

Joy in Salvation

A Sermon

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Delivered by

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"I will rejoice in thy salvation."—[Psalm 9:4](#).

I DESIRE to continue the topic of the morning, only we will look at another side of the same important matter.

We spoke this morning, as you have not forgotten, upon these words, "Your own salvation." I trust most of us—would God I could hope all of us—were earnest about our own personal salvation. To those who are earnest this second text will be the complement of the first. They desire that their own salvation shall be secure; it is their own salvation when they obtain it; but here is the guide as to what is the right salvation—what our own salvation ought to be. It is not our own in another sense; it is God's. "I will rejoice in thy salvation." While it becomes our own by an act of faith, it is not our own so that we can claim any merit or take any part of the glorying to ourselves. The only salvation that is worth being our own is that which is God's. "I will rejoice in thy salvation." Having this morning somewhat at length explained what salvation is, showing that it was not a mere deliverance from wrath to come, but from the present wrath of God, and yet more essentially from sin, from the power of evil within us, there is no need that we should go over that again, I trust; but we shall begin by noticing the speciality which is in the text, dwelling upon the divine salvation. "I will rejoice in thy salvation." So, then, we look at once at:—

I. A DIVINE SALVATION.

The salvation we have already spoken of is God's, and it is God's salvation in many ways. *It was his in the planning.* None but himself could have planned it. In his infinite wisdom he devised it. The salvation which is revealed in the person of Jesus Christ, in the gospel is every part of it in all its architecture the fruit of divine skill. We may say, "Or with whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and who taught him knowledge?" In every part the divine hand may be seen; it is of God's planning and ordaining, or ever the earth was. *So is it of God's providing.* You have salvation wrapped up in the gift of the person of Jesus Christ. All of it lies in Christ. Because he died, our sin is put away. Because he lives, we shall live also. And Christ is the pure gift of God. All salvation is in him, and, therefore, all salvation is thus procured by God. It is God's salvation. And what is more, God not only plans and procures, but *he also applies salvation.* I believe in free agency, but I never yet met with a

Christian man who was able to say that he came to Christ of his own free will without being drawn by the Spirit of God. Whatever our doctrinal view may be, the experimental fact is the same in every case. All believers will confess that they are God's workmanship, created anew in Christ Jesus. "No man can come unto me except the Father which hath sent me draw him." There is a want of power. "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." There is a want of will, and the Spirit of God, therefore, applies the salvation which God has planned, and which God has provided. And as the first application of this salvation is of God, *so is it all the way through*. I do not believe, dear brethren, that our religion is like the action of a clock wound up at first by a superior hand, and then left to go alone. No! every day the Holy Ghost must continue to work upon us, and in us, to will and to do according to God's good pleasure. And if you and I should ever get right up to the gate of pearl, and should hear the songs of the blessed within that gate, we should not be able to take the last step, but should turn back to our sin and folly even, if he that began a good work in us should cease to carry it on. He is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending. "Salvation is of the Lord," from first to last. He makes the rough draft of it, in conviction, upon our conscience; he goes on to complete the picture; and if there be one touch in the picture that is not of God, it is a blot upon it. If there be anything of the flesh, it will have to be wiped out; it is not consistent with the work of God. Of God is it in all respects. Now we know that this salvation is of God, not only because we are told that he planned it, and provided it, and applies it, but because *it has the marks of God upon it*. There is a certain line of poetry; I know it is Shakespeare's. Well, you know, I cannot quite tell you why, but yet I am sure no one ever wrote exactly in that way. I am reading the Psalms through, and I read and I say, "That is David's." I observe certain critics who say, "No, this belongs to the time of the captivity." I am certain it does not. And why? Because there is a Davidic ring about it, you know. The son, of Jesse, and he alone, could have said such things. Now in salvation there are the marks of divine authorship. I once saw a painting by Titan at Venice, and he had written, "Fecit, fecit Titian." He claimed it twice over, as if to make sure that someone else should not claim it. And God has put it three times over that there should be no doubt whatever that salvation is of God, and he must have the glory of it. Now observe the marks of God—what I may call the broad arrow of the King—set on salvation. It is full of mercy. Here is salvation for the blackest of sinners—salvation for all manner of sin—forgiveness for all manner of sin—salvation so full of grace that only God could have conceived it. "Who is a pardoning God like thee?" But this salvation is equally congenial with justice, for God never absolutely forgives a sin. There is always punishment for sin in every case. Jesus Christ, the Substitute, comes in and satisfies Justice before the word is spoken to the sinner, "Thy transgression is blotted out." In the salvation which God has provided on the cross by the death of his dear Son there is as much justice as there is mercy; and there is an infinity of both. Now this is God-like. Man, if he brings out one quality, usually clouds another with

it; but God exhibits his character in harmonious completeness—as merciful as if he were not just, and as just as if he were not gracious. In the gospel, on this account, we see also divine wisdom. Whatever some may say about the doctrine of substitution, Christ is still the power of God and the wisdom of God. The way, so simple, yet so sublime, by which God is just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth, exhibits the infinite wisdom of the Most High.

