

SALVATION OF THE LORD

"Salvation is of the Lord."

Jonah 2:9

JONAH learned this sentence of good theology in a strange college. He learned it in the whale's belly, at the bottom of the mountains, with the weeds wrapped about his head, when he supposed that the earth with her bars was about him forever. Most of the grand truths of God have to be learned by trouble. They must be burned into us with the hot iron of affliction, otherwise we shall not truly receive them. No man is competent to judge in matters of the kingdom, until first he has been tried—since there are many things to be learned in the depths which we can never know in the heights. We discover many secrets in the caverns of the ocean, which, though we had soared to Heaven we never could have known.

He shall best meet the wants of God's people as a preacher who has had those wants himself. He shall best comfort God's Israel who has needed comfort. And he shall best preach salvation who has felt his own need of it. Jonah, when he was delivered from his great danger—by the command of God the fish had obediently left its great deeps and delivered its cargo upon dry land—was then capable of judging. And this was the result of his experience under his trouble—"Salvation is of the Lord."

By salvation here we do not merely understand the special salvation which Jonah received from death. For according to Dr. Gill, there is something so special in the original, in the word "salvation" having one more letter than it usually has, when it only refers to some temporary deliverance, that we can only understand it here as relating to the great work of the salvation of the soul which endures forever. That "Salvation is of the Lord," I shall this morning try to show as best I can.

First, I shall endeavor to explain the doctrine. Then I shall try to show you how God has guarded us from making any mistakes and has hedged us up to make us believe the Gospel. Then I shall dwell upon the influence of this Truth upon men. And I shall close up by showing you the counterpart of the doctrine. Seeing every Truth has its obverse, so has this.

1. First, then, to begin by explanation, let us EXPOUND THIS DOCTRINE—the doctrine that salvation is of the Lord, or of Jehovah. We are to understand by this that the whole of the work whereby men are saved from their natural estate of sin and ruin and are translated into the kingdom of God and made heirs of eternal happiness is of God and of Him only. "Salvation is of the Lord."

To begin, then, at the beginning, the plan of salvation is entirely of God. No human intellect and no created intelligence assisted God in the planning of salvation. He contrived the way, even as He Himself carried it out. The plan of salvation was devised before the existence of angels. Before the daystar flung its rays across the darkness, when as yet the unnavigated ether had not been fanned by the wing of seraph and when the solemnity of silence had never been disturbed by the song of angel. God had devised a way whereby He might save man, whom in His sovereignty, He ordained would Fall.

He did not create angels to consult with them. No, of Himself He did it. We might truly ask the question, "With whom took He counsel? Who instructed Him when He planned the great architecture of the temple of mercy? With whom took He counsel, when he dug the deeps of love, that out of them there might well up springs of salvation? Who aided Him?" No one. He Himself alone did it. In fact, if angels had then been in existence, they could not have assisted God. I can well suppose that if a solemn conclave of those spirits had been held, if God had told them, "Men

will rebel. I declare I will punish them. My justice, inflexible and severe, demands that I should do so. But yet I intend to have mercy.”

If he had put the question to the celestial squadrons of mighty ones, “How can these things be? How can Justice have its demands fulfilled and how can Mercy reign?” the angels would have sat in silence until now—they could not have dictated a plan. It would have surpassed angelic intellect to have conceived the way whereby righteousness and peace should meet together and judgment and mercy should kiss each other. God devised it because without God it could not have been devised. It is a plan too splendid to have been the product of any mind except of that mind which afterwards carried it out. “Salvation” is older than creation. It is “of the Lord.”

And as it was of the Lord in planning, so it was of the Lord in execution. No one has helped to provide salvation. God has done it all Himself. The banquet of mercy is served up by one host—that host is He to whom the cattle on a thousand hills belong. But none have contributed any dainties to that royal banquet. He has done it all Himself. The royal bath of mercy, wherein black souls are washed was filled from the veins of Jesus—not a drop was contributed by any other being. He died upon the Cross and as an expiator He died alone.

No blood of martyrs mingles with that stream. No blood of noble confessors and of heroes of the Cross entered into the river of atonement. That is filled from the veins of Christ and from nowhere else. He has done it wholly. Atonement is the unaided work of Jesus. On yonder Cross I see the Man who “trod the winepress alone.” In yonder garden I see the solitary Conqueror who came to the fight single-handed, whose own arm brought salvation and whose omnipotence sustained Him. “Salvation is of the Lord.” As to its provisions—Jehovah—Father, Son and Spirit—have provided everything.

