
WORD OF
SALVATION
SENT TO
SINNERS

Ralph Erskine
(1686-1752)

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“...To you is the word of this salvation sent.”—Acts 13:26

PAUL is here preaching Christ Jesus in this chapter: and in this verse he makes application of his sermon to his hearers, and that very close. More particularly in the words you may observe,

1. The nature of the gospel described, it is “the word of salvation.”

2. The endorsement or direction, showing to whom it is directed or sent, “To you”; you men and brethren, you Jews or Gentiles, to whom it is preached.

The doctrinal proposition, natively arising from these words, is the following.

OBSERVATION. “That the gospel, as a word of salvation, is sent to every sinner that hears it.”

Before I proceed to speak of this doctrine, I would obviate an objection that may be made against it.

OBJECTION. Is not the gospel-call here limited to them that fear God in the text?

ANSWER. If by these that fear God is to be understood religious people, into whose hearts God hath put his fear; these are the persons that will most of all welcome the word of salvation; because they see most of their need of it: but the gospel-message is not here limited to them, and others excluded; no: the apostle here speaks to all

his auditory, both gracious and graceless, as appears not only in this text, "Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, to you is the word of this salvation," but also in the application of his sermon to the graceless as well as to the gracious, verse 40,41, compared with the two preceding verses.

3. There is a fear of God that is the fruit of conviction, and a fear of God that is the fruit of conversion; the former is by the law, the latter is by the gospel: it is like that the former is especially intended here: for at this time the word was with power; it struck an awe and dread upon the apostle's auditory. And though no sinner, no, not the most stupid that hears the gospel, is excluded from the call thereof, so as it can be said, the word of salvation is not sent to him; no, no; it is sent to every one; yet none but such as fear God, so far as to be filled with an awe and dread of God speaking to them in the word, and with a conviction of sin, and of their need of this salvation; none but such will receive and welcome the word of this salvation: for, if they have no fear of God, and of his wrath, no sense of sin, and of their deserving damnation, they will not value, but slight and despise the word of salvation. This text, therefore, doth not limit the word of salvation, as sent only to them who fear God, but only points out the manner and method wherein this word of salvation comes to be received and entertained, and how it will not be received by these who have nothing of the fear and dread of God upon them.

4. These who are awakened to any sense of sin, and fear and dread of God, are the persons that are most ready themselves, as if the word of salvation were not sent to them; therefore, these, in a particular manner, are mentioned and encour-

aged to take it to themselves, because they are afraid to apply the word. Others that are called will not come. And they that have this fear upon them have a will, but want courage; and therefore the Lord says to them, as it were, Fear not to come, for, "To you is the word of this salvation sent."

5. That the word of salvation is sent to all, even to them who, through the want of the fear of God, reject it, is plain both from this text and context, compared with other Scriptures. See the commission, Mark 16:15. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. Isaiah 46:12. Hearken to me, ye stout-hearted, that are far from righteousness. Revelation 3:20. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me." Any man, be what he will. In short, the word of salvation, importing all salvation necessary, looks to all sinners that need this salvation. The gospel would not be glad news to all people, if any sinner were excluded. Hence the call is to all the ends of the earth, "Look unto me, and be saved, all ye ends of the earth": hence the call also is, "Whosoever will, let him come, and take of the water of life freely." And again, "To you, O men, do I call; and my voice is to the sons of men. Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters," &c.

The method we would observe, for the farther illustration of this subject, as the Lord shall be pleased to grant assistance, shall be the following:

- I. We shall speak a little of this salvation.
- II. Of the word of salvation.
- III. Of the sending of this word.
- IV. Make application of the whole.

I. This Salvation

We shall speak a little of this salvation, and consider what it supposes, and what it implies.

1. What this salvation supposes, namely, misery. Our miserable state by nature is a state of alienation and estrangement from God. We are without God, and are alienated from the life of God; aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. It is a state of enmity; for, "The carnal mind is at enmity against God"; we are in actual rebellion against him. It is a state of darkness and ignorance; we are destroyed for lack of knowledge. A state of bondage to sin, Satan, and the world, and divers lusts; we are fettered and imprisoned, led captive. It is a state of impotence: we are, by nature, without strength; we cannot so much as ask deliverance: "We are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves." It is a destitute state, a pit wherein there is no water; a comfortless state, a bewildered state, a cursed and condemned state; for "He that believeth not, is condemned already": he that believeth not the gospel, is condemned already by the law, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." It is a state of death: spiritual death, and legal death.

