the bar of worldly-mindedness. Many of you are so fixed to the world, that ye cannot come and close with this great salvation. I may allude to that word spoken of Saul, 1 Sam. x. 21. that he hid himself among the stuff; for many have buried, and nested themselves in the midst of the world, that they cannot embrace this great salvation.

VII. The *Seventh* bar which keepeth many from embracing this great salvation, is the bar of hard-heartedness. There hath such a stupidity and hardness of heart seized upon many, that let Christ preach as he will to them, by his word, or by other dispensations, they are no more moved than if his word or dispensations were a thousand miles from them. O that strong bar of hardness of heart, when shall the omnipotent hand of God break it?

VIII. The *Eighth* bar that hindereth many from embracing this great salvation, is the bar of slothfulness. Many of you cannot be at the pains to embrace it; but I say unto you, there is but small pains in the way of godliness. I say unto you, it may so easily be had, that is in your offer to-day, and if ye will ye may put forth your hand, and take it. Consider therefore what ye will do. O! will ye despise it? I say will ye still neglect and despise it? Will ye but read that dreadful word, Acts xiii. 41. 'Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish.' Tell me freely, would ye have us to return this answer to him who sent us, that ye are despisers of this great salvation? Say to it, are there none of you, who (for all this) will consent to partake of this great salvation? O captives and prisoners, and ye who are in the bonds of Satan, will ye come and partake of this great salvation. and you shall be made free? I have an act of release for you to-day, if ye will come and make use of it, ye shall be set at liberty. But Oh! shall the prison-doors be cast open. and yet none come forth? But (that I may come to a close) I say unto you, O poor pri-

soner, go forth, go forth, and partake of this great salvation. Oh! will ye not come forth? What holdeth you in? The foundation of your prison-house is shaken to-day; therefore if ye will but come forth, and cast a look to Christ, your very shackles shall fall off your hands, and ye shall be as those who were never bound. Now I leave this with you, and to make you think upon it, I shall speak these five words unto you, and I entreat you think upon them.

I *First*, I have excellent tidings to tell you, (I hope some of you will give ear to them) viz. there is a great person come here to-day, and that is, the mighty Author of this great salvation, who hath brought everlasting righteousness with him, desiring you to make use thereof: it is his desire that ye would take his excellent gift at his hand. These, I say, are the tidings that I have to preach unto you; and I hope never to be declared a liar: for what I preach unto you, I say yet unto you, that Christ, the author of this great salvation, desireth to give it freely unto you, if ye will but take it. But, O! will ye not take it? I think, if ye did see an hundred men lying in prison, or dungeon, without light, bread, or water, and a great prince coming to them saying, I desire to see you all come forth and partake of this great liberty which I bring unto you; and every one of them should answer, I scorn to come forth at this time; would ye not think them exceeding great fools. And yet I fear this act of great folly falls out in many of your hands to-day; that when Christ hath given you the keys of your prison-doors, and they are opened, ye will not come forth. But I must entreat you yet to come forth, and shew yourselves; for who knoweth, but we may be commanded to shut your prison-doors again, and to seal them with seven seals, with an unalterable decree from heaven, never to be recalled? Wherefore, O ye prisoners, go forth, go forth from your prison-house.

2. *Secondly*, I would say this to you, that it is not without much ground that this great salvation (offered to you) is called a great salvation: I know a little paper of two or three sheets might contain all the salvation that ever any man obtained; but the world would never be able to contain all the books which might be written to the commendation of this great salvation; yea, unto any who will embrace it, I say, *First*, If thou find not this great salvation above thy faith, then go thy way when thou art come: but I know thou wilt find it both above thy faith and hope. *Secondly*, If you find it not above thy desires, when thou art come unto it, then go away again; but were thy desires as the sand upon the sea-shore, thou shalt always find more in thy salvation, than ever thou could desire. *Thirdly*, If

this salvation be not above what thou can conceive, then go thy way, when thou art come to it; but think of it as thou can, it shall always be above thy thoughts of it. *Fourthly*, If this salvation be not above thy opinion of it, then go thy way, when thou art come unto it: but I know thou wilt find it far above thy opinion of it. Therefore seeing it is so great a salvation, as that all the world could not contain all the books which might be written in the commendation of it, O will ye embrace it, even to-day, while it is in your offer.

