

## SERMON II.

*Hath appeared unto all men.*—TITUS ii. 11.

USE 1. Let us prize these days of grace. We are not apprehensive enough of the mercy that grace is so clearly revealed. The gospel is the light of the renewed world; we can no more be without the gospel than the world can be without the sun. Ps. xix. David first speaks of the sun, then of the law, which signifies there the general doctrine of the scriptures. People would be in a miserable case, and all things would languish and suffer decay, if the sun were gone; and such blackness there would be upon the new creation if we had not the light of the gospel. Oh! how miserable were they that wanted the light of the sun for a few days, as in Egypt! And how barbarous and miserable should we be, were it not that immortality and life is brought to light by the gospel! Tertullian saith, *Gemmæ a sola raritate gratiam possident*—Jewels are commended for their scarceness and rareness. Oh! we should the more seriously regard the gospel, because God hath been so tender of revealing it. For four thousand years in a great measure the gospel lay hid. God kept it for a long time as a precious secret hid in his own bosom, and did not think the world worthy of it, till the Son of God came out from him to take our nature, then was the gospel discovered. Only as a king reveals his secrets to some of his intimates and privy counsellors, and hides from the rest of his subjects, so God revealed it to some prophets and some holy men, and yet they had but a glimpse, and saw Christ at a distance. As when we see a man afar off, we cannot tell his shape, nor colour of his clothes, nor other circumstances, but only we see the substance and bulk of a man, so they saw Christ, but it was at a distance, they could not tell the particular circumstances of his birth, incarnation, death, and resurrection so clearly as now we can; therefore the prophets are forced to study their own prophecies: 1 Peter i. 10, 'Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you.' They saw there was a glorious salvation at hand, but fully what to make of it they could not tell; therefore they studied their own writings and prophecies, that were brought to them by the Spirit of God. The very prophets of God would have thought themselves happy to see the things that we see: Mat. xiii. 16, 17, 'But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.' We have a far more happy estate, since the manifestation of Christ in the flesh and pouring out of the Spirit, than Abraham and David and the prophets and righteous men had, for God hath dealt more mercifully and kindly with us; they had but a glimpse, and how earnestly did they desire to see more! and therefore were inquiring after it more and more. The usefulness, necessity and rarity of the gospel should make it more dear to us, that we should prize these days of grace more than we do.

*Use 2.* Let it put us upon trial. What are we the better for these days of grace? Have we more knowledge and clearness of faith? Alas! we are far inferior to those that obtained but the shadows; their eagle-eye discerned more of Christ in a ceremony than we can in the substance. It is said, Zech. xii. 8, 'He that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David, and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them.' But we come short, not only of David, but of the meanest believer in the Old Testament, and have little knowledge of the covenant and blessings of it. We lose the benefit of the days of light wherein we live; as good we had never heard of the gospel, nay, in some sense it had been better for us we had never enjoyed these days of plenty, if we do not profit by them. To stumble in the night is more venial and pardonable; but it is dangerous to stumble there where we have the benefit of the light to see our way. The grace of God hath appeared, breaking out like a clear light, yet we come short of grace offered to us. Trees in a fertile soil should be more fruitful, and cattle in better pasture should thrive more; so we that are led forth by the pleasant streams, and refreshed with the tender grass of the earth, should thrive more. Wherefore hath God set up a candle, a light in the church, but that we should work by it? Therefore have you improved these days of grace? What of power have you got to subdue corruption? Alas! to some the gospel is but a dead letter still; it gives them no strength to master their corruptions; at best it is a directive light, not persuasive; it is only as light, not as fire to consume and burn up their lusts; therefore, what of strength can you speak of for subduing of corruption? what of willingness of heart to do duties? 'The love of Christ constraineth us,' 2 Cor. v. 14. You who are not acquainted with God's love and grace have less constraint. It should not be so; yet there is more recorded of the piety, zeal, and devotion of the saints of the Old Testament than we can imitate. And have we a greater measure of comfort to carry us out against discouragement? Have we a more full joy, to bear us up against all the afflictions of this present life, now there is more grace discovered? John xv. 11, 'These things have I spoken to you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.' Is there a greater measure of charity in doing good to them that need it, as more of the bounty of God is discovered to us in these days of grace? Under the law all things were set down in so many positive precepts, the exact proportion what they should give and lay out; the tenth part was the Lord's; but under the gospel it may be there was no such precept (though that be a great question whether the tenth be not the Lord's still), but God knows love will not be backward, for it is trusted much in the days of the gospel. In short, are we more acquainted with God's covenant? can we subdue corruptions more, bear afflictions better? and have we a greater ability and willingness to good works?

*Which bringeth salvation to all men.*—That is, to all that accept of grace, bond or free; and that salvation is taken for our complete happiness, for eternal life and salvation, is clear enough. The point then is—

*Doct. 3.* That the grace of God revealed in the gospel is the great means of salvation, or a grace that tends to salvation.