So far we are all agreed but now we shall have to separate a bit. “Salvation is of the Lord,” in the application of it. “No,” says the Arminian, “it is not. Salvation is of the Lord, inasmuch as He does all for man that He can do. But there is something that man must do, which if he does not do, he must perish.” That is the Arminian way of salvation. Now last week I thought of this very theory of salvation when I stood by the side of that window of Carisbrooke Castle out of which King Charles, of unhappy and unrighteous memory, attempted to escape. I read in the guide book that everything was provided for his escape.

His followers had means at the bottom of the wall to enable him to fly across the country and on the coast they had their boats lying ready to take him to another land. In fact, everything was ready for his escape. But here was the important circumstance—his friends had done all they could. He was to do the rest. But that doing the rest was just the point and brunt of the battle. It was to get out of the window, out of which he was not able to escape by any means, so that all his friends did for him went for nothing, so far as he was concerned.

So with the sinner. If God had provided every means of escape and only required him to get out of his dungeon, he would have remained there to all eternity. Why, is not the sinner by nature dead in sin? And if God requires him to make himself alive and then afterwards He will do the rest for him, then verily, my Friends, we are not so much obliged to God as we had thought. For if He require so much as that of us and we can do it, we can do the rest without His assistance. The Romanists have an extraordinary miracle of their own about St. Dennis, of whom they tell the lying legend that after his head was off he took it up in his hands and walked with it two thousand miles.

Whereupon said a wit, “So far as the two thousand miles go, it is nothing at all. It is only the first step in which there is any difficulty.” So I believe, if that is taken, all the rest can be easily accomplished. And if God does require of the sinner—dead in sin—that he should take the first step, then He requires just that which renders salvation as impossible under the Gospel as ever it was under the Law. Because man is as unable to believe as he is to obey and is just as much without power to come to Christ as he is without power to go to Heaven without Christ.

The power must be given to him of the Spirit. He lies dead in sin. The Spirit must quicken him. He is bound hand and foot and fettered by transgression. The Spirit must cut his bonds and then he will leap to liberty. God must come and dash the iron bars out of their sockets and then he can escape from the window and make good his escape afterwards. But unless the first thing is done for him, he must perish as surely under the Gospel as he would have done under the Law. I would cease to preach if I believed that God, in the matter of salvation, required anything whatever of man which He Himself had not also engaged to furnish.

For how many have I frequently hanging upon my lips of the worst of characters—men whose lives have become so horribly bad that the lips of morality would refuse to give a description of their character? When I enter my pulpit am I to believe that these men are to do something before God's Spirit will operate upon them? If so, I should go there with a faint heart, feeling that I never could induce them to do the first part. But now I come to my pulpit with a sure confidence—God the Holy Spirit will meet with these men this morning!

They are as bad as they can be. He will put a new thought into their hearts. He will give them new wishes, He will give them new wills and those who hated Christ will desire to love Him. Those who once loved sin will, by God's Divine Spirit, be made to hate it and here is my confidence—that what they cannot do, in that they are weak through the flesh—God sending His Spirit into their hearts will do for them, and in them and so they shall be saved.

“Well, then,” says one, “that will make people sit still and fold their arms.” Sir, it will not. But if men did so I could not help it—my business—as I have often said in this place before, is not to prove to you the reasonableness of any Truth, nor to defend any Truth from its consequences. All I do here—and I mean to keep to it—is just to assert the Truth, because it is in the Bible. Then, if you do not like it, you must settle the quarrel with my Master and if you think it unreasonable you must quarrel with the Bible. Let others defend Scripture and prove it to be true. They can do their work better than I could—mine is just the mere work of proclaiming.

I am the messenger. I tell the Master's message. If you do not like the message quarrel with the Bible, not with me. So long as I have Scripture on my side I will dare and defy you to do anything against me. “Salvation is of the Lord.” The Lord has to apply it, to make the unwilling willing, to make the ungodly godly and bring the vile rebel to the feet of Jesus or else salvation will never be accomplished. Leave that one thing undone and you have broken the link of the chain, the very link which was just necessary to its integrity. Take away the fact that God begins the good work and that He sends us what the old divines call preventing grace—take that away and you have spoilt the whole of salvation. You have just taken the keystone out of the arch and down it tumbles. There is nothing left then.