3. *Thirdly*, I would say this unto you, be persuaded, that there is no sin that will more provoke the majesty of God to punish you, than the sin of slighting the great salvation, 'Bring forth these murderers,' saith the Lord (of the slighers of this invitation) 'and slay them before me.' I entreat you enquire at your own hearts, What will ye answer when ye are reprov'd for slighting of it? Old men, will ye ask at your own hearts what will ye answer to Christ, when he shall propose that question to you, 'Why slighted ye the great salvation?' Old women, what will ye answer, when he shall say to you, 'Why slighted ye the great salvation?' Young men, and young women, enquire at your own hearts, what will ye answer, when Christ shall say to you, 'Why slighted ye the great salvation?' Can ye imagine any answer unto that question? O dreadful shall the wrath of God be, that shall be executed upon the slighers of this great salvation!

4. *Fourthly*, I would say this unto you, that heaven is waiting to hear, what acceptation the offer of this great salvation doth get among you; here is the great salvation, here is the offer of it, and here is the commendation of it: what say you to it? Is it not an excellent salvation? Is it not a free salvation? Is it not a great salvation? Is it not an eternal salvation? Why then do ye not welcome it? Can any of you say any thing to the discommendation of it? I know you cannot. Yea, I dare say, your own hearts are admiring it as most excellent; and therefore O! will ye accept it? Alas! shall there be none here, who will be found accepters of this great salvation, so freely offered to-day?

5. *Fifthly*, I would say this to you, let all the angels praise him, who is the Author of this great salvation. All the saints round about the throne, praise him who is the Author of this great salvation. All those who are the expectants of heaven, praise him who is the Author of this great salvation. All ye to whom this offer is made, praise him who is the Author of this great salvation. O heaven, praise him who is the Author of this great salvation. O all ye fowls of the air, praise him who is the



Author of this great salvation. O fire! hail, snow, vapours stormy winds and tempests, praise him who is the Author of this great salvation. All the tribes of the earth, praise him, who is the Author of this great salvation. Our own souls praise him, who is the Author of this great salvation. And all that is within us bless him, who is the Author of this great salvation. O! who would not praise him, who is the Author of this great salvation? Are there any here that will refuse to commend him? O! think upon him, and let not this be a day of slighting him. Now where are your hearts at this time? I will tell you where many of your hearts are, they are thinking upon the world. But I am sure, there are not many of them thinking upon this great salvation. Now, what resolution mind ye to go away with to-day? Oh! have ye no resolution beyond what ye had when ye came hither to-day? Are there any here who have this resolution, to whom shall we go, but to him who is the Author of this great salvation, who alone hath the words of eternal life. Even the Lord breathe it upon you. Or, is this your resolution, that through Christ's strength (forsake him who will) ye will never forsake him? Or, have ye this resolution, that ye will esteem the great salvation more highly than ever ye did? O that the Lord may keep these in the imaginations of the thoughts of your hearts for ever. But as for you who have no resolutions to embrace this great salvation, oh! wherewith shall I commend it unto you? Do not your own necessities commend it? But if nothing can persuade you to come away and embrace it, then this place shall be a heap of witnesses against you: 'For it hath heard all the works of the law which he hath spoken unto you,' Joshua xxiv. 27.