The gospel is called the power of God unto salvation: Rom. i. 16, 'I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation;' that is, a powerful instrument which God useth. Therefore it is called the arm of the Lord: Isa. liii. 1, 'Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?' Its force is not in letters and syllables, but it standeth in the co-operation of the Spirit, by which God owneth and honoureth it. It is said to Cornelius, when Peter came to preach the gospel to him, Acts xi. 14, that he should tell him words whereby he and all his house should be saved. There is no other way to bring men to God but this; this will teach you how you and your little ones should be saved.

Now the gospel, or the grace of God in the gospel, is a means of salvation, because it hath a moral tendency that way, and because it hath the promise of the Spirit's work and assistance.

1. It hath a moral tendency that way; for there is the history of salvation, what God hath done on his part; there are the counsels of salvation, what we must do on our part; and there are excellent enforcements to encourage us to embrace this salvation.

[1.] There is the history of salvation, what God hath done on his part; there all things are ready; there you hear of the love of God, that he hath given his only Son, and of the free election of those whom he means to save in Christ. There you hear of the person of the Mediator, his mission and sending into the world, his incarnation, his unction, or anointing to his office, his abasement, his obedience, his death, his burial, his satisfaction for sin, his purchase of life; and then his exaltation, with all the fruits and effects of it, to wit, his intercession at the right hand of God, his effusion and pouring out of the Spirit to be his deputy here on earth; and there you read of his collection and manner of gathering of a church by the institutions of the word and sacraments; there we hear of the humiliation of Christ, by which salvation was purchased; and of his exaltation, whereby the graces that accompany salvation are distributed and dispensed, and how Christ by his Spirit applies this salvation.

[2.] There is the counsel of salvation, what man must do on his part that he may partake of the righteousness and Spirit of Christ, according to the good pleasure of God, which Christ purchased by virtue of his humiliation, and dispenseth and distributeth by virtue of his exaltation. I call all this the counsel of God, because thus it is called in scripture: Luke vii. 30, 'The pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves.' If you will be saved, here is God's counsel, thus you must do. It is dangerous for a sick man to alter the physician's method and receipt, to be tampering, to be taking out and putting in; so it is very dangerous to alter the counsel of God which he hath set down how we may be brought to salvation. Do not, as the young man that came to Christ, and said, Mat. xix. 16, 'Good master, what good thing shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?' and yet, when Christ puts him to the trial, it is said he went away sad. So a natural man his heart is raised up to hearken after salvation, but he goes away sorrowful when he cannot win heaven in his own way, to enjoy Christ and the world, Christ and carnal liberty, and Christ and his carnal pleasures; therefore you must not only look to the his-

tory of salvation, what God hath done, but to the counsel of salvation, what you must do. And Peter sums it up, and gives an abridgment of the gospel: Acts ii. 37, 38, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do? and Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' Repentance, that implies true and lively grief because of sin and misery, by which a man feeleth the wrath of God, grieveth because he hath offended God, acknowledgeth that he hath deserved condemnation, hungereth and thirsteth after Christ, and then waiteth till his heart be settled in the comfort of the gospel, and he possessed of the righteousness of Christ. Nay, repentance implies more; you must lay down the weapons of defiance, and study thankfulness to God, and walk in new obedience, and love God, and love your neighbour, and bear the cross quietly, waiting for eternal life. This is the counsel of God to you if you would be saved. And then he saith, 'Be baptized,' by which Peter understands a religious use of the seals, and all the means of salvation in which God is wont to meet us, and give us the supplies of his grace by his Spirit.

[3.] There are excellent enforcements to encourage us to embrace this salvation. God is very impatient of being denied, now he speaks in the gospel, and useth all kinds of methods. As a man who cannot undo a door, and having a bunch of keys in his hand, tries one after another, till the lock doth fly open, so the Lord tries all kind of methods, beseecheth, threateneth, promiseth, that the heart of the sinner might fly open. He beseecheth; God falls a-begging to his own creature, and deals with us as importunately as if the benefit were his own; thus doth he pray us to be reconciled. And then God threatens eternal death, to stir us up to take hold of eternal life; he tells us of a pit without a bottom, and a worm that never dies. Sometimes he seeketh to work upon our hope, and sometimes upon our fear. He not only tells us of the loss of happiness, which is very grievous to an ingenuous spirit: Heb. xii. 14, 'Follow holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord;' but he tells us of those eternal torments that are without end and ease, of a worm that never dies, and of a fire that shall never be quenched. Oh! whose heart doth not tremble at the mention of these things? Then, on the other side, we have promises as great as heart can wish for, and more: 2 Peter i. 4, 'Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises.' It hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive of these things. Who ever hired a man to be happy, or a thirsty man to drink, or a hungry man to eat? Salvation is so acceptable, and the heavenly and blessed hope so glorious, that we should purchase it at any rate; but God taketh all methods to awaken man. Thus the gospel may well be said to be a powerful instrument of our salvation, because it hath a powerful tendency that way.