And now on the next point we shall a little disagree again. “Salvation is of the Lord,” as to the sustaining of the work in any man's heart. When a man is made a child of God he does not have a stock of grace given to him with which to go on forever. But he has grace for that day. And he must have grace for the next day and grace for the next and grace for the next, until days shall end, or else the beginning shall be of no avail. As a man does not make himself spiritually alive, so neither can he keep himself so. He can feed on spiritual food and so preserve his spiritual strength. He can walk in the Commandments of the Lord and so enjoy rest and peace but still the inner life is dependent upon the Spirit as much for its after existence as for its first begetting.

I do verily believe that if it should ever be my lot to put my foot upon the golden threshold of Paradise and put this thumb upon the pearly latch, I should never cross the threshold unless I had grace given me to take that last step whereby I might enter Heaven. No man of himself, even when converted has any power except as that power is daily, constantly and perpetually infused into him by the Spirit. But Christians often set up for independent gentlemen. They get a little stock of grace in hand and they say, “My mountain stands firm, I shall never be moved.”

But ah, it is not long before the manna begins to be putrid. It was only meant to be the manna for the day and we have kept it for the morrow and therefore it fails us. We must have fresh grace—

*"For day by day the manna fell,
Oh to learn that lesson well."*

So look day by day for fresh grace. Frequently, too, the Christian wants to have grace enough for a month vouchsafed to him in one moment. "Oh," he says, "what a host of troubles I have coming—how shall I meet them all? Oh, that I had grace enough to bear me through them all!" My dear Friends, you will have grace enough for your troubles, as they come one by one. "As your days, so shall your strength be."

But your strength shall never be as your months, or as your weeks. You shall have your strength as you have your bread. "Give us this day our daily bread." Give us this day our daily grace. But why is it you will get to troubling yourself about the things of tomorrow? The common people say, "Cross a bridge when you come to it." That is good advice. Do the same. When a trouble comes, attack it and down with it and master it. But do not begin now to forestall your woes. "Ah, but I have so many" says one. Therefore I say do not look further before you than your needs. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

Do as the brave Grecian did, who, when he defended his country from Persia did not go into the plains to fight but stood in the narrow pass of Thermopylae. There, when the myriads came to him, they had to come one by one and he felled them to the earth. Had he ventured into the plain he would have been soon devoured and his handful would have been melted like a drop of dew in the sea. Stand in the narrow pass of today and fight your troubles one by one. Do not rush into the plains of tomorrow for there you will be routed and killed. As the evil is sufficient so will the grace be. "Salvation is of the Lord."

But lastly, upon this point. The ultimate perfection of salvation is of the Lord. Soon, soon, the saints of earth shall be saints in light. Their hairs of snowy age shall be crowned with perpetual joy and everlasting youth. Their eyes, suffused with tears, shall be made bright as stars, never to be clouded again by sorrow. Their hearts that tremble now are to be made joyous and fast and set forever like pillars in the temple of God. Their follies, their burdens, their griefs, their woes, are soon to be over.

Sin is to be slain, corruption is to be removed and a Heaven of spotless purity and of unmingled peace is to be theirs forever. But it must still be by grace. As was the foundation such must the top stone be. That which laid on earth the first beginning must lay in Heaven the topmost stone. As they were redeemed from their filthy conversation by grace, so they must be redeemed from death and the grave by grace, too, and they must enter Heaven singing—

*"Salvation of the Lord alone,
Grace is a shoreless sea."*

There may be Arminians here but they will not be Arminians there. They may here say, "It is of the will of the flesh," but in Heaven they shall not think so. Here they may ascribe some little to the creature. But there they shall cast their crowns at the Redeemer's feet and acknowledge that He did it all. Here they may sometimes look a little at themselves and boast somewhat of their own strength. But there, "Not unto us, not unto us," shall be sung with deeper sincerity and with more profound emphasis than they have ever sung it here below. In Heaven, when grace shall have done its work, this Truth shall stand out in blazing letters of gold, "Salvation is of the Lord."

II. Thus I have tried to expound the Gospel. Now shall I show you HOW GOD HAS HEDGED THIS DOCTRINE ABOUT?

Some have said salvation in some cases is the result of natural temperament. Well, Sir, well, God has effectually answered your argument. You say that some people are saved because they are naturally religious and inclined to be good? Unfortunately I have never met with any of that class of persons yet. But I will suppose for a moment that there are such people. God has unanswerably

met your objection, for, strange to say, the great number of those who are saved are just the most unlikely people in the world to have been saved while a great number of those who perish were once just the very people whom, if natural disposition had anything to do with it, we should have expected to see in Heaven.