Oh! cast your eyes upon these pillars of the house, and stones of the walls, I take them as so many witnesses, that they may speak and testify against you in the great day of the Lord, if ye neglect this great salvation to-day; therefore ere ye go away, be thinking upon it, whether or not ye mind to embrace it, now while ye may have it. This day I have set life and death before you, I have set before you both the great salvation, and the great damnation; and O that ye had understanding in these things, that ye, being wise, might be provoked at last to embrace this great salvation, the which we do yet again entreat you to think upon. Is not heaven looking upon you at this time, to see what ye will do with this great offer of salvation, which I have this day, from the Lord, presented unto you? Now, to him that can persuade you to embrace this great salvation, this gospel redemption, this blessed mystery, into which the angels desire to pry, to him, who can bring you back from the pit, and enlighten you

with the light of the living, to him, who hath the key of your prison, who can open and none can shut, and can shut and none can open: to him, who hath all power in heaven and earth communicated to him, who can deliver you from the grave, and can set you free from all your enemies, we desire to give praise. Amen.

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## SERMON II.

HEB. ii. 3. *How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.*

THERE are two great and most ordinary complaints in these days; 1. There are many who complain that their estates and persons are in bondage, and that they are sold for slaves to the hand of strangers. But, O that we could also turn over the complaint to this, ‘That our souls are in bondage, and that we are yet in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity’; that so we might be provoked to long for the great salvation that is in your offer. 2. There are many complaining (and not without much cause) that there is now such a toleration of errors. But wilt thou complain also of this, that within thy heart there is a toleration of lusts? Is there not an act of toleration concluded within thy breast, that the devil and his company may reign in thee at pleasure? Oh! have ye not need of this great salvation? Shall I tell you that Christ is courting you to embrace it, that he putteth on all his most glorious robes, and manifesteth himself unto you as a suiter, making offer of himself, and of his great salvation? O tell me, have ye seen him? Or do ye think to see him this day? What robes had he on? There are five glorious robes wherewith he clothes himself, when he condescendeth to manifest himself to his people. *First*, He cometh to his own with the garments of salvation; according to that word, Zech. ix. 9. ‘Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation.’ Nay, your king is come here to-day, and will ye not fall in love with him, when he is clothed with the garments of salvation? Can ye ever have a more conquering sight of Christ, than when he is clothed with such an excellent robe, and offering you salvation? *Secondly*, He appeareth to his own sometimes in a garment dyed in blood; according to that word, Isa. lxiii. 1. ‘Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments in blood, as one that treadeth the wine fat?’ And now I say to

those who will not look to Christ when he appears in the garments of salvation, have ye a heart to refuse him that hath fought such a combat for you, who hath 'trode the wine-press alone,' and hath stained all his garments with the blood of his enemies? Or is there any here, who dare refuse this salvation, when they see how he treadeth his enemies in anger, and trampleth them in his fury, and thus sprinkleth their blood upon his garments? O tremble at this sight, and seek quarters from him in time, or he shall dye his garments with the blood of thy immortal soul. *Thirdly*, Christ appeareth unto his own, being clothed with those humble robes of condescendency, when he came in the similitude of sinful flesh. O! what a sight was that, to behold the Prince of heaven clothed with our nature? What a sight was that, to behold him, who 'was clothed with light as with a garment,' to be clothed with our infirmities? Yet he condescended to clothe himself thus, that we might have access unto him, and be partakers of his gift: O! can we refuse him, when we have thus pressed him to put on beggars-weeds, that he might say to worms, 'ye are my brethren and my sisters.' *Fourthly*, Christ sometimes manifesteth himself, being clothed with the garments of beauty and ravishing majesty. Such was the sight that the spouse got of Christ, Cant. ii. 3. 'As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my Beloved among the sons;' and Cant. v. when she saw him 'white and ruddy, and the standard-bearer of ten thousand,' such was that joyful sight of him when his garments were as the light, 'and white as the snow;' which he had at the transfiguration, when those glorified ones did come, as it were, ambassadors from the higher house to make him a visit. And, *Fifthly*, Christ sometimes appeareth to his own in robes of dreadful majesty, and terrible highness and loftiness, when that soul, upon the first sight of him, remains dead, and there remains no more life in them. Such was the sight that Daniel got in his xth. chap. and such was the sight that John got of Christ, Rev. i. 13—18. And I would ask at all that are here, what a sight have ye gotten of Christ to-day, in which of all these robes have ye seen him in? It is true, we are not now to look for the extraordinary sights of him; but yet, if ever thou hast seen him in any of his wooing robes, sure he hath appeared matchless; and how shall ye then refuse him?