But I won't keep you by mentioning all the divine attributes. It is certain they all shine in the gospel, nor can any tell which of the letters best is writ—the power, the wisdom, or the grace. They are all there, proving the salvation to be of God.

And there is one other matter. True salvation is of God because *it draws toward God*. If thou hast God's salvation, thou art being drawn towards thy heavenly Father, nearer and nearer every day. The ungodly forget God; the awakened seek God; but the saved rejoice in God. Ask thyself this question, Couldst thou live without God? The ungodly man would be happier without God than he is with. It would be the best piece of news in the newspaper to thousands, if we could publish it to-morrow, that God was dead. To ungodly men it would be like ringing the bells of universal Joy; they would run riot after their own will. And where would the believer be? He would be an orphan. His sun would be blotted out; his hopes would be dead and buried. Judge by this whether thou art saved. If thou art saved, thou art drawn to God, thou seekest to be like God, thou desirest to honour God. If there be none of these things in thee, then I charge thee see to it, for thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity. God have mercy upon thee! I need not further say that the salvation is of God, and *God must have all the glory of it*. All on earth who are saved, and all in heaven who are saved, will ascribe their salvation entirely to the ever blessed God, and join with Jonah, who in the very depths of the sea made this, his confession of faith, "Salvation is of the Lord." But now, secondly, our text (having noticed the divine salvation in it) has:—

II. AN OUTSPOKEN AVOWAL.

"I will rejoice in thy salvation." Here is someone springing out from the common crowd and saying, "I have heard of God's salvation; I will rejoice in it! I will rejoice in it! *Some despise it*. They hear it, and they turn a deaf ear. When they have listened to it longest, they are most weary of it. But *I will rejoice* in thy salvation." Here is a distinguished character, who is made so, doubtless, by distinguishing grace. Oh! I hope there are many of us here who could stand up and say—if this were the time and place—"Let others say what they will, and count the cross a thing to mock at, and Jesus Christ to be forgotten, I am his servant; I will rejoice in his salvation." There are *some that rest in another salvation*. We all did so once. But he who speaks in the text throws aside self-righteousness as filthy rags. He puts it all aside, and says, "I will rejoice in thy salvation." If I were righteous, I would not say so. Had I a perfect holiness, I would not mention it in comparison with the righteousness of Christ; but being an unworthy sinner, without a single merit of my own, I will not be so foolish as to patch up a fictitious

righteousness, but I will rejoice in thy salvation. You see them there!—those worshippers of the scarlet woman—they are resting in their priest! He puts on millinery, blue, pink, scarlet, white, and I know not what—all kinds of little toys to please fools with. And there be some that rejoice in that salvation that comes from an "infallible" sinner—that comes from a sham priest of God. But we are looking to Christ, who stands before the eternal throne and pleads the merits of his own blood. We say:—

"Let all the forms that men devise
Assault our faith with treacherous art,
We'll Can them vanity and lies
And bind the gospel to our heart."

"I will rejoice in thy salvation." There may be some tonight to whom I shall speak who are rejoicing in God's salvation through his abundant grace who have very little else to rejoice in. You are very poor. Ah! how welcome you are to this house! How glad I am that you have come. I feel it always a joy that the people have the gospel preached to them. Well, you have no broad acres, you have no gold rings on your fingers; you come in the garb of toil. Never mind, my brother, lay hold on eternal life and say, "I will rejoice in thy salvation." Perhaps you are sick to-night—your poor weak body could scarcely drag itself up to the assembly of God's people. Well, well, it is a heavy thing to have to suffer so, but if you cannot rejoice in a hale body, yet rejoice in his salvation. Look to-night to Jesus; put your trust in him alone, and you will have a sufficient well-spring of joy, if you have nothing else. Possibly some of you who lay hold on Christ and rejoice in him will have hard times of it at home your father will mock at you, your mother will not sympathise with you; your workmates to-morrow, if they hear that you are converted, will laugh, and jest, and jeer at you. What say you? Are you a coward? Will you back out of it because it demands a sacrifice? Oh! if it be so, then you are indeed unworthy of the name, and you count yourself so; but if you are what you should be, you will say, "Let them; laugh at me as they will, and spit upon me as they please, I will rejoice in thy salvation."

"If on my face for thy dear name,
Shame and reproach may be;
I'll hail reproach and welcome shame,
For thou'lt remember me."