Why, there is one here who in his youth was a child of many follies. Often did his mother weep over him and cry and groan over her son's wanderings. For what with a fierce high spirit that could brook neither bit nor bridle, what with perpetual rebellions and ebullitions of hot anger, she said, "My son my son, what will you be in your riper years? Surely you will dash in pieces Law and order and be a disgrace to your father's name."

He grew up. In youth he was wild and wanton but, wonder of wonders, on a sudden he became a new man, changed, altogether changed, no more like what he was before than angels are like lost spirits. He sat at her feet, he cheered her heart and the lost, fiery one became gentle, mild, humble as a little child and obedient to God's Commandments. You say, wonder of wonders! But there is another here. He was a fair youth—when but a child he talked of Jesus. Often when his mother had him on her knee he asked her questions about Heaven. He was a prodigy, a wonder of piety in his youth.

As he grew up, the tear rolled down his cheek under any sermon, he could scarcely bear to hear of death without a sigh. Sometimes his mother caught him, as she thought, in prayer alone. And what is he now? He has just this very morning come from sin. He has become the debauched, desperate villain. He has gone far into all manner of wickedness and lust and sin and has become more damnably corrupt than other men could have made him. His evil spirit, once confined, has now developed itself—he has learned to play the lion in his manhood, as once he played the fox in his youth.

I do not know whether you have ever met with such a case. But it very frequently is so. I know I can say that in my congregation some abandoned, wicked fellows have had their hearts broken and been led to weep and have cried to God for mercy. By His grace they have renounced their vile sins, while some fair maiden has heard the same sermon and if there was a tear she brushed it away. She still continues just what she was, "without God and without hope in the world." God has taken the base things of the world and has picked His people out of the very roughest of men in order that He may prove that it is not natural disposition but that "Salvation is of the Lord" alone.

"Well," but some say, "it is the minister they hear who converts men." Ah, that is a grand idea, full sure! No man but a fool would entertain it. I met with a man sometime ago who assured me that he knew a minister who had a very large amount of converting power in him. Speaking of a great Evangelist in America, he said, "That man, Sir, has got the greatest quantity of converting power I ever knew a man to have. And Mr. So-and-So in a neighboring town I think is second to him."

At that time this converting power was being exhibited, two hundred persons were converted by the converting power of this second best and joined to the Church in a few months. I went to the place some time afterwards—it was in England—and I said, "How do your converts get on?" "Well," said he, "I cannot say much about them." "How many out of those two hundred whom you received in a year ago stand fast?" "Well," he said, "I am afraid not many of them. We have turned seventy of them out for drunkenness already." "Yes," I said, "I thought so—that is the end of the grand experiment of converting power." If I could convert you all, anyone else might unconvert you. What any man can do another man can undo. It is only what God does that is abiding.

No, my Brethren—God has taken good care it shall never be said conversion is of man—for usually He blesses those who seem to be the most unlikely to be useful. I do not expect to see so many conversions in this place as I had a year ago when I had far fewer hearers. Do you ask why? Why, a year ago I was abused by everybody. To mention my name was to mention the name of the most abominable buffoon that lived. The mere utterance of it brought forth oaths and cursing. With many men it was a name of contempt, kicked about the street as a football.

But then God gave me souls by hundreds who were added to my Church and in one year it was my happiness to see not less than a thousand personally who had then been converted. I do not expect that now. My name is somewhat esteemed now and the great ones of the earth think it no dishonor to sit at my feet. But this makes me fear lest my God should forsake me now that the world esteems me. I would rather be despised and slandered than anything else. The assembly that you think so grand and fine, I would readily part with, if by such a loss I could gain a greater blessing. "God has chosen the base things of the world."

And therefore I reckon that the more esteemed I may be the worse is my position—so much the less expectation shall I have that God will bless me. He has put His "treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of man." A poor minister began to preach once and all the world spoke ill of him but God blessed him. By-and-by they turned round and petted him. He was the man—a wonder! God left him! It has often been the same. It is for us to recollect, in all times of popularity, that "Crucify Him, crucify Him" follows fast upon the heels of "Hosanna."

The crowd today, if dealt faithfully with, may turn into the handful of tomorrow. For men love not plain speaking. We should learn to be despised, learn to be contemned, learn to be slandered and then we shall learn to be made useful by God. Down on my knees have I often fallen, with the hot sweat rising from my brow, under some fresh slander poured upon me. In an agony of grief my heart has been well-near broken till at last I learned the art of bearing all and caring for none. And now my grief runs in another line. It is just the opposite. I fear lest God should forsake me, to prove that He is the Author of salvation—that it is not in the preacher, that it is not in the crowd, that it is not in the attention I can attract but in God and in God alone.