But now to come to the words I was speaking unto you of; the *first* thing in the words, *viz.* that there are many who live under the offer of this great salvation that do slight it, and do not embrace it: and now I shall only add a few things further unto you. 1. Let me propose a few considerations, to persuade you to embrace this great salvation: God forbid we go away



before we embrace this gospel salvation. And therefore I charge you, in his name, go not away before ye embrace it. And to press it home upon you, there are these eight or nine properties of this great salvation that is offered unto you this day.

And *First*, It is a free salvation; ye have no more ado but to put forth your hand and take it. O come and take it. Christ hath fought for this salvation, and there is no more required of you, but to come, and reap the fruits of his victory; 'whosoever will, let him come;' there is nothing that should move you to stay away, O captives, and bond slaves to Satan. O prisoners of hope; will ye come and partake of this great salvation? What holds you from coming away and partaking of it? It is freely offered unto you, ay, believe it. Christ requires no more of you, but that ye should come and take it out of his hand: if ye consent to obey, the bargain is ended: 'Ye shall eat the good of the land.' Isa. i. 19.

*Secondly*, This great salvation, is a complete salvation that is offered unto you to-day; this is clear, Luke i. 17. 'That we might be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us.' There is not an enemy that is in thy way, but if thou wilt come and partake of the great salvation, thou may have victory over it; so complete a salvation is it that is in your offer this day. O, shall we pass away, and not embrace it? O, shall your cursed hearts undervalue this complete salvation that is come to your door? Believe it, 'salvation is near unto you,' if ye will take it.

*Thirdly*, It is a wonderful salvation; it is such a salvation as the angels desire to pry into and it is such a salvation that all the prophets desire to pry into; it is almost six thousand years since all the angels in heaven fell into a sea of wonder at this great salvation; it is almost six thousand years since Abel fell into a sea of wonder at this great salvation; and what think ye is his exercise this day? He is even wondering at this great salvation. Would ye ask at all the angels in heaven; would they not all say, O embrace the great salvation? Would ye ask at all the saints that are above, would they not advise you to embrace this great salvation? Would ye ask at Adam, would he not say, O embrace this great salvation? Would ye ask at Abel, would he not say, O embrace this great salvation? And would not all the patriarchs say unto you, O embrace this great salvation? And do not all who have tasted of the sweetness of it, cry out unto you, come and embrace the great salvation.

The *Fourth* property of this salvation is, that it was bought at an exceeding dear rate; it is a dear salvation. Would ye know the difference betwixt Christ's coming to this salvation, and your

coming to it? It is this. Christ was forced to travel through all the armies of the justice of God; he was forced to drink of the cup of the wrath of God, before he could come to purchase this great salvation; and now what is required of you to obtain this? We may say no more, but put out our hands, and take it. Will ye look to the price that was laid down for this salvation? There is not a wound in the body of Christ, but it saith, this is a dear salvation. There is not a reproach Christ met with, but it saith, O is not this a dear salvation? There is not a buffeting Christ met with, but it saith, O is not this a dear salvation? There is not a necessity that he is put into, but it saith, is not this a great and dear salvation? O sirs! will ye not come and take this great salvation, this dear salvation? What must I give for it, say ye? I say ye must give nothing for it, come and take it, 'without money, and without price:' it was dear to Christ, but it shall be cheap unto you. O! is it not cheap to you? I assure you, if you will come to the market to buy the great salvation, there is none of you who needeth to stand for the price of it. O come and take it, and have it, and there will be no more priggings.

*Fifthly*, It is an everlasting salvation, that ye shall enjoy the fruits of throughout eternity; as is clear, Heb. v. 9. 'He became the author of eternal redemption unto us.' It is a salvation that the devil can never be able to take out of your hands: if ye take it, ye shall never be robbed of it again. O come and partake of this great salvation, whereby the gates of hell shall never prevail against you.