It takes some pluck, but we ought to have it in the cause of Christ. Your mean, miserable wretches that will only go out to follow Christ in sunny weather, and get them gone again when a cloud darkens the sky, deserve well the wrath that comes upon them. They are like the Nautilus, very well on the placid sea, but the first billow that arises they furl their sails and drop into the deep, and are seen no more. Oh! beware, beware, beware of a sunny-weather religion; beware of a religion that will not stand the fire; but be you such that, if all the world forsook Christ, you would say, "I will rejoice in his salvation"; and if you were

turned out of doors, if you were turned out of the world itself, and thought not fit, to live, you would yet be content to have it so, if you might be numbered with the people of God, and be permitted to rejoice in his salvation. Does this, as I try to speak it, awaken a holy emotion in any soul here? Is there someone who has been a stranger to my Lord who to-night can say, "I desire to rejoice in his salvation"? I cannot forget, when I sat as a young lad under the gallery of a little place of worship, hearing the gospel simply preached—the blessed moment when I was led to resolve to follow Christ. I have never been ashamed of having done so. I have never had to regret it. He is a blessed Master. He has handled me roughly lately, but he is a blessed Master. I would follow at his heels if only like a dog, for it is better to be his dog than to be the devil's darling. He is a blessed Master. Let him say what he will, and do what he will. Oh! is there no young man here, no youth, no child, no girl; is there no gray-headed one who will say, "I will rejoice in thy salvation" O eternal Spirit, come and touch some heart, and make this, their spiritual birthright, that they may say, "I—I—I will rejoice in thy salvation."

But we must pass on, for time presses. We have, in the third place, to consider in the text:—

III. A DELIGHTFUL EMOTION.

We have noticed the divine salvation, and the outspoken avowal; now we will notice the delightful emotion. "I will rejoice in thy salvation." It is an unfortunate thing that Christianity gets associated with melancholy. I will not forbid the banns, for they are not very near of kin, but I wish they were further apart every day. It is a good thing for the melancholy to become a Christian; it is an unfortunate thing for the Christian to become melancholy. If there is any man in the world that has a right to have a bright, clear face and a flashing eye, it is the man whose sins are forgiven him, and who is saved with God's salvation. In order for any man, however, to rejoice in God's salvation, *he must, first of all, know it*. There must be an intelligent apprehension of what it is. Next, he must grasp it by an act of faith as his own. Then, having grasped it, he must study it to know the price at which it was bought, and all the qualities—the divine qualities that follow from it. Then *he must hold it fast*, and seek to get out the sweetness from it. What is there in God's salvation that should make us rejoice? I do not know what to select, for it is all joy and all rejoicing. It is enough to make our heart to ring with joy to think that there should be a salvation at all for such poor souls as we are. We may well hang out all the streamers of our spirits, and strew the streets of our soul with flowers, for King Jesus has come to dwell there. Ring every bell; give him a glorious welcome. Let all the soul be glad when Jesus enters and brings salvation with him, for the salvation of Christ is so suitable that we may well rejoice in it. Dear brother, if you are saved, I know the salvation of Christ suited you. It did me—exactly—it was made on purpose for me. I am as sure of it as if there were no other sinner to be saved. It was the gospel that brought power to the weak, nay, it brought life to the dead; it brought everything

to those that had nothing; it is just the sort of gospel for a penniless, bankrupt sinner like myself. We rejoice *in the suitability of the gospel*; we rejoice in the freeness of it. We have nothing to pay; we have no price to pay, neither of promise, nor of anything that was our own. Salvation was freely given to us in Christ Jesus. Let us rejoice in it, then. Oh! rejoice in the richness of that salvation. When the Lord pardoned our sins, he did not pardon half of them, and leave some of them on the book, but with one stroke of the pen he gave a full receipt for all our debts. When we went down into the fountain filled with blood, and washed, we did not come up half-clean, but there was no spot nor wrinkle upon us—we were white as driven snow. Glory be to God for such a rich salvation as this. And he did not in that day save us with a perhaps and a chance salvation that set us on a rock, and say, "Keep yourself there—you must depend upon yourselves", but this was the covenant he made with us, "A new heart also will I give thee, and a right spirit will I put within thee." *It was a complete salvation*, which would not permit a failure. The salvation, which is given to the soul that believes is on this wise, "I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." "The water that I shall give him shall be a well of water springing up unto everlasting life." I believe the perseverance of the saints to be the very gem of the gospel. I could not hold the truth of Scripture if this could be disproved to me, for every page seems to have this upon it, if nothing else, that "the righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall wax stronger and stronger." In this my soul rejoices, that I have a salvation to preach to you which, if you receive it, will effectually save you if your hearts are given to Christ, and will keep you, and preserve you, and bring you into the eternal kingdom of his glory. I will rejoice in the certain and abiding character of that salvation. Oh! there is enough in the salvation of Christ to make heaven full of bliss; there is enough to make us full of praise. Let us take up the theme; let us talk by the way to one another about it; let us talk to sinners about it; let us recommend religion by our cheerfulness. Levity be far from us, but happiness let it be the happiest sphere in which we live if we have little else to rejoice in, we have enough here. Whatever may be our condition or prospects, we may still rejoice in God's salvation, and let us not fail to be filled with this most blissful emotion.

