

The Way of Salvation

A Sermon

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“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”—[Acts 4:12](#).

IT IS A VERY HAPPY CIRCUMSTANCE when the servants of God are able to turn everything to account in their ministry. Now, the apostle Peter was summoned before the priests and Sadducees, the chief of his nation, to answer for having restored a man who was lame from his mother’s womb. Whilst accounting for this case of cure, or, if I may use the expression, for this case of temporal salvation, the apostle Peter had this thought suggested to him, “While I am accounting for the salvation of this man from lameness, I have now a fine opportunity of showing to these people, who otherwise will not listen to us, the way of the salvation of the soul.” So he proceeds from the less to the greater, from the healing of a man’s limb to the healing of a man’s spirit; and having informed them once that it was through the name of Jesus Christ that the impotent man had been made whole, he now announces that salvation,—the great salvation, must be wrought by the selfsame means; “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

What a great word that word “salvation” is! It includes the cleansing of our conscience from all past guilt, the delivery of our soul from all those propensities to evil which now so strongly predominate in us; it takes in, in fact, the undoing of all that Adam did. Salvation is the total restoration of man from his fallen estate; and yet it is something more than that, for God’s salvation fixes our standing more secure than it was before we fell. It finds us broken in pieces by the sin of our first parent, defiled, stained, accursed: it first heals our wounds, it removes our diseases, it takes away our curse, it puts our feet upon the rock Christ Jesus, and having thus done, at last it lifts our heads far above all principalities. and powers, to be crowned for ever with Jesus Christ, the King of heaven. Some people, when they use the word “salvation,” understand nothing more by it than deliverance from hell and admittance into heaven. Now, that is not salvation: those two things are the *effects* of salvation. We are redeemed from hell because we are saved, and we enter heaven because we have been saved beforehand. Our everlasting state is the effect of salvation in this life. Salvation, it is true, includes all that, because salvation is the mother of it, and carrieth it within its bowels; but still it were wrong for us to imagine that that is all the meaning of the word. Salvation begins with us as wandering sheep; it follows us through all our mazy

wanderings; it puts us on the shoulders of the shepherd; it carries us into the fold; it calls together the friends and the neighbors; it rejoices over us; it preserves us in that fold through life; and then at last it brings us to the green pastures of heaven, beside the still waters of bliss, where we lie down for ever, in the presence of the Chief Shepherd, never more to be disturbed.

Now our text tells us there is only one way of salvation. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." I shall take first of all *a negative truth taught* here, namely, that there is no salvation out of Christ; and then, secondly, *a positive truth inferred*, namely, that there is salvation in Jesus Christ whereby we must be saved.

I. First, then, A NEGATIVE FACT. "Neither is there salvation in any other." Did you ever notice the intolerance of God's religion? In olden times the heathen, who had different gods, all of them respected the gods of their neighbors. For instance, the king of Egypt would confess that the gods of Nineveh were true and real gods, and the prince of Babylon would acknowledge that the gods of the Philistines were true and real gods: but Jehovah, the God of Israel, put this as one of his first commandments, "Thou shalt have none other gods besides me;" and he would not allow them to pay the slightest possible respect to the gods of any other nation: "Thou shalt hew them in pieces, thou shalt break down their temples, and cut down their groves." All other nations were tolerant the one to the other, but the Jew could not be so. One part of his religion was, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one God;" and as the consequence of his belief that there was but one God, and that that one God was Jehovah, he felt it his bounden duty to call all pretended gods by nicknames, to spit upon them, to treat them with contumely and contempt. Now the Christian religion, you observe, is just as intolerant as this. If you apply to a Brahmin to know the way of salvation, he will very likely tell you at once, that all persons who follow out their sincere religious convictions will undoubtedly be saved. "There," says he, "are the Mohammedans; if they obey Mohammed, and sincerely believe what he has taught without doubt, Alla will glorify them at last." And the Brahmin turns round upon the Christian missionary, and says, "What is the use of your bringing your Christianity here to disturb us? I tell you our religion is quite capable of carrying us to heaven, if we are faithful to it." Now just hear the text: how intolerant is the Christian religion! "Neither is there salvation in any other." The Brahmin may admit, that there is salvation in fifty religions besides his own; but we admit no such thing. There is no true salvation out of Jesus Christ. The gods of the heathens may approach us with their mock charity, and tell us that every man may follow out his own conscientious conviction and be saved. We reply—No such thing; there is no salvation in any other; "for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved"

Now, what do you suppose is the reason of this intolerance—if I may use the word again? I believe it is just because there is the truth both with the Jew and with the Christian.