*Sixthly*, It is a noble and honourable salvation; it is not to be taken out of one slavery to another, but it is to be taken 'out of prison that we may reign,' Luke i. 71. compared with ver. 74. It is, 'That we being saved, may serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life.' I say, come, come and partake of this great salvation, that your glory may be increased, and that ye may be exalted above the kings of the earth.

*Seventhly*, It is a most advantageous salvation: what are the advantages of any salvation that are not to be found in this? Is there not peace to be found through this salvation? Is there not liberty to be found through this salvation? Is there not eternal enjoyment of God to be found through this salvation! Yea, all salvations are in this one salvation.

*Lastly*, It is a royal salvation; for it cometh to us from, and through the Son of God: Christ is the Author of it. And we conceive, Christ may be said to be the Author of this salvation, in these respects; 1. He is the meritorious cause that did pro-



cure it; it was the price of his blood that was laid down for it, to purchase this great salvation. 2. He is the fountain from whence it floweth; according to that which we have cited, Heb. v. 9. 'He became the Author of eternal salvation.' 3. He is the person that fitteth our spirits for partaking of it; and it is he that removeth mountains out of the way, that we may have fair access unto the great salvation. 4. It is he that must persuade our hearts to embrace and take hold of it. He standeth without and crieth unto the heart to embrace this great salvation, and he standeth within, making the heart cry out, Content, I will embrace the great salvation; he is indeed the person that commendeth, and doth point forth this great salvation unto us. He is the noble minister of it, it began first to be preached by him.

Now, is there any of you that hath fallen in love with this great salvation? That ye may try yourselves, I shall give you some evidences of the persons that are near unto this great salvation. 1. Is thy estimation of the great salvation increased by what it was in the morning when thou come hither? Is thy estimation of the great gospel salvation a foot higher than it was in the morning? I say unto thee, thou art not far from the great salvation, come away. 2. Is thy desire after the great salvation increased by what it was in the morning? Hast thou stronger desires after the great salvation, than before thou camest hither? That is an evidence thou art not far from it. 3. Is thy thoughts of thy necessity of the great salvation greater than they were? Thinkest thou that thou hast more need of the great salvation than ever thou thoughtest before? And is thy opinion and thoughts of saving thyself, less than they were before thou camest hither? Art thou forced to cry out, 'None but Christ can save me!' I say, thou art not far from the great salvation; wilt thou come away? O that ye would once seal this conclusion with much heart persuasion, I am undone without Christ, I am undone without Christ, who is the Author of this great salvation. Are there any of you that are sensible that ye are in the fetters of sin, 'and in the bonds of iniquity?' Are ye brought to the conviction of this, 'that ye are in the gall of bitterness?' I say, if thou be brought to this length, to be sensible of thy bonds, and are crying out, O Redeemer, hasten, and come away. I say, if thou be sensible of thy bonds and imprisonment, and crying out, O thou that was anointed from eternity to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, O hasten and come away, and redeem me, even poor me, sinking, sinning, perishing, self-destroying me, thou art not far from the great salvation. 4. Art thou a person who beginneth to weep, because thou hast been so long a stranger to Christ, and the great salva-



tion? Old men that are here, how long have ye been strangers to the great salvation, and to the Author of it? Now will ye shed one tear for your estrangements, and cry out, wo is me that Christ and I have been so long asunder? I say, if thou hast come that length, thou art not far from the great salvation, come away: O pity yourselves, make haste, make haste, and come away.