2. What doth salvation imply? It implies the whole redemption purchased by Christ, and the whole of the application of it by the Spirit. It is salvation from a state of estrangement, to a state of acquaintance with God; from enmity, to peace and reconciliation; from darkness to light; from bondage to liberty. It includes pardon and justification, adoption and filiation, sanctification of nature, heart, and way, communion with God; afterward a glorious resurrection of the body, and eternal life and glory, in being for ever with the Lord.

II. The Word of Salvation

The second head proposed was: To speak of the word of salvation, which I may do by answering these four questions.

QUESTION 1. What is the word of salvation?

ANSWER. Not the law, but the gospel; this is that which is the power of God to salvation, Romans 1:16. Whatever discovers Christ, and salvation through him, is the gospel.

QUESTION 2. Why is it called the word of salvation?

ANSWER. Because it discovers salvation; it describes salvation; it conveys salvation, as a charter does an estate, or as a testament does a legacy; it offers salvation; it establishes a connection betwixt faith and salvation to all sinners of mankind, for, "He that believeth shall be saved"; and because it is the organ or instrument by which the Spirit applies salvation.

QUESTION 3. How does the word operate in the hand of the Spirit, when believed unto salvation?

ANSWER. It operates as seed cast into the ground: it operates as rain and dew; "My doctrine shall drop as the dew, and distil as the rain": as light, "They that sat in darkness saw a great light"; it is light shining in a dark place. As fire; "Is not my word like a fire?" As water, as wind, as a seal imprinting the divine nature: as a glass, through which we see God's glory: as balm for healing, "He sent his word, and healed them."

QUESTION 4. What are the qualities of this word of salvation?

ANSWER 1. It is a divine word; the word of God. God: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is the Author of it. Hence the gospel is called, "The gospel of God," Romans 1:1; 15:16.

2. It is a word of God in Christ, Hebrews 1:1,2; 2:3. It is secured in the hands of a Mediator; Yea, and Amen in him. It is given to us by Christ, and sealed in his blood; "This is the New Testament in my blood."

3. It is a gracious word of God in Christ: it is free; it does not move upon our goodness or badness; our goodness does not further, nor our badness hinder it. It is a word that comes from pure grace, and springs from his free mercy, who is the God of all grace. It is such a gracious word, that it contains all grace. Hence,

4. It is a complete word, containing all our salvation; for it contains God in it, Christ in it, the Spirit in it. It contains a righteousness in it, founding a legal title to life eternal, vis., the obedience of Christ; and a legal security from eternal death, vis., the satisfaction and death of the Surety. It contains all the parts of life, and may well be called the word of life: life in the beginning of it, in regeneration, "Of his own will begat he us, by the word of truth." The life of justification: we are justified in believing and receiving of Christ, our righteousness, as offered in the word. The life of sanctification, the life of consolation, and the life of glory hereafter.

5. It is a sure word: "The sure mercies of David": Sure, and more sure than a voice from heaven, such as even that which the disciples heard on the mount, "We have a more sure word of prophecy, unto which we do well to take heed," II Peter 1:19.

6. It is a gracious, complete, sure word of God in Christ to sinners, as well as saints: it is to sinners of Adam's family; for it presents a remedy for their malady. This leads,

III. The Sending of This Word

To the third general head proposed, viz., To speak of the sending of this word. Here it may be enquired, from whom, by whom, to whom it is sent; and for what purpose?

1. From whom is it sent? Why, it is a word of salvation sent from the God of salvation, to whom belong the issues from death; and it carries the impress of himself upon it. As the word is God's word, so it is of God's sending, "He sent his word and healed them," Psalm 107:20.