And this thing I hope I can say from my heart—if to be made as the mire of the streets again, if to be the laughing stock of fools and the song of the drunkard once more will make me more serviceable to my Master and more useful to His cause—I will prefer it to all this multitude, or to all the applause that man could give. Pray for me, dear Friends, pray for me, that God would still make me the means of the salvation of souls. For I fear He may say, "I will not help that man, lest the world should say he has done it," for "salvation is of the Lord," and so it must be, even to the world's end.

III. And now WHAT IS, WHAT SHOULD BE, THE INFLUENCE OF THIS DOCTRINE UPON MEN?

Why, first, with sinners, this doctrine is a great battering-ram against their pride. I will give you a figure. The sinner in his natural estate reminds me of a man who has a strong and well-near impenetrable castle into which he has fled. There is the outer moat. There is a second moat. There are the high walls and then afterwards there is the dungeon, into which the sinner will retire. Now, the first moat that goes round the sinner's trusting place is his good works. "Ah," he says, "I am as good as my neighbor. Twenty shillings in the pound down, ready money, I have always paid. I am no sinner. I tithe mint and cumin. A good respectable gentlemen I am, indeed."

Well, when God comes to work with him, to save him, He sends His army across the first moat. And as they go through it, they cry, "Salvation is of the Lord." And the moat is dried up, for if it is of the Lord how can it be of good works? But when that is done, he has a second entrenchment—ceremonies. "Well," he says, "I will not trust in my good works but I have been baptized, I have been confirmed, do not I take the sacrament? That shall be my trust,"

"Over the moat! Over the moat!" And the soldiers go over again, shouting, "Salvation is of the Lord." The second moat is dried up, it is all over with that. Now they come to the first strong wall. The sinner, looking over it, says, "I can repent, I can believe whenever I like. I will save myself by repenting and believing." Up come the soldiers of God, His great army of conviction and they batter this wall to the ground, crying, 'Salvation is of the Lord.' Your faith and your repentance must all be given up, or else you will neither believe nor repent of sin."

And now the castle is taken. The man's hopes are all cut off. He feels that it is not of self. The castle of self is overcome and the great banner upon which is written, "Salvation is of the Lord," is displayed upon the battlements. But is the battle over? Oh no, the sinner has retired to the dungeon, in the center of the castle. And now he changes his tactics. "I cannot save myself," says he, "therefore I will despair. There is no salvation for me." Now this second castle is as hard to take as the first, for the sinner sits down and says, "I can't be saved, I must perish."

But God commands the soldiers to take this castle, too, shouting, "Salvation is of the Lord." Though it is not of man, it is of God. "He is able to save, even to the uttermost," though you cannot save yourself. This sword, you see, cuts two ways. It cuts pride down and then it cleaves the skull of despair. If any man says he can save himself, it halves his pride at once and if another man says he cannot be saved, it dashes his despair to the earth. For it affirms that he can be saved, seeing, "Salvation is of the Lord."

That is the effect this doctrine has upon the sinner—may it have that effect on you! But what influence has it upon the saint? Why, it is the keystone of all dignity. I will defy you to be heterodox if you believe this Truth. You must be round in the faith if you have learned to spell this sentence—"Salvation is of the Lord." And if you feel it in your soul you will not be proud. You cannot be. You will cast everything at His feet, confessing that you have done nothing save what He has helped you to do and therefore the glory must be where the salvation is.

If you believe this you will not be distrustful. You will say, "My salvation does not depend on my faith but on the Lord. My keeping does not depend on myself but on God who keeps me. My being brought to Heaven rests not now in my own hands but in the hands of God. You will, when doubts and fears prevail, fold your arms, look upwards and say—

*"And now my eye of faith is dim,
I trust in Jesus, sink or swim."*

If you can keep this in your mind you may always be joyful. He can have no cause for trouble who knows and feels that his salvation is of God.

Come on, legions of Hell. Come on, demons of the pit!—

*"He that has helped me bears me through,
And makes me more than conqueror, too."*

Salvation rests not on this poor arm, else should I despair but on the arm of yonder Omnipotent—that arm on which the pillars of the Heavens do lean. "Whom should I fear? The Lord is my strength and my life—of whom shall I be afraid?"