And now I must close. The text has in it a word of the future which we must not quite overlook. Here is a joyful gospel, "I will rejoice in thy salvation." You may read it if you like, "I shall"—"I shall" or "I will"—it would be quite right. The Hebrew has no present. It seems to have given up all tenses—like God himself who was, and is, and is to come. I shall rejoice in thy salvation. Now here is:

IV. A BLESSED PROSPECT.

You may live to grow old; well, we shall never grow weary of Christ. If we are his people, we shall never have any cause to part from him; "I will rejoice in thy salvation." I could bring up to this platform an aged brother whom all of you would know, who has infirmities and

has age creeping upon him, but there is not a happier soul in this house than he; and when I had made him speak to you, I could bring you many more aged women too, and I would ask them what they think of Christ, and I am sure they would say with greater emphasis than I can, "I will rejoice in thy salvation." I almost wish my grandfather were alive and behind me to-night, for on one occasion I preached with him in the pulpit, and when I came to speak of experience he pulled my coat-tail and came to the front, and said, "My grandson can tell you that he believes it, but I can tell you experimentally," and on the old gentleman went with it. Well, many an aged Christian can tell you he has rejoiced in God's salvation. He does rejoice, and, instead of age making the joy of his youth to become dim, it has mellowed and sweetened the fruit, which was sweet even at the first. Oh! that we may, when these hairs grow hoar with years, and the snows of many winters lie white upon our head, may we still rejoice in God's salvation. But then, whether we reach old age or not, there is one thing that is certain—we shall assuredly die, and when we come to die, what shall we do? I know what you are thinking of. You say, "I should groan." Ay, sinner, you are thinking of the friend that is wiping away the clammy sweat from the brow and those closed eyes. Now those may never occur. We often hear them mentioned in reference to dying beds, but they are not so constantly there as to be, necessary. And if they were there' if we did lose sight itself before life fails—what then? Why, the vision of the Christ, who is our salvation, and in whom we rejoice, shall then be more gloriously clear and radiantly beautiful, because the sights and sounds of earth have vanished from us.

Now, instead of looking at these outward parts of dying, think of this, "I will rejoice in thy salvation." When I parted from our dear brother, Cook, a few days ago, he could not say much. He was very, very weak, but what he did say was just this, "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus is all." Well, I talked, and read, and prayed, and so on, and when we had done, he simply said, "The blood—the blood, the blood—that is all my hope." Why, he looked as calm in prospect of dying as any of you do in sitting here, and was as delighted with the hope of being where Jesus is as ever bride was at the coming of the marriage day. It was delightful to see the blessed calm and peace that was upon that man of God. And when I come to die, whoever I may be, however little my standing in the Church of God is, if I am in Christ, I will rejoice in his salvation; I will make the dark valley ring with his praises; I will make the river of death itself to roll back as the Red Sea did of old, with my triumphant songs; I will enter heaven with this upon my heart and upon my lip, 'I will rejoice in thy salvation! Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive honour, and power, and dominion, and glory for ever and ever!' And, brethren, if that is what we may do in dying, this is what we shall do for ever and ever, "I will rejoice in thy salvation." Millions of ages, throughout all the cycles of years that interpose ere Christ delivers up the kingdom to God, even the Father, and then onward, even through eternity, this always shall be our own ground of rejoicing, "I will rejoice in thy salvation."

Now I cannot come and stand at the door and speak to everyone as the congregation withdraws, but if it were possible I should like to stand there and shake the hand of everyone that has been in the house to-night, and say, "Well, friend, how fares it with you?" Can you say, 'I will rejoice in thy salvation?'" If I cannot do that, I wish it were possible to speak in the silent shades of night to you when you awoke, so that you might hear a voice ringing in your ears, "Do you rejoice in God's salvation?" Perhaps some of you may have come a long distance across the sea. You may be by-and-by on shipboard again. It may be that you will be in peril, or it may be that afterwards you shall be in sickness. Well, may this evening's congregation in this day of July rise up before your minds, and if you forget the preacher (and that will not matter), yet if you hear a voice that says, "Can you rejoice in God's salvation?" I hope that, even if it is twenty years to come, it may then be as the voice of God to your soul, and bring you to the Saviour. But better far would it be if you would come to him tonight and you may. May the Spirit of God bring you! Whosoever believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ hath everlasting life. The whole of the gospel is wrapped up in Christ's message, which he has sent by his apostles, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." To you each this—this—is the word, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." God add his own blessing, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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