A thousand errors may live in peace with one another, but truth is the hammer that breaks them all in pieces. A hundred lying religions may sleep peaceably in one bed, but wherever the Christian religion goes as the truth, it is like a fire-brand, and it abideth nothing that is not more substantial than the wood, the hay, and the stubble of carnal error. All the gods of the heathen, and all other religions are born of hell, and therefore, being children of the same father, it would seem amiss that they should fall out, and chide, and fight; but the religion of Christ is a thing of God's—its pedigree is from on high, and, therefore, when once it is thrust into the midst of an ungodly and gainsaying generation, it hath neither peace, nor parley, nor treaty with them, for it is truth, and cannot afford to be yoked with error: it stands upon its own rights, and gives to error its due, declaring that it hath no salvation, but that in the truth, and in the truth alone, is salvation to be found.

Again, it is because we have here the sanction of God. It would be improper in any man who had invented a creed of his own, to state that all others must be damned who do not believe it; that would be an overweening censoriousness and bigotry, at which we might afford to smile; but since this religion of Christ is revealed from heaven itself, God, who is the author of all truth, hath a right to append to this truth the dreadful condition, that who so rejecteth it shall perish without mercy; and in proclaiming that, apart from Christ, no man can be saved. We are not really intolerant, for we are but echoing the words of him that speaketh from heaven, and who declares, that cursed is the man who rejects this religion of Christ, seeing that there is no salvation out of him. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Now I hear one or two persons saying, "Do you imagine then, sir, that none are saved apart from Christ?" I reply, I don't imagine it, but I have it here in my text plainly taught. "Well but," saith one, 'how is it concerning the death of infants? Do not infants die without actual sin? Are they saved? and if so, how?' I answer, saved they are beyond a doubt; all children dying in infancy are caught away to dwell in the third heaven of bliss for ever. But mark this—no infant was ever saved apart from the death of Christ. Christ Jesus hath with his blood bought all those who die in infancy; they are all regenerated, not in sprinkling, but probably in the instant of their death a marvellous change passes over them by the breathing of the Holy Spirit, the blood of Jesus is applied to them, and they are washed from all original corruption which they had inherited from their parents, and thus washed and cleansed they enter into the kingdom of heaven. Otherwise, beloved, infants would be unable to join in the everlasting song, "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his blood." If infants were not washed in the blood of Christ, they could not join in that universal song which perpetually surrounds the throne of God. We believe that they are all saved—every one of them without exception—but not apart from the one great sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. Another says, "But how about the heathen? They know not Christ; are any of the heathen saved?" Mark, Holy Scripture saith but very little concerning the

salvation of the heathen. There are many texts in Scripture which would lead us to infer that all the heathen perish; but there are some texts which, on the other hand, lead us to believe that there are some out of the heathen race who, led by God's secret spirit, are seeking after him in the dark, endeavoring to find out something they cannot discover in nature; and it may be that the God of infinite mercy who loves his creatures, is pleased to make to them these revelations in their own heart—dark and mysterious revelations concerning the things of heaven—so that even they may be made partakers of the blood of Jesus Christ, without having such an open vision as we have received, without beholding the cross visibly elevated, and Christ set forth crucified among them. It has been observed in many heathen lands, that before the missionaries have gone there, there has been a strong desire after the religion of Christ. In the Sandwich Islands, before our missionaries went there, there was a strange commotion in the minds of those poor barbarians; they did not know what it was, but they were all on a sudden discontented with their idolatries, and had a longing desire after something higher, better, and purer, than anything they had hitherto discovered; and no sooner was Jesus Christ preached, than they willingly renounced all their idolatries, and laid hold upon him to be their strength and their salvation. Now, we believe this was the Work of God's Spirit secretly inclining these poor creatures to seek after him; and we cannot tell but that in some sequestered spots where we had thought the gospel never has been preached, there may be some lone tract, some chapter of the Bible, some solitary verse of Holy Writ remembered, which may be sufficient to open blind eyes, and to guide poor benighted hearts to the foot of the cross of Christ. But this much is certain; no heathen, however moral—whether in the days of their old philosophy, or in the present time of their barbarism—ever did or ever could enter the kingdom of heaven apart from the name of Jesus Christ. “Neither is their salvation in any other.” A man may seek after it and labor after it in his own way, but there he cannot possibly find it, “for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