2. Because it hath the promise of the Spirit's assistance. Rom. i. 16, the gospel is said to be 'the power of God unto salvation,' not only because it is a powerful instrument which God hath appropriated to this work, but this is the honour God puts upon the gospel, that he will join and associate the operation of his Spirit with no other doctrine but this. And therefore the apostle saith, Gal. iii. 2, 'Received you

the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?' How come you to receive the Spirit? Either by endeavouring to get acceptance with God according to the terms of the law, or by the doctrine of the gospel. The assistance of the Spirit is joined with no other doctrine. This is the authentic proof of the excellency of that doctrine, that God hath reserved the power of his grace to go along with it; he will not associate and join his Spirit with any other doctrine. The law, as it is contradistinguished from the gospel, it is called 'the ministration of condemnation,' 2 Cor. iii. 9, and 'the ministration of death' to fallen man, ver. 7. It is the office of the law to condemn a man, not to save him. Not as if preaching of the law did make us guilty, but shows us to be guilty. To him that is guilty of death, it puts the guilt before his eyes, that knowing it, and feeling it, he may be terrified, and despair in himself, and beg for deliverance. To this end the apostle gives us an account of his own experience: Rom. vii. 9, 'I was alive without the law once;' that is, I thought I was alive, and did not know myself, or feel myself guilty of death; I thought myself to be in as good a condition towards God as any man; 'but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died;' then I counted myself to be lost and utterly undone. A sinner, before the law comes, is like a beggar, that dreams he is a king, and that he wallows in ease and plenty; but when he awakes, his soul is empty, and he feeleth his poverty and his hungry belly, and his rags confute all his dreams and false surmises. So we thought ourselves to be alive, in a good condition towards God; but when the law comes, then we see ourselves to be dead and lost. Therefore the law, as it is opposed to the gospel, is not the means of salvation, so it is only the law of sin and death: Rom. viii. 2, 'For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.'

*Object.* You will say, These seem to be hard expressions, to call it the law of sin and death; but you must understand it aright. To man fallen the law only convinceth of sin, and bindeth over to death; it is nothing but a killing letter; but the gospel, accompanied by the power of the Spirit, bringeth life. Again, Ps. xix. 7, it is said there, 'The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul;' therefore it seems the law may also be a word of salvation to the creature. I answer—By the law there is not meant only that part of the word which we call the covenant of works, but there it is put for the whole word, for the whole doctrine of the covenant of life and salvation; as Ps. i. 2, 'His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night.' And if you take it in that stricter sense, then it converteth the soul but by accident, as it is joined with the gospel, which is the ministry of life and righteousness, but in itself it is the law of sin and death. Look, as a thing taken simply would be poison and deadly in itself, yet mixed with other wholesome medicines it is of great use, is an excellent physical ingredient; so the law is of great use, as joined with the gospel, to awaken and startle the sinner, to show him his duty, to convince him of sin and judgment; but it is the gospel properly that pulls in the heart.

*Use.* To press you to regard the gospel more, as you would salvation itself, for it bringeth salvation. By way of motive and encouragement—

1. Consider the greatness of the salvation: Heb. ii. 3, 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?' It is not a slight matter. In the gospel God doth not treat with you about trifles; your eternal life lies upon it; we preach to you a doctrine that tends to salvation. That so the argument may be more operative, consider what is salvation. Salvation implieth a deliverance from danger and distress, and a preservation in a condition of safety. Sometimes he is called a saviour, *qui quod semel factum est conservat, ne pereat*, that keepeth a thing in a condition of safety, though it were never lost. In this sense God is said to save man and beast: Ps. xxxvi. 6, 'O Lord, thou preservest man and beast;' as he doth preserve them from decay and ruin; so he is 'the saviour of all men,' 1 Tim. iv. 10. There is not a creature but may call God saviour. But this salvation I speak of is a salvation proper but to a few creatures, not a general preservation or act of providence. Here is not only safety, but glory; it is a translation to a place of happiness. Again, he is said to save that delivers out of danger and destruction, as the shepherd that snatcheth the lamb out of the teeth of the lion saveth him; and in common speech we call him a saviour that delivers from evil. But mark, this salvation is not only privative, but positive. Christ doth not only deliver us from evil, from sin, from the wrath of God, the accusations of the law, and eternal death, but positively he gives us grace, and righteousness, and everlasting life; he is not only a saviour to defend us, but a saviour to bless us, 'a sun and shield,' Ps. lxxxiv. 11; not only a shield to keep from danger, but a sun who is the fountain and cause of vegetation and life; it is not preservation merely, but preferment. If Christ had only delivered us from wrath to come, and been a saviour privatively, it had been more than we could expect; or if he had procured some place where we might have been unacquainted with pain or trouble, yet then he had been a saviour; but here is not only a ransom and deliverance, but an inheritance, an exaltation; heaven and everlasting glory are included in this salvation. Instead of horror and howlings, here are everlasting joys, and we shall ever be with God, praising his grace in the midst of all his saints. The blessing is so excellent, that we cannot neglect it without great danger: Heb. ii. 3, 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?' For what can we expect but that God's mercy and patience abused should be turned into wrath and fury? And we cannot despise it without a great deal of sin and profaneness: Heb. xii. 16, 'Lest there be any profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.' The birthright was a pledge of the blessing, and a right of priesthood and ministration before the Lord depended upon it. This was Esau's by birth; and he is called *βέβηλος*, 'a profane man,' for parting with it at so low a rate, and thinking so meanly of spiritual privileges. Oh! but what profaneness is this, to despise the great salvation that will cause us ever to be before the Lord, and minister in his presence! We count him a profane man that is guilty of murder, theft, adultery, perjury, because those sins bring public shame and contempt, and because these sins are most destructive to human society; but he is a profane man indeed that despiseth the gospel, because it offereth such an excellent salvation; that is profaneness, to slight God's best provision, to scorn his