2. By whom is it sent? It is not sent by angels, but by men; "We are ambassadors for Christ," II Corinthians 5:20. It is true, God sent his word first by Christ, "He so loved the world, that he sent his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, might not perish, but have everlasting life," John 3:16. Then Christ sends it by men, that we may not be afraid at his appearance, as Israel were of old; "We have this treasure in earthen vessels," II Corinthians 4:7. 3. To whom is it that he sent the word of salvation? He sent it to all sinners that hear it. Whosoever will look to the word of salvation, will find it looking to them. What was the gospel preached to Abraham? "In thee, or in thy seed, shall all the families of the earth be blessed," Genesis 12:3. Is not this a word of salvation to us also? It includes all; so as every sinner may take hold of it. See John 3:16; I Timothy 1:15. Christ came to call sinners to repentance. See Proverbs 1:20; Isaiah 46:12. It is a word that suits the case of sinners: and therefore, if it be enquired,

4. For what purpose is it sent to sinners? Why, for the very same purpose that a healing remedy is sent to a deadly malady; for Christ comes in the word, and is presented there for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption: see I

Corinthians 1:30; Revelation 3:17,18. More particularly, it is sent as a word of pardon to the condemned sinner; "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions, for my own name's sake." Hence may every condemned sinner take hold of it, saying, This word is sent to me. It is sent as a word of peace to the rebellious sinner, saying, Christ hath received gifts for men, even for the rebellious. Oh! I am a rebel, may the sinner say; yet here is a word for me. It is sent as a word of life to the dead; "The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." It is a word of liberty to the captives; "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he hath anointed me to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound," Isaiah 61:1. It is sent as a word of healing for the diseased; for the word says, "I am the Lord that healeth thee." It is a word of cleansing, or a cleansing word to the polluted; "I will sprinkle you with clean water; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you." It is sent as a word of direction to the bewildered; "I will lead the blind by a way they know not, and in paths which they have not trod." It is a refreshing word to the weary; "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, to speak a word in season to the weary." It is sent as a comforting word to the disconsolate; it brings the good news of the river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God; and of Christ, the consolation of Israel. It is sent as a drawing word, and a strengthening word to the soul destitute of strength, saying, "He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might, he increaseth strength. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power. When I am lifted up, I will draw all men after me." It is sent in short, as a word

of salvation, and all sort of salvation and redemption to the lost soul, saying, "Christ came to seek and save that which was lost"; and that we are not redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ.

IV. Application

The last general head proposed was: To make application of the subject. Is it so, that the gospel, as a word of salvation, is sent to every sinner that hears it? Then,

1. Hence see the kindness of God in Christ to sinners of mankind. Why hath he made such a difference between sinning men and sinning angels? There was never a word of salvation sent to angels that sinned; no not one word; "They are reserved in chains, to the judgment of the great day"; but it was sent unto mankind; "To you, O men, do I call; and my voice is to the sons of men"; "To you is the word of this salvation sent."

2. See what a valuable book the Bible is, which contains this word of salvation. O Sirs, how ought we to search the Scriptures: for, in them we think, and think aright when we do so, that we have eternal life and salvation conveyed to us? Why, they testify of Christ: and we ought especially to search out the words of eternal life; the words of salvation that lie there.

3. Hence see what a valuable blessing the gospel is, and the dispensation thereof; and how welcome a gospel-ministry should be unto us, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace!" Romans 10:15, that publish the word of salvation? How sad is it when gospel-ministers have not beautiful feet, when they defile their feet by stepping unto the puddle of defection and corruption, and so make

poor souls to nauseate the very gospel preached by them! And how dismal is it, when these who profess the gospel of peace, have their feet defiled with the puddle of error! How desirable is it, when they have both the gospel of peace in their mouth, and beautiful shoes upon their feet, and are shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, and with a gospel conversation, declining to walk with others in a course of defection?

4. Hence see the inexcusableness of unbelief, in rejecting the gospel, since it is sent to every one that hears it. Men have no cloak for their unbelief; no ground to say, This word of salvation is not sent to me: yea, it is sent to thee, whosoever thou art: it is a rope cast down for thy drowning soul to lay hold upon.

5. Hence see how culpable they are who straiten the door, and hamper the call of the gospel, saying, in effect, If you have not such and such qualifications, this word of salvation is not to you: if you have not such and such marks and evidences, it is not to you: it is only upon such and such terms that it is to you: this is to make the gospel no gospel. It is as if Christ came to save saints, but not to save sinners. They contradict the very design of the gospel, which is a word of salvation to sinners of all sorts and sizes. "To you is the word of salvation sent": to you, O sinner, is the door of salvation opened. Whatever straitens this door; whatever doctrines you hear, that hamper or limit the gospel-offer, and tend to make you suppose, that there is no room for you, no access for you, you may suspect that to be either no gospel-doctrine, or that has such a legal mixture accompanying it, as you ought to shun like the devil; because it would keep you at a distance from Christ and salvation.