But after all, my dear friends, it is a great deal better, when we are dealing with these subjects, not to talk upon speculative matters, but to come home personally to ourselves. And let me now ask you this question, have you ever proved by experience the truth of this great negative fact, that there is no salvation in any other? I can speak what I do know, and testify what I have seen, when I solemnly declare in the presence of this congregation, that it is even so. Once I thought there was salvation in good works, and I labored hard, and strove diligently to preserve a character for integrity and uprightness; but when the Spirit of God came into my heart, “sin revived and I died,” that which I thought had been good proved to be evil; wherein I thought I had been holy I found myself to be unholy. I discovered that my very best actions were sinful. that my tears needed to be wept over, and that my very prayers needed God's forgiveness. I discovered that I was seeking after salvation by the works of the law, that I was doing all my good works from a selfish motive, namely to save

myself, and therefore they could not be acceptable to God. I found out that I could not be saved by good works for two very good reasons: first, I had not got any and secondly, if I had any, they could not save me. After that I thought, surely salvation might be obtained, partly by reformation, and partly by trusting in Christ; so I labored hard again, and thought if I added a few prayers here and there, a few tears of penitence, and a few vows of improvement, all would be well. But after forging on for many a weary day, like a poor blind horse toiling round the mill, I found I had got no farther, for there was still the curse of God hanging over me: “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them;” and there was still an aching void in my heart the world could never fill—a void of distress and care, for I was sorely troubled because I could not attain unto the rest which my soul desired. Have you tried those two ways of getting to heaven? If you have, I trust the Lord, the Holy Spirit, has made you heartily sick of them, for you shall never enter the kingdom of heaven by the right door, until you have first of all been led to confess that all the other doors are barred in your teeth. No man ever will come to God through the straight and narrow way until he had tried all the other ways; and when we find ourselves beaten, and foiled, and defeated, then it is, that pressed by sore necessity, we betake ourselves to the one open fountain, and there wash ourselves, and are made clean.

Perhaps I have in my presence this morning some who are trying to gain salvation by ceremonies. You have been baptized in your infancy; you regularly take the Lord’s Supper; you attend your church or chapel; and if you knew any other ceremonies you would attend to them. Ah! my dear friends, all these things are as the chaff before the wind in the matter of salvation; they cannot help you one step towards acceptance in the person of Christ. As well might you labor to build your house with water, as to build salvation with such poor things as these. These are good enough for you when you are saved, but if you seek salvation in them, they shall be to your soul as wells without water, clouds without rain, and withered trees, twice dead, plucked up by the roots. Whatever is your way of salvation—for there are a thousand different inventions of men whereby they seek to save themselves—whatever it may be, hear thou its death. knell tolled from this verse: “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

II. Now, this brings me to the POSITIVE FACT which is inferred in the text, namely, that there is salvation in Jesus Christ. Surely, when I make that simple statement I might burst forth with the song of the angels, and say—“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men.” Here are a thousand mercies all bound up in one bundle, in this sweet, sweet fact, that there is salvation in Jesus Christ. I shall endeavor now merely to deal with any soul here present who entertains a doubt as to his own salvation in Jesus Christ; I shall single him out, and address him affectionately and earnestly, and endeavor to show him that he may yet be saved, and that in Christ there is salvation for him.