bowels, and, when the Lord hath made the bait an allurement so strong to gain man's heart, yet to turn his back upon it.

2. Consider the completeness of the Saviour. Jesus Christ is so by merit, and by efficacy and power, and so every way fitted to do us good. He doth something for us, and something in us. Look, as in the gospel there is the history of salvation, and there Christ doth all, he is a saviour by merit; and there is the counsel of salvation, and there he is a saviour by power, he helps us to do the duty on our part. We have the merit of his humiliation and the power of his exaltation; for us he prevails by the merit of his death, and in us by the efficacy of his Spirit. When Christ was to save us, there were several hindrances—one on God's part, and another on ours; there was hindrance put in by God's justice, and a hindrance by our unbelief. Justice requires merit, and unbelief power; Christ was a saviour both ways. Again, there are different enemies to our salvation, which were of several qualities—God and the law, and sin and death, and Satan and the world. Now God and the law are to be considered in a distinct rank from sin and death, from Satan and the world. God was an enemy that could not be overcome, therefore must be reconciled. The law was an enemy that was not to be disannulled and destroyed, but to be satisfied; the precepts of it were not to be relaxed or repealed, but fulfilled; the curses of it were not to fall to the ground; some must be made a curse, that the authority of it might be kept up. Now Jesus Christ he is made a curse for us, and by his merit he satisfies the law and the justice of God. Then, among the other enemies, look to Satan; he is not only a tempter, but an accuser. As he is a tempter, so Christ is to overcome him by his power; as he is an accuser, so Christ is to overcome him by his merit. Certainly so far as Satan is an enemy, so far must Christ be a saviour, that the plaster may be as broad as the sore; and therefore against the accusations of Satan he interposeth as our advocate, by representing his merit, and by bringing his blood unto the mercy-seat. Once again, consider, that our comfort may be full, Christ saves us by merit and by power. By his obedience and merit he gives us *jus ad rem*, a right and title to salvation; but by his efficacy and power he gives us possession, *jus in re*. He was first to buy our peace, our comfort, our grace, our glory of God, and then to see that we be possessed of it; and therefore we are said to be reconciled by his death, and saved by his life. He died that we might rely on his merit, and ransom, and blood, which was a price to reconcile us to God; and he lives that we might wait for his power, and so be saved by his life.

3. Consider, as the greatness of the salvation, and the completeness of the Saviour, so the excellency of the gospel; how it manifests and sets out this saviour, not in shadows and types, but with clear and express explication. God bestowed many benefits upon the old church, which were great enforcements to godliness, but not so powerful and effectual, because they were but shadows of salvation. Things that grow in the shade come not to such perfection as things that grow in the sun. In the Old Testament they had many blessings, but they were typical ones, and lasted but for a while; they had many saviours, that delivered them from the house of bondage, led them through the Red Sea, and through the desert into Canaan; delivered them from their enemies,

destroyed the nations round about them ; but now these were shadows of good things to come. The New Testament shows what is the meaning of all these ; that we are delivered from the devil, and led into heaven, and brought to the possession of eternal life by Jesus Christ. The Old Testament speaketh of calling Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees, and separating his seed as a people to God. We can speak of election, that we may obtain the adoption of sons. The Old Testament speaks of multiplying the seed of the Jews as the sand of the sea ; the New Testament speaks of the multitude of converts, a great number which none can number. The Old Testament speaks of the bringing out of Egypt ; the New, of bringing sinners out of the power of darkness. The Old Testament mentions the Red Sea ; the New, the grace of baptism, or Red Sea of Christ's blood. The Old Testament speaks of God's providence in the wilderness, how the people of Israel were led up and down for forty years, and fed, and clothed, and delivered ; the New Testament speaks of God's providence over his church during the whole state of the present world ; how he guides us by his counsel, till he brings us to his glory : Ps. lxxiii. 14, 'Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory.' They were led into the land of Canaan by Jordan, and we have entrance into heaven by death ; they could speak of judges and kings that were glorious, and did worthily in their generations, but the New Testament shows all that have an interest in Christ shall judge the world together with Christ at the last day : 2 Cor. vi. 2, 'Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world ?' and as kings shall reign with Christ for evermore, and be far more glorious than Solomon in all his glory. Their piety was like a plant that grows in the shade ; now the sun is risen, which scattereth his light, heat, and influences.