6. Hence see the ground of God's controversy at this day, together with an antidote against the errors and evils of the day. The great ground of God's controversy, at this day, with the generality we live amongst, is, their rejecting the word of salvation. Wherefore is he now speaking in wrath and war,* but because we will not hearken to his speaking in mercy? Scotland hath been long deaf to the word of God, and to the warnings of God. Judicatories have been deaf to the word of God, to the word of salvation, calling them to reform and return to the Lord; deaf to any testimony lifted up for reformation. And the whole land hath been deaf to the voice of God in the gospel. And, what, if God now thunder and roar out of Zion, and say: You shall hear at the deafest side of the head? If you will not hear the voice of the word, you shall hear the voice of the sword. Oh! what is his quarrel? Why, God says, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye him": No; but we refuse to hear him. General Assemblies have refused to hear him; they gave ear to a patron, or a great man, and give more obedience to him than to the voice of Christ. He said, "Feed my sheep, feed my lambs": No say they; let them be devoured and torn to pieces with the wolves, rather than displease men of rank and power. How justly may God say to such, "Go to the gods whom ye have served," and see if they can deliver you in the day of death, or in the day of wrath?

See here also an antidote against many errors of the day. Here is an antidote against enthusiastic delusions, viz., If we take the word of God for the rule and the warrant of faith, and of every particular duty. Some will say, "We must wait for the Spirit being poured out; and till the Spirit come, there is no doing: therefore we may sit still and do nothing,

either in the matter of our salvation-work or generation-work; either in personal or public work." Why, here is a delusion, here is enthusiasm, to make the Spirit the rule of faith and duty, and not the word of God. When God spake to Moses at the Red Sea, saying, "Speak to the people, that they go forward." What! go forward, might unbelief say, into the sea, and be all drowned? Nay, stay till we see the water divided. No, says God, "Speak to the people that they go forward"; and in going forward at the word and call of God, making his call and word the rule of faith and duty, in this way they were to find the sea divided before them.

To wait upon God's working, either outwardly or inwardly, without answering the call of his word, and going forward in the way of duty is to wait without a warrant; it is a delusion, a tempting of God. You are to aim at believing the word of salvation sent to you. The people we call Quakers say, They ought not to pray till the Spirit move them: making the inward motions of the Spirit, and not the word of God the rule of duty. Thus it is no wonder that they be led by a delusive spirit; for the word of God is the word of the Spirit; and though we cannot fight without the Spirit, yet the Spirit will not fight for these, or with these that will not take his sword in their hand: though we can do nothing without the Spirit, yet the Spirit will do nothing without the word. But if once we take the sword of the Spirit in our hand; I mean, take the word for our rule, and essay duty, and the work of believing, which is the work of God, according to the direction of the word of God; then, and not till then, are you to expect God will work powerfully; for, out of his own road he will not, namely, if you turn away your ear from hearing his word; or, if he do, he will bring you to this road before he do any thing more.

Here also see an antidote against all, or most of all the errors of the age wherein we live. Here is an antidote against all practical error; against all profanity, looseness and luxury, whoredom and debauchery, that have been running down, like a mighty stream, through all ranks of persons, from the throne to the dunghill, in every corner of the land. What would remedy these evils? Even the receiving of this salvation that is sent in the gospel to us. Unbelief in rejecting this salvation, which is a salvation from all sin as well as misery; this unbelief in slighting the Saviour and salvation, is the root of all the looseness and profanity in the age. Men do not see this root that lies hid under ground. Here is an antidote against the Deism of the age. Why do men undervalue the scriptures, and deny the necessity of divine supernatural revelation? Even because they reject the word of salvation; they do not see that the gospel only is the word of salvation; and that there is no salvation but in the faith of it: but the faith of this word would cure the Deism of the age.

Here is an antidote against Arminianism; for salvation comes not of the free-will of man, but of the free grace of God in a word of salvation sent to us. Here is an antidote against Arianism. Would any soul deny the supreme Deity of Christ, and his proper Divinity, if they believed that with him are the words of eternal life; and that a word from his mouth is a word of salvation? "Look to me and be saved, all ye ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else," Isaiah 45:22. Here is an antidote against Antinomianism; for, by this salvation we are not saved to sin, and to work wickedness, and break the law of God, but saved from sin and wickedness. The gospel being a word of complete salvation, the grace of God therein appears to all

men, teaching effectively what the law does perceptively, namely, "To deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil world."