But now, in the *Third* place, Let me give you some evidences by which you may know more clearly, whether or not ye have embraced this great salvation; that ye may know yourselves, and that ye walk not down to your graves with a lie in your right hand. The *first* evidence of a person that hath embraced this great salvation, is, that they will have a high esteem of the Saviour and Author of the great salvation. Hast thou a matchless esteem of matchless Christ, the Saviour of the world? That is a speaking evidence unto thee that thou art a partaker of the great salvation: art thou come this length, that thou criest out, None but Christ, none but Christ? It is a speaking evidence that thou art come to be partaker of the great salvation, when thou can cry out that word, Exod. xv. 2. 'The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation.' If Christ hath become thy salvation, then it is like he hath become thy song. I would ask this at you, were ye ever brought this length, that ye durst never advance to praise Christ alone, but was forced to call all the creatures, and say, O magnify the Lord with me? O that is an evidence that ye have embraced this great salvation.

*Secondly*, Those who have embraced the great salvation, will study to maintain and keep their grips of it; they will study to hold fast so precious a jewel. This is prest, Gal. v. 1. 'Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.' Yea, they will study to walk suitable to this noble mercy, at least they will strive and endeavour to do it; as is also pressed in that same verse. I say, if thou hast been made a partaker of the gospel-salvation, thou wilt strive to keep thyself from the power of those things that once triumphed over thee.

*Thirdly*, A person who is a partaker of the great salvation, will have a high esteem of this mercy and salvation; so Paul, when he speaketh of it here, he cannot but put some note of excellency to it, calling it the *great salvation*: therefore I say, if thou hast embraced the great salvation, thou wilt have an high esteem of it, that not to be subjected to it as thou should, or to be in subjection to the power of thy lust in any measure, will be thy burden and affliction. The man will be sorry when he is brought forth from the house of bondage unto the Red-sea; he will be sorry, that when he should have songs of triumph over his idols

put in his mouth, that they should sing songs of triumph over him.

*Fourthly*, A person who hath embraced the great salvation, will be longing sometimes for the day when his salvation shall be complete, when he shall sing that song, with that 'numerous multitude, which cannot be numbered,' Rev. vii. 9. O what a day shall it be, when thou shalt begin to sing that song? 'After this (saith he) I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands:' and they cried: and how cried they? 'They cried with a loud voice.' They would not mutter the song nor sing silently, but 'cried with a loud voice:' and what did they cry? 'They cried with a loud voice, saying, salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.' I would only ask you who are partakers of the great salvation, what songs shall be put into thy mouth, when 'the waters of Jordan shall divide themselves, that the ransomed of the Lord may pass through?' When thou shalt sing that song, Psalm cxv. 1. 'Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thee belongs the glory of our salvation?' O what a day shall it be, when that excellent song shall be put into thy mouth? Yea, what a day shall it be, when thou shalt be clothed with these excellent garments that are made mention of, Isa. vi. 10. For he hath clothed thee with the 'garments of salvation,' and he hath covered thee with the 'robes of righteousness.' O what robes are these? Did ye ever see such excellent robes as these must be? I think we will misken ourselves. O! do ye not think we will misken ourselves when we shall put on these excellent robes? Now therefore is the bargain closed? Or will ye go away before ye take this great salvation? Dare ye go out at these doors, and neglect the great salvation? I would ask this at you, think ye it will not be most sad, that Christ should tell this in heaven of you to-night, I was preaching to a pack of stones, that not of them would love me? Will ye not be afraid that this report shall be carried back to heaven of you? For what report can Christ carry back but this? Now is the cord of this great salvation let down unto you, is there none of you that will take a grip of it? O will ye flinger after it? Will ye make this a rejoicing day in heaven, that is a fasting day unto you? And the way to make it so, is to embrace the great salvation. Now what say ye to it, old men? Let me speak to you, and ask your thoughts of the great salvation; gray hairs should be a crown of glory, if they be found in the way of righteousness. Old men, speak your minds, that young men may not have your bad example, what say ye of this great sal-