4. Consider what should be God's aim in the designation of his providence, that he hath brought it and laid it before you : Acts xiii. 26, 'To you is the word of this salvation sent.' The apostle doth not say, We have brought it to you, but, God sent it. God hath a special hand in bringing the gospel. If you accept it, it will be God's token sent to you in love ; for the present it is God's message, sent for your trial. There is a mighty providence that accompanieth the preaching of the gospel. You will find the journeys of the apostles were ordered by the Spirit, as well as their doctrine ; as Acts viii. 26, 'The angel of the Lord said to Philip, Arise, go towards the south, unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.' If they went north or south, it was not by their own good affection, or by the inclination and judgment of their own reason, but by the direction of the Spirit. So Acts xvi. 7, 'They assayed to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them not.' They were not left to their own guidance and direction, but still they were carried up and down by the Spirit : 'As prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,' 2 Peter i. 21. So also the delivery of it, to what people it should be disclosed, was not by the direction of men, but by the Holy Ghost. The apostles had not only their commission what they should do, but where they should preach it. If God send a minister to you to preach this grace that bringeth salvation, do not look upon it as a thing of chance. The



gospel doth not run by chance, and merely according to the intention and designment of men, nor in an orderly stated course as the sun, but by the special direction of God. You would stand admiring, and think it a special benefit in a time of drought if the rain should fall on your garden and upon none else, as it did upon Gideon's fleece; or if the sun should be shut up to others and shine in your horizon, as it did in Goshen. Such a distinction hath God made in sending of the gospel; it is darkness to others, but a sun to you. God hath a special hand in the progress of the gospel; certainly the preaching of it in power, there is much of God in it. The word goes from place to place; if you accept it not, God will go to another. When the Jews refused the salvation of God, it is sent to the gentiles: Acts xxviii. 28, 'The salvation of God is sent unto the gentiles, and they will hear it.' It is not tendered unto you out of necessity, but by way of trial, out of God's choice. God cannot want clients; when you yourselves are thrust out, others may get in. You may want salvation, but God cannot want guests at the feast he hath prepared.

5. Consider of the great judgment that will light upon them that despise an offer of salvation. That which by its natural tendency is a grace bringing salvation, by your neglect may bring certain condemnation and ruin. Observe, God did never utterly cast off the people of the Jews for contempt of the law, but when once they came to despise the gospel, God would have no more to do with them. Indeed for the contempt of the law the Jews were punished; they went into captivity, but still a stock did remain, and it budded again. But when those glorious appearances of grace were discovered to them, and they despised them, then the wrath of God came unto them, *εἰς τὸ τέλος*, 'to the uttermost,' 1 Thes. ii. 16. When salvation itself cannot save them, condemnation must needs take place; and so persons perish upon a double ground—as guilty sinners, and as despisers of the remedy; as a man that is deadly sick, and will not take physic, perisheth both as he is sick and as he will not take physic; or as a man condemned by the law, and being reprieved for a short time, yet neglects to sue out his pardon.

But you will say, Who are those contemners of this salvation offered in the gospel? The gospel is the remedy, and contemning the gospel may be explained by refusing the counsels of physicians. You know some are utter enemies to physic, and cannot endure anything that is bitter and tart: and so carnal men, given up to pleasure, cannot endure the severities of the gospel, which are God's counsels and receipts for sick souls. If a few good hopes and wishes will carry them to heaven, that is all they mind. Some see that the endeavours of physicians do not always succeed, and that there is great uncertainty in that art, therefore slight all. Thus do men slight the gospel out of pure unbelief. Every one that hears the word is not saved; there are but few to whom it is manifested in power; and so they contemn it, having no such high thoughts of the word of God. Some, out of pride, refuse physic; they know as much as the physician; and so they throw away themselves by depending upon their own counsel. So some, out of mere pride and conceit, slight the gospel; they know as much as can be taught them; they think themselves alive, and need nothing, when they

are stark dead. Others, out of negligence, they are sick, but are not at leisure to take physic, do not mind the condition of their body till it proves deadly. Thus it is in the sickness of the soul; some are slightsers: Mat. xxii. 5, 'They made light of it,' ἀμελήσαντες; others distrust, others cannot endure God's terms, others are self-conceited; but all neglect this great salvation, and contemn the greatest gift God ever offered to men; therefore they shall meet with the greatest judgment.