Here is an antidote against Legalism, or Neonomianism, as some call it, which turns the gospel to a new law, and the covenant of grace, as it were, to a covenant of works. This text and doctrine shews that we are not saved by a work, but by a word; not by any work of ours, but by a word sent from God to us, even a word of salvation: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us," Titus 3:5. See II Timothy 1:9.

Here also is an antidote against ignorant preachers of the gospel, that confound the marks of faith with the ground of faith, or the evidences of faith with the warrant of faith, or the condition of the covenant with the qualities of the covenanted, as if the gospel call were only to saints, or to sinners so and so qualified; and so leading men in to themselves for a ground of faith, instead of leading them out of themselves to Christ, exhibited to them in a word of salvation sent to them. The Gospel-method of salvation is the reverse of all the legal schemes in the world. The legal strain supposes some good quality about the sinner, before he be allowed to meddle with the word of salvation; and so shuts the door of the gospel, which it pretends to open. But the gospel-strain brings the word of salvation freely to every sinner's door, and supposes him to be destitute of all good qualities whatsoever, and leaves no room for any sinner to say, I am not allowed to come in.

7. Hence see how much it concerns all and everyone to try and examine what entertainment they have given the word of salvation that is sent

to them. Have you received it or not in a saving way?

(1.) Have you received it as the word of God? the word by way of eminency? the word of God in Christ? I Thessalonians 2:13, and received it not as the word of man, of this or that man, but, as it is in truth, the word of God?

(2.) Have you received it as a word of salvation, or as a faithful saying, worthy of all acceptation, both as a truth and as a good? This reception of it supposes a view you have of your being a lost sinner welcoming a Saviour.

(3.) Have you received it, as the word of this salvation, a present salvation, a particular salvation? This particular salvation from sin and wrath, that you need; this near salvation; "I bring near my righteousness to the stout-hearted and far from righteousness; my salvation shall not tarry," Isaiah 46:12,13; this great salvation, this purchased salvation, this promised salvation, this offered salvation, presently offered. Faith fixes upon something present. You need not say, Romans 10:6,7,8, "Who will ascend to heaven, to bring Christ down? or, descend into the deep, to bring Christ up? The word is nigh thee, even in thy heart, and in thy mouth." Again,

(4.) Have you received it as a sent salvation; as God's send, as God's gift, sent by the hand of Christ, sent by the hand of his ambassadors, sent freely and sovereignly, without your seeking after it, sent out of the store-house of divine grace?

(5.) Have you received it as sent to sinners, to sinners in general? For here is glad tidings of great joy to all people: "Upon this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined,"

Isaiah 25:6. (6.) Have you received it as sent unto you in particular? To you, sinners, says the general dispensation; to thee, sinner, in particular, says the particular offer: "Whosoever will, let him come." Hast thou then received it, as sent to thee, though a guilty sinner; to thee, though a vile sinner? Hast thou entertained it with a me, me, of particular application, saying, Here is an offer to me, a gift to me, a promise from heaven to me? Hast thou found thyself called by name, and said, I am warranted to take hold of Christ, and the salvation he brings with him, in this word of salvation, and even so I take him at his word; "Lord I believe, help thou mine unbelief"? Have you hereupon found the virtue of this word, as a word of salvation, saving you from your doubts and fears, saving you from your bonds and fetters, saving you from your helpless and hopeless condition, and making you to hope for complete salvation from sin and misery? Have you found salvation begun in the faith or the word of salvation, and been begotten to a lively hope thereby? And does this hope begin to purify your heart, and this faith begin to work by love to God and hatred of sin, and of yourself for sin? And is your continual recourse to this word of salvation, or to the promise of God in Christ, for all your salvation?