And this may by grace, nerve you to work for God. If you had to save your neighbors you might sit down and do nothing. But since "Salvation is of the Lord," go on and prosper. Go and preach the Gospel. Go and tell the Gospel everywhere. Tell it in your house, tell it in the street, tell it in every land and every nation—for it is not of yourself—it is "of the Lord." Why do not our friends go to Ireland to preach the Gospel? Ireland is a disgrace to the Protestant Church. Why do not they go and preach there? A year or so ago a number of our brave ministers went over there to preach. They did right bravely.

They went there and they came back again and that is about the sum total of the glorious expedition against Popery. But why come back again? Because they were stoned! Good easy men! Do they not think that the Gospel ever will spread without a few stones? But they would have been killed! Brave martyrs they! Let them be enrolled in the red chronicle. Did the martyrs of old, did the Apostles shrink from going to any country because they would have been killed? No, they were ready to die and if half a dozen ministers had been killed in Ireland, it would have been the finest thing in the world

The strong arm of the Law would have put them down. We might have gone through every village of Ireland afterwards and been at peace. The constabulary would soon have put an end to such infamous murder. It would have awakened the Protestantism of England to claim the liberty which is our right there as we give it elsewhere. We shall never see any great change till we have some men in our ranks who are willing to be martyrs. That deep ditch can never be crossed till the bodies of a few of us shall fill it up. And after that it will be easy work to preach the Gospel there.

Our Brethren should go there once more. They can leave their white cravats at home and the white feather, too and go forth with a brave heart and a bold spirit. And if the people mock and scoff, let them mock and scoff on. George Whitfield said, when he preached on Kennington Common, where they threw dead cats and rotten eggs at him, "This is only the manure of Methodism, the best thing in the world to make it grow. Throw away as fast as you please." And when a stone cut him on the forehead, he seemed to preach the better for a little blood-letting. Oh for such a man to dare the mob and then the mob would not need to be dared. Let us go there, recollecting that "Salvation is of the Lord," and let us in every place and at every time preach God's Word, believing that God's Word is more than a match for man's sin and God will yet be Master over all the earth.

My voice fails me again and my thoughts, too. I was weary this morning when I came into this pulpit and I am weary now. Sometimes I am joyous and glad and feel in the pulpit as if I could preach forever. At other times I feel glad to close. But yet with such a text I would that I could have finished up with all the might that mortal lip could summon. Oh, to let men know this, that their salvation is of God! Swearer, swear not against Him in whose hand your breath is! Despiser, despise not Him who can save you or destroy you. And you hypocrite, seek not to deceive Him from whom salvation comes and who therefore knows right well whether your salvation has come from Him.

IV. And now in concluding let me just tell you WHAT IS THE OBVERSE OF THIS TRUTH. Salvation is of God—then damnation is of man. If any of you are damned, you will have no one to blame but yourselves. If any of you perish, the blame will not lie at God's door. If you are lost and cast away you will have to bear all the blame and all the tortures of conscience yourself—you will lie forever in perdition and reflect, "I have destroyed myself. I have made a suicide of my soul. I have been my own destroyer. I can lay no blame to God."

Remember, if saved, you must be saved by God alone, though if lost you have lost yourselves. "Turn you, turn you, why will you die O house of Israel?" With my last faltering sentence I bid you stop and think. Ah, my Hearers! My Hearers! It is an awful thing to preach to such a mass as this. But the other Sunday, as I came down the stairs, I was struck with a memorable sentence, uttered by one who stood there. He said, "There are 8,000 people this morning without excuse in the day of judgment."

I should like to preach so that this always might be said. And if I cannot, O may God have mercy on me, for His name's sake! But now remember! You have souls. Those souls will be damned, or saved. Which will it be? Damned they must be forever unless God shall save you. Unless Christ shall have mercy upon you, there is no hope for you. Down on your knees! Cry to God for mercy. Now lift up your heart in prayer to God. May now be the very time when you shall be saved. Or ever the next drop of blood shall run through your veins, may you find peace!

Remember, that peace is to be had NOW. If you feel now your need of it, it is to be had now. And how? For the mere asking for it. "Ask and it shall be given you; seek and you shall find."—

*"But if your ears refuse
The language of His grace,
Your hearts grow hard, like stubborn Jews,
That unbelieving race,*

*The Lord with vengeance drest,
Shall lift His hand and swear,
You that despise My promised rest
Shall have no portion there."*

Oh that you may not be despisers, lest you "wonder and perish!" May you now fly to Christ and be accepted in the Beloved. It is my last best prayer. May the Lord hear it! Amen.