6. Besides the wrong done to God and yourselves, consider the wrong you do to God's messengers. This is the spiritual honour God hath put upon them, that they are instrumental saviours: 1 Tim. iv. 16, 'In doing this, thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee.' We are employed in a subserviency to his grace, that so we might be saviours unto you. Oh! do not rob us of the honour God hath put upon us, let not our employment be in vain. The apostle urgeth this argument, Phil. ii. 16, 'Holding forth the word of life, that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.' Discover that it is a word of salvation in your lives. This would be the minister's crown and rejoicing, to see the fruits of the word of life, now in your conversation, and hereafter in your glorification, when a minister shall present himself and all his converts to God, 'Behold, I and the children which thou hast given me,' Heb. ii. 13. Therefore do not rob us of the honour God hath put upon us to be instrumental saviours.

What shall we do? Take these directions—

1. Get a sense of your dead and lost condition by nature. The killing letter makes way for the word of life; the law shows us that we are dead, and then we inquire after the way of life and salvation: 'The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost,' Luke xix. 10. We must be lost in our own sense and feeling before we can be saved. It is very notable that only those that were pricked in heart said, 'What shall we do to be saved?' Acts ii. 37, 'Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?' So Paul: Acts ix. 6, 'And he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' So the jailer: Acts xvi. 29, 'He came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' Till we are pinched in conscience we trouble ourselves with other questions: as the disciples had many superfluous questions: John ix. 2, 'Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' and nice disputes: Acts i. 6, 'Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?' they were taken up with terrene expectations. Such a question Peter propounded to Christ: John xxi. 21, 'Lord, and what shall this man do?' But when we are soundly humbled, we say, Lord, what must I do to be saved? I see I am a lost creature; an hunger-bitten beggar will seek relief. Such questions are rare now, because the law has not a kindly work. Men think the gate of heaven wide, and the way easy to find; they never came to see how far off they were. But those that know themselves to be lost are inquisitive after a remedy, and more pliable to God's counsel. Oh! where is the word of salvation? what shall we do? They are ready to submit to any terms God shall prescribe.

Others make dry confessions of sin, and give in a narrative, but are not so solicitous about the remedies and redresses ; but poor wounded spirits, that are sensible of their misery by nature, say, Good sir, show us the way ; let God write down what articles he pleaseth, we would be glad to subscribe to them. Bonds of iniquity are much more sore than bonds of duty.

2. Let us attend more conscionably both upon the reading and hearing the word of the gospel, for both are instituted. Upon the reading of it ; we should often consult with it ; it is the counsel of God to poor lost souls, and the charter of our salvation. Do not think reading will be altogether unprofitable. The eunuch was reading, and wanted an interpreter, then God sent Philip, Acts viii. 33. He that sent Philip to the eunuch will send the Spirit to thee. Then attend more upon the hearing of the word of this salvation. Hearing is necessary. He that refuseth God's ordinance refuseth life and salvation. When men think they can get as much good by reading at home as by hearing sermons, they set up their foolish judgment against God's wisdom, as if they could tell a better means of salvation than God himself. God's word read is an ordinance, and God's word taught is an ordinance. Are we so wise as to be above the help of church gifts? yet we are not above God's ordinance. When God hath instituted two things, we should observe both. He hath instituted baptism and the Lord's supper. We must not, because we have been baptized, neglect the supper ; so we must not neglect hearing because we have reading. As God hath instituted prophets and apostles to write scripture, so likewise pastors and teachers to open, explain, and apply scripture ; and therefore the ministry must not be contemned.

*Object.* But you will say, God's blessing goeth with the gospel ; and when we read the scriptures at home, we are sure of pure gospel ; but we cannot say so of the sermons of men, who are liable to miscarriage and error.

*Ans.* The scripture is pure gospel of itself and by itself, and the sermons of men for the scripture's sake, for they are but comparing one scripture with another ; they differ but as the cloth and garment ; scripture is the cloth, and sermons make it up into a garment for use ; or as corn and bread, the same substance remaineth in both. An apothecary, when he tempers several ingredients to make a medicine, he doth not destroy the nature of the simples, but compounds them, to make the medicine more effectual ; so by gifts in the church, the gospel is not destroyed, but ordered and compounded, that it may be more useful. Indeed you must look to it that there be no sophistication in the composition ; a spiritual man hath a distinguishing appetite ; therefore be much in reading, much in hearing. When the wind is laid, the mill stirs not, and a ship under sail goes the swifter for oars, so the hearing of the word moves the affections ; but when we cannot come to hear it, our affections are laid and stir not.