8. Hence see what matter of joy and praise believers have, who have been determined thus to entertain the word of salvation; for, when the word of salvation is received through grace, then the work of salvation is begun; and you need be in no uneasiness now, though you be called to work out the work of your salvation with fear and trembling; because it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do. "He that hath begun the good work in you, will perfect it unto the day of the Lord." The

word of salvation may be to thee, O believer, the word of consolation all the days of your life: for, it is a word of salvation, not only from the sinful state, and miserable state you were in, but is a word of salvation also, bringing the good news of salvation in every case; salvation from the devil, the world, and the flesh; salvation and deliverance from the hands of all your enemies; salvation from the sting of death; salvation from the terror of judgment; salvation from the curse of the law, and from the guilt of all your sins; salvation not only from all evil, but salvation to eternal life; for the word of salvation, which you have received and entertained through grace, contains all the words of eternal life.

The word of salvation is the word of life for you, when under deadness, and the word of liberty for you, when under bondage; a word of rest for you, when under weariness; a word of relief for you, when under distress of whatsoever sort. It is a word of salvation confirmed with the oath of God, "That by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, they might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them."

9. Hence see matter of terror to those who neglect this great salvation that is sent to them by this word: "How shall they escape who neglect so great salvation," and so near to them? O sinner, it is a salvation sent to your house, and will you reject it? A word of salvation sent to your soul; a word of salvation sent to your hand to receive it, and will you reject it? A word of salvation sent to your ear, saying, "But hear, and your soul shall live." A word of salvation sent to your heart, and by it God is knocking at the door of your heart. O Sirs, will you refuse him that speaketh from heaven? "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh; for if they escaped

not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven," Hebrews 12:25. If you will not hear God's word of grace in the gospel, saying, "To you is the word of this salvation sent," you must lay your account to hear his word of wrath in the law, saying, yea, swearing in his wrath, "That you shall not enter into his rest." If you have no fear of God, as it is in the verse where my text lies; if you shall never be persuaded to fear the Lord and his goodness, manifested in the word of salvation sent to you, you must lay your account to fear the Lord and his wrath, manifested in the word of condemnation, which the law pronounces against them who believe not the gospel: "He that believeth not, is condemned already," John 3:18. And there is no escaping this sentence of condemnation, but by receiving the word of salvation.

10. Hence see how much it is the interest of every one to receive, and entertain, and welcome this word of salvation. O Sirs, "Hear, that your souls may live." Hear the joyful sound of salvation, O lost, perishing sinner, before the door of mercy be shut, and the day of grace be over. To persuade you hereunto, we shall lay before you the four following considerations.

(1.) Consider what sort of a salvation is offered to you. It is a spiritual salvation; the salvation of the immortal soul: "What shall a man profit, though he gain the whole world, if he lose his own soul?" If you would not lose and ruin your souls, O receive the word of salvation. It is a costly salvation; it comes running in the channel of the blood of Christ. It is brought to your hand, and free to you, however dear bought by the Redeemer. You have nothing to pay for it; the price of it is paid already; the condition of it is fulfilled. It is a complete salva-

tion; salvation from every thing you need to be saved from: salvation from unbelief, enmity, atheism, heart-hardness, heart-deadness, and every thing that you make an objection against receiving of this salvation. You say you cannot believe, you cannot repent; but would you be saved from your unbelief and impenitence? This and all the other branches of salvation is sent to you, when the word of salvation is sent. Will you welcome a Saviour to save you from all, to be wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, and all to you? It is an everlasting salvation. Would you be happy after death, and have an eternity of happiness? "Life and immortality is brought to light by this word of salvation." O poor dying sinner, consider what an everlasting salvation this is.

(2.) Consider what need thou hast of this salvation. Thou hast a dark mind; and needest salvation from that darkness and ignorance. Thou hast a guilty conscience, and needest salvation from that guilt. Thou hast a hard heart; and needest salvation from that hardness. Thou hast powerful and strong corruption; and needest salvation from that. Thou hast a corrupt nature; and needest salvation from that. Thou hast many heart-plagues; and needest salvation from these plagues, and healing. Behold, all this salvation, and infinitely more, comes with the word of salvation; no salvation thou needest is excepted. Thy need is great, death is at hand, judgment at hand: "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." There will be no word in the day of judgment to sinners, but a word of condemnation: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels": but now, in the day of salvation, is sent to you this word of salvation; now, now is the day; and, perhaps, now or never.