vation? Is it not a most glorious salvation? Is it not a most excellent salvation that is in your offer? I intreat you speak your minds, tell Christ that ye are content to take the great salvation: otherwise, whoever he be that will not partake of this gospel-salvation, I, in the name and authority of Christ our Maker, denounce eternal and irrevocable war against him; put on your harness, ye shall not boast when ye put it off again: the wrath and fury of God shall come upon thee to the uttermost, if ye embrace not this great salvation. Other wars are but for a time, the greatest captains that ever the earth did carry, are now laid down in the sides of the pit, and their swords broken under their heads. Armies of ten hundred thousand, a hundred years time have laid them all in their graves, and ended all their contests; but there is no discharge of this war, that shall be concluded betwixt Christ and you, it shall become an eternal and most terrible war, which shall be but beginning when time is ended: now peace, or war, which of them will ye choose? Dare ye send a charge to Christ, and say that ye will defy him? I am afraid there shall be two things that many of us shall report to-day: *First*, I am afraid there will be many that will give Pharaoh's report to the offer of the great salvation, and say, 'Who is the Lord, that I should obey him?' I tell you who he is, he is 'glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders.' O embrace him before he go hence, and give not Pharaoh's report, lest ye be drowned in the sea of his wrath, whence there shall be no recovery. *Secondly*, I fear there will be many here to-day, that will give Demas's report to this precious offer; I will go and forsake Christ, and embrace this present world. O bad exchange; cursed be he that will make it; will ye be of Demas's humour? I fear there hath been many of that humour of a long time; but I intreat you once to be wise before you die. I confess that proverb, *Old fools are twice fools*. I think old men that will not embrace the great salvation, I think they are triple fools; what wait you for, is there any thing that can afford you any satisfaction but this great salvation? Now, are ye convinced, old men, that Christ is waiting for your answer; I intreat you, before ye go hence, speak your minds, what think ye of the great salvation? Is it not a lovely salvation? Is it not lovely now? What say ye to it? I am to go away, and the offer is to be taken up at this time, and it is hard to say, if ever ye shall have an offer again. I would only say this to you, and be sure of it, though I should never be a partaker of this great salvation, yet I shall be a witness against you that are not partakers of it. I tell and declare unto you, I shall be a witness against you, if ye embrace not this great salvation. Now, old men, are ye per-



suaded to embrace it? Let me obtest you by the beauty of Christ, come and partake of the great salvation, ye that are travelling upon the borders of eternity. Now, if ye will give no more, give this, will ye go home and think upon it. I shall not be uncharitable, nor enter to judge your thoughts. I fear there will be many declared and found guilty among us, that we have declared unto heaven, we will not embrace this great salvation, but have trode the blood of the 'Son of God under foot.' Now I intreat every one of you, ask at yourselves, if ye be the persons that will presume in your hearts to do so; now I shall leave it with you, let it not be a witness against you. I shall leave it with this, O come away, old men, young men, old women and maids, come and embrace this precious gospel-salvation. Ye may say, ye bid us come, but we cannot come. I desire no more of you but to come with this, Lord, I am content to come, but I cannot come. Come once to that, for if once ye be content to receive it, it will not be long before ye be able to receive it. Now shall Christ depart, and will none of you say, ye are content to take him? Will ye charge your own consciences with this, am I content to take Christ, and the great salvation? O blest, blest, blest be he that is the Author of this great salvation; and blest be he that gets any of the ends of the cords of the great salvation, that he sink not under the wrath and fury of the Lord. Come and embrace this great salvation. And again, I say, come and embrace it; for what can ye have if ye want it? And what can ye want if ye have it. I shall say no more, but close with that word, Isa. lxii. 11. 'Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, to those that are afar off:' what hath he proclaimed, 'Say ye to the daughter of Zion, behold thy salvation cometh, behold it cometh.' I say unto you that are the ends of the world, 'salvation is brought near unto you.' Stout-hearted and far from righteousness, the great salvation is brought near unto you, and will ye send it away! O consider what ye are doing. And to him that can persuade you to embrace this great salvation, we desire to give praise.

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## A S E R M O N

### CONCERNING DEATH.

Psalm lxxxix. 48. *What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death, &c.*

**I**T is very hard to determine, where all that are here shall be within thirty years; for even ere that time come, many, if