3. In reading and hearing the word, receive all the parts of it : Acts xx. 27, 'I have not shunned to declare to you all the counsel of God. The receipts of a physician must not be altered, neither by the apothecary nor patient ; so we must not alter God's receipts, nor you neither ; we must not shun to declare, nor you to receive, the whole counsel of God. For instance, there is the history of salva-

tion; the doctrinal and historical part must be kept pure, that is the foundation. You read, in Gen. xxvi. 20, there was a great strife between Isaac's herdsmen and the herdsmen of Gerar about wells. Oh! certainly we should earnestly 'contend for the faith that was once delivered to the saints,' Jude 3; these are wells of salvation. Take away one of the natures of Christ, or destroy one of his offices, and you lose a fountain of comfort; there is a well of salvation dammed and stopped up. So the promissory and hortatory part is necessary to quicken us, that we may not look for more than God hath promised, an earthly kingdom without the cross, or imperfect justification that needs our merit, or perfect sanctification without the relics of the flesh. But especially let us have regard to the mandatory part of the gospel; there we are apt to flinch and start aside; but we must hearken not only to what God hath done for us, but what he requires of us, that we may obey the counsels as well as believe the history of the gospel. The covenant is mutual; there is an obligation upon God, and an obligation upon us; therefore we read, Exod. xxiv. 7-9, that half of the blood was sprinkled upon the altar, to note God took upon him his part of the obligation, and half upon the people, to note they must take upon them their part of the obligation. It is true that God in the covenant of grace gives the condition as well as the blessing promised, but our obligation is to be acknowledged; though it be wrought of God, yet it is to be done by us. And there must be a restipulation, 'the answer of a good conscience towards God,' 1 Peter iii. 21. What answer do you make to God's proposals and articles? It is an allusion to the manner of admitting persons to baptism in those days; they were to answer to questions. *Credis?* dost thou believe? The person to be baptized was to answer, *Credo*, I do believe. *Abrenuncias?* dost thou renounce the world? he answered, *Abrenuncio*, I do renounce. *Spondes?* dost thou undertake to obey God? *Spondeo*, I undertake, I promise so to do. We must not only regard what God and Christ have done, but there must be something in us before we can make use of what God and Christ have done for us. There is a mutual consent of both sides; the gospel is as it were an indenture drawn between God and us; therefore, as we look to God for eternal life and salvation, which is made over to us in the promises of the covenant, so God looks for obedience and faithfulness from us, which is required of us in the precepts of the covenant.

*To all men.*—That is, to all sorts of men, bond or free, to servants as well as others; for in the context he doth discourse of servants. I shall only in brief observe this note—

*Doct. 4.* That this salvation which the grace of God bringeth is free for all that will accept of it.

God excludes none but those that exclude themselves. It is said to appear to all men—

1. Because it is published to all sorts of men; they all have a like favour in the general offer: John vi. 37, 'All that the Father giveth me, shall come unto me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.' There are two things in that description—there is the doctrine of election, and the offer of grace. It is certain the elect shall come; but then, in the offer or tender of grace, they have all alike

favour. Therefore be not discouraged, for whoever comes shall be sure of welcome; by this means the reprobate are left without excuse. The gospel is wisely contrived; it gives no ground of despair to any; one hath as fair ground to believe as the other; there is no monopoly in the offer. God doth not say, Come you, and not others, and I will not cast you out; but, Whosoever comes. The wicked have as fair a ground to believe as others; in the general offer God speaks promiscuously.

2. All that accept have a like privilege; therefore this grace is said to appear to all men. There is no difference of nations, nor of conditions of life, nor of lesser opinions in religion, nor of degrees of grace. See all summed up by the apostle: Col. iii. 11, 'There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all.' We are taken with the admiration of outward privileges, and are altogether for empaling and enclosing 'the common salvation,' as it is called, Jude 3. The Lord accepts of all, be they Jew or Greek, &c. To go over these distinctions: The several conditions of life make no difference, bond or free, rich or poor. Servants or bondmen in those times were in a miserable case; they were but *animata instrumenta*, used as living instruments; every master had *potestatem vitæ et necis*, power over the life and death of his servants, as over his cattle. But now free grace doth overlook this distinction; bond or free are all one in Christ. In the account of God there is none poor but he that wants the righteousness of Christ. Then, for other differences in moral excellences, some nations are more civil than others; but, saith he, 'neither Scythian nor barbarian;' that doth not vary the case. He doth not mention only the barbarian, but the Scythian, which were of all people most rude and savage, the very dross and dregs of barbarism itself; they had little knowledge in the arts, letters, and civilities of other nations, yet all these are one in Christ. Then there is no difference of nation, Greek or Jew; some may live in a colder, some in a warmer climate, as they are nearer or further off from the sun; but all are alike near to the Sun of righteousness. God hath broken down the partition wall, and enlarged the pale of the church. Indeed, Rome would fain rear up a new partition wall, and confine God to their own precincts, as if out of their church there was no salvation. Envious nature cannot endure to hear that all nations should stand upon the same level. So again for some lesser differences in religion, that do not destroy the foundation; circumcision and uncircumcision, all is one in Christ, provided they submit to the main duties of christianity. They were the two known parties and factions in those times, but yet such as did not exclude from the benefit of the common salvation. When there was a schism at Corinth, 1 Cor. iii. 4, 'One saith, I am of Paul, another, I am of Apollos;' Christ is only ours, and not yours; Paul writeth to them, 1 Cor. i. 2, 'To all that call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.' We anathematise one another, and impropriate Christ by sacrilegious censures. It is very natural to us to confine grace within the circuit of our own opinions; and the worst sort of christians for the most part do so, as if none should go to heaven but those of their party. Tertullian, speaking of the times in which he lived, It is holiness enough