I know thee, sinner! Thou hast long been trying to find the road to heaven, and thou hast missed it. Hitherto thou hast had a thousand dazzling cheats to deceive thee, and never yet one solid ground of comfort for thy poor weary foot; and now, encompassed about by thy sins, thou art not able to look up. Guilt, like a heavy burden, is on thy back, and thy finger is on thy lip, for thou darest not yet cry for pardon; thou art afraid to speak, lest out of thine own mouth thou shouldest be condemned. Satan whispers in thine ear, "It is all over with thee; there is no mercy for such as thou art: thou art condemned, and condemned thou must be; Christ is able to save many, but not to save thee." Poor soul! what shall I say unto thee but this—Come with me to the cross of Christ, and thou shalt there see something which shall remove thine unbelief. Seest thou that man nailed to yonder tree? Dost thou know his character? He is without spot or blemish, or any such thing: he was no thief, that he should die a felon's death: he was no murderer and no assassin, that he should be crucified between two malefactors. No; his original was pure, without a sin; and his life was holy, without a flaw. Out of his mouth there proceeded only blessing; his hands were full of good deeds, and his feet were swift for acts of mercy; his heart was white with holiness. There was nought in him that man could blame; even his enemies, when they sought to accuse him, found false witnesses, but even they "agreed not together." Dost thou see him dying? Sinner, there must be merit in the death of such a man as that; for without sin himself, when he is put to grief, it must be for other men's sins. God would not afflict and grieve him when he deserved it not. God is no tyrant that he should crush the innocent; he is not unholy that he should punish the righteous. He suffered, then, for the sins of others.

"For sins, not his own, he died to atone."

Think of the purity of Christ, and then see whether there is not salvation in him. Come now With thy blackness about thee, and look at his whiteness; come with thy defilement, and look at his purity; and as thou lookest at that purity, like the lily, and thou seest the crimson of his blood overflowing it, let this whisper be heard in thine ear,—he is able to save thee, sinner, inasmuch as though he was "tempted in all points like as we are," yet he was "without sin;" therefore, the merit of his blood must be great. Oh, may God help thee to believe on him!

But this is not the grand thing which should recommend him to thee. Remember, he who died upon the cross, was no less than the everlasting Son of God. Dost see him there? Come, turn thine eye once more to him. Seest thou his hands and feet trickling with streamlets of gore? That man is Almighty God. Those hands that are nailed to the tree, are hands that could shake the world; those feet that are there pierced have in them, if he willed to put it forth, a potency of strength that might make the mountains melt beneath their tread. That head, now bowed in anguish and in weakness, has in it the wisdom of the God-head, and with its nod it could make the universe tremble. He who hangs upon the cross yonder, is he without whom was not anything made that was made: by him all things con-

sist—Maker, Creator, Preserver, God of providence, and God of grace—he who died for thee is God over all, blessed for ever. And now, sinner, is there any power to save in such a Saviour as this? If he were a mere man, a Socinian’s Christ, or an Arian’s Christ, I would not bid thee trust him; but since he is none other than God himself incarnate in human flesh, I beseech thee cast thyself upon him;

“He is able,

He is willing, doubt no more.”

“He is able to save unto the uttermost, them that come unto God by him.”

Will you recollect again, as a further consolation for your faith that you may believe that God the Father has accepted the sacrifice of Christ. It is the Father’s anger that you have the most cause to dread. The Father is angry with you, for you have sinned, and he has sworn with an oath that he will punish you for your offenses. Now, Jesus Christ was punished in the room, place, and stead of every sinner who hath repented. or ever shall repent. Jesus Christ stood as his substitute and scapegoat. God the Father hath accepted Christ in the stead of sinners. Oh, ought not this to lead you to accept him? If the Judge has accepted the sacrifice, sure you may accept it too; and if he be satisfied, sure you may be content also. If the creditor has written a full and free discharge; you, the poor debtor, may rejoice and believe that that discharge is satisfactory to you, because it is satisfactory to God. But do you ask me how I know that God has accepted Christ’s atonement? I remind you that Christ rose again from the dead. Christ was put into the prison-house of the tomb after he died, and there he waited until God should have accepted the atonement.

“If Jesus ne’er had paid the debt,

He ne’er had been at freedom set.”

Christ would have been in the tomb at this very day, if God had not accepted his atonement for our justification; but the Lord looked down from heaven, and he surveyed the work of Christ, and said within himself, “It is very good; it is enough;” and turning to an angel, he said, “Angel, my Son is confined in prison, a hostage for my elect; he has paid the price; I know he will not break the prison down himself; go, angel, go and roll away the stone from the door of the sepulcher, and set him at liberty.” Down flew the angel, and rolled away the massive stone; and rising from the shades of death the Saviour lived. “He died and rose again for our justification.” Now, poor soul, thou seest God has accepted Christ; surely then, thou mayest accept him and believe on him.