(3.) Consider what a firm ground this word of salvation is for faith to build upon. It is the word of God; the God that cannot lie. It is ratified by the oath of God. It is a word confirmed by the blood of the Son of God. It is a word attested by the Three that bear record in heaven. It is a word spoken by the inspiration of the Spirit of God, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. The Spirit and the bride say, Come"; come and hear this word of salvation; come and believe; come and apply to thyself what is offered to thee.

(4.) Consider the good warrant you have to intermeddle with this word of salvation. It is sent to you on purpose that you may believe it with application to yourself; and that every one of you, thou man, thou woman, may take it home to thy own heart; for, "To thee is the word of salvation sent." To thee is this love-letter sent from heaven. Read the indorsement, and see if it be not to thee. It is to thee, O guilty sinner, saying, "Christ came to save sinners." It is to thee, O inhabitant of the earth, that art not yet in hell; "Look unto me and be saved, all the ends of the earth." It is to thee, O scorner, that hast hitherto been a mocker of God and godliness, "Wisdom crieth without, she uttereth her voice in the streets: How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof; behold I will pour out my Spirit unto you; I will make known my words unto you," Proverbs 1:20,22,23. It is to thee, O rebellious sinner. If thou wert excepted, all mankind would be so: behold, "Christ hath ascended up on high, led captivity captive, and received gifts for men, even for the rebellious, that God the Lord might dwell among them." It is for thee, O black and bloody sinner;

“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool,” Isaiah 1:18. It is to thee, O sinners that are thirsting after other things than Christ, Isaiah 55:1,2, “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come. Wherefore spend you your money for that which is not bread? &c. Wherefore do ye thirst and pant after other things that cannot give you satisfaction?” Yea, it is for thee, O unhumbled, unconvinced sinner. Say not that it cannot concern thee because thou art not convinced of thy sin: Oh! the word of salvation comes even to thee also, Revelation 3:18, “I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; eye-salve, that thou mayest see; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed.” Even to thee that, as in the preceding verse, art saying, that thou art rich and increased with goods, and standest in need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. Unconcerned sinner, to thee, even thee, is the word of this salvation sent. Is this love-letter for thee? O then know, that though you have no will, you have a warrant to receive it, and Christ in it. If you reject this word of salvation, it is either because you will not, or dare not, or cannot receive it.

If you say, you will not take it to you, then remember you are subscribing your own doom. And I take instruments against you, that you will not have salvation; you will not come to Christ that you may have life; you are preferring some base lust to the Lord of glory, and so preferring, of consequence, damnation to salvation, death to life.

If it be not a will of obstinacy, but of impotency, saying, Oh! if my will were subdued; behold, the word of salvation comes with salvation from that

plague of unwillingness, saying, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power": and, "To you is the word of this salvation sent," that you welcome it; and so far as you welcome it, so far are you willing.

If you say you dare not take the word to yourself, as the word of salvation to you: why dare you not do what God enjoins you? Why dare you not take what God offers you? How durst you sin against God, when he forbade you? And now you dare not take his word for your salvation, when he requires you! How durst you venture on his fury against his command? And now you dare not venture on his favour, through Christ, at his call and command? Was it not enough to offend his justice? And will you now venture to slight his mercy? This is worse than all your former sins, to refuse salvation that he freely offers from the guilt of all.

If you say you cannot, because of utter impotency, that shall be no stop. You cannot believe, you cannot come to Christ; but, as the word of salvation is sent to you, so salvation is come to you, because you cannot come to it. The Saviour is come to you, because you cannot come to him: are you for him? The word of salvation is a word of power, and drawing power is in it, to draw you that cannot come: "When I am lifted up I will draw all men after me." Are you willing to be drawn? Then the word of salvation hath so far taken effect upon you, as to remove your unwillingness and to make you willing. Look for another pull of omnipotence, for the word of salvation is a word of omnipotence. It is the almighty word of the almighty God. Saving power, drawing power is in it. Welcome it as such; and, in due time, you shall be able as well as willing. Your faith is not to be acted in the sense of self-ability and sufficiency, but in the sense of self-

inability and insufficiency. "Our sufficiency is of God"; salvation is of God; saving faith is of God; "All things are of God, who hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation," II Corinthians 5:18, and given to you this word of salvation: and it contains all your salvation. And if any part of it were left to you, it would not contain all your salvation. What you cannot do, this salvation can; therefore receive it, and bless God for it, that "To you is the word of this salvation sent."