with some, saith he, to be of such a party, as if none could be saved but men of their own persuasion. Now, saith the apostle, 'neither circumcision nor uncircumcision;' all have the same common privilege. Once more, though there be a difference in the degrees of grace, yet all have an interest in the common privileges of christians. Some have a stronger, some a weaker faith; but saith the apostle, Rom. iii. 22, 'The righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, is unto all and upon all that believe; for there is no difference;' they all take hold of the same righteousness. Look, as a jewel held by a man and by a child, though the man holds it more strongly than the child, yet it is the same jewel, and of the same worth and value; so the righteousness of Christ is of the same worth before God; the stronger believer holds it faster than the weaker believer; but though he cannot be so high in faith as Abraham, and as other worthies of God, yet he hath his holdfast upon God. Differences of nations and outward condition do neither help nor hinder salvation, and different degrees of grace, though they occasion some accidental difference in the spiritual life, as some have more comfort than others, yet as to the main, all that accept have a like privilege. The reasons of it are partly because the same grace is the cause of all. Free grace acts for the good of all upon the same terms: Isa. xliii. 25, 'I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my own sake, and will not remember thy sins.' God doth not take notice of differences in them whom he forgives. God may pardon the sin of Andrew and Thomas, as well as of Abraham and Paul; grace's motives lie within itself. And partly, because they have the same Redeemer, Jesus Christ, theirs and ours. Under the law you shall find the rich and poor were to give the same ransom: 'The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel,' Exod. xxx. 15, to signify the price of Christ's blood for all souls is equal; they have not a nobler Redeemer, nor a more worthy Christ than thou hast. And partly because your faith is as acceptable to God as theirs: 2 Peter i. 1, 'To them who have obtained like precious faith with us;' that is, for kind, though not for degree. It is of the same nature, worth, and property with the faith of the apostles, though every one cannot believe as strongly as Peter, nor come up to his height.

*Use 1.* If the grace of God hath appeared to all men, then let us put in for a share. Why should we stand out? Are we excepted and left out of the proclamation of pardon and free grace? If persons be excepted by name when a pardon is offered to rebels, they stand off, and will not come within the verge of such power; but if it be offered to all, why should we stand out? We must not add nor detract. If God hath said, Christ died for sinners, believe him upon his word, and say, I am chief; do not say, I am a reprobate; God hath no favour for me. Will you leave that word and hazard your salvation for a groundless jealousy and scruple? Therefore confute your fears, and put all out of question by a thorough believing.

*Use 2.* For comfort to weak believers. Though your faith cannot keep time and pace with Abraham's, nor your obedience with the worthies of God, yet you are 'followers of them who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises,' Heb. vi. 12. A little faith is faith,

as a drop is water, and a spark is fire; it is free to all that have or will accept. Say, then, as he, Mark ix. 24, 'Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.' The least drachm of gospel faith gives a title and interest. Indeed, you must strive to make it more evident; you cannot have comfort till then, and consider, endeavours of growth do better than idle complaints, therefore follow on still with hope.

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### SERMON III.

*Teaching us that, denying ungodliness, &c.—TITUS ii. 12.*

THE next thing to be considered is the lesson that grace teacheth us, 'Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.'

But before I enter upon the discussion of the particular branches, I shall observe some things in the general.

*Obs. 1.* Grace teacheth us holiness. It teacheth by way of direction, by way of argument, and by way of encouragement.

1. It teacheth by way of direction what duties we ought to perform, and so it maketh use of the moral law as a rule of life. The law is still our direction, otherwise what we do cannot be an act of obedience. Certainly the direction of the law is still in force; for where there is no law there is no transgression, and duty without a rule is but will-worship. If the law were blotted out, the image of God would be blotted out; for the external law is nothing but the copy of God's image, that holiness and righteousness which is impressed on the heart. Now grace doth not blot out the image of God, but perfects it. In the new covenant God promiseth to make the law more legible: Heb. viii. 10, 'This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts.' Well, then, we are not freed from the authority and directive power of the law. Grace adopts, it doth not abolish, the law. The commands of the law sway the conscience, and love inclineth the heart, and so it becometh an act of pure obedience. Obedience respects the command, as love doth the kindness and merit of the lawgiver.

2. It teacheth by way of argument; it argueth and reasoneth from the love of God: Gal. ii. 20, 'The life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.' There is grace's argument; Christ loved me. We should not, then, be so unkind as to deny God his honour or worship, or cherish his enemies: 2 Cor. v. 14, 'For the love of Christ constraineth us.' What will you do for God, that loved you in Christ? The gospel contains melting commands and commanding entreaties. The law and the prophets do not beseech, but only command and threaten; but the grace of God useth a different method in the new testament.

3. It teacheth by way of encouragement, as manifesting both help