Another argument, which may perhaps come nearer to thine own soul is this—many have been saved who were as vile as thou art. and therefore there is salvation. “No,” sayest thou, “none are so vile as I am.” It is a mercy that thou thinkest so, but nevertheless it is quite certain that others have been saved, who have been as filthy as thyself. Have you been a persecutor? “Yes,” you say. Ay, but you have not been more blood-thirsty than Saul! And yet that chief of sinners became the chief of saints. Have you been a swearer? Have you

cursed the Almighty to his face? Ay; and such were some of us who now lift up our voices in prayer, and approach his throne with acceptance. Have you been a drunkard? Ay, and so have many of God's people been for many a day and many a year; but they have forsaken their filthiness, and they have turned unto the Lord with full purpose of heart. However great thy sin, I tell thee, man, there have been some saved as deep in sin as thou art. And if even none have been saved, who are such great sinners as thou art, so much the more reason why God should save thee, that he may go beyond all that he ever has done. The Lord always delights to be doing wonders; and if thou standest the chief of sinners, a little ahead of all the rest, I believe he will delight to save thee, that the wonders of his love and his grace may be the more manifestly known. Do you still say that you are the chief of sinners? I tell you I do not think it. The chief of sinners was saved years ago; that was the Apostle Paul: but even if you should exceed him, still that word "uttermost" goes a little beyond you. "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him." Recollect, sinner, if thou dost not find salvation in Christ it will be because thou dost not look for it, for it certainly is there. If thou shalt perish without being saved through the blood of Christ, it will not be through a want of power in that blood to save thee, but entirely through a want of will on thy part—even that thou wilt not believe on him, but dost wantonly and wilfully reject his blood to thine own destruction. Take heed to thyself, for as surely as there is salvation in none other, so surely there is salvation in him.

I could turn to you myself, and tell you that surely there must be salvation in Christ for you, since I have found salvation in Christ for myself. Often have I said, I will never doubt the salvation of any one, so long as I can but know that Christ has accepted me. Oh! how dark was my despair when I first sought his mercy seat, I thought then that if he had mercy on all the world, yet he would never have mercy on me; the sins of my childhood and my youth haunted me; I sought to get rid of them one by one, but I was caught as in an iron net of evil habits, and I could not overthrow them; and even when I could renounce my sin, yet the guilt still did cling to my garments—I could not wash myself clean; I prayed for three long years, I bent my knees in vain, and sought, but found no mercy. But, at last, blessed be his name, when I had given up all hope, and thought, that his swift anger would destroy me, and that the pit would open its mouth and swallow me up, then in the hour of my extremity did he manifest himself to me, and teach me to cast myself simply and wholly upon him. So shall it be with thee, only trust him, for there is salvation in him—rest assured of that.

To quicken thy diligence, however, I will conclude by noting that if you do not find salvation in Christ, remember you will never find it elsewhere. What a dreadful thing it will be for you if you should lose the salvation provided by Christ! For "how shall you escape if you neglect so great salvation?" To-day, very probably I am not speaking to very many of the grossest of sinners, yet I know I am speaking to some even of that class; but whether we are gross sinners or not, how fearful a thing it will be for us to die without first having found

an interest in the Saviour! Oh sinner! this should quicken thee in going to the mercy seat; this thought, that if thou findest no mercy at the feet of Jesus, thou canst never find it any where else. If the gates of heaven shall never open to thee, remember there is no other gate that ever can be opened for thy salvation. If Christ refuse thee thou art refused; if his blood be not sprinkled on thee thou art lost indeed. Oh! if he keeps thee waiting a little while, still continue in prayer; it is worth waiting for, especially when thou hast this thought to keep thee waiting, namely, that there is none other, no other way, no other hope, no other ground of trust, no other refuge. There I see the gate of heaven, and if I must enter it, I must creep on my hands and knees, for it is a low gate; there I see it, it is a strait and narrow one, I must leave my sins behind me, and my proud righteousness, and I must creep in through that wicket. Come sinner, what sayest thou? Wilt thou go beyond this strait and narrow gate, or wilt thou despise eternal life and risk eternal bliss? Or wilt thou go through it humbly hoping that he who gave himself for thee will accept thee in himself, and save thee now, and save thee everlastingly?

May these few words have power to draw some to Christ, and I am content. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." "For there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."