

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

THE COMMON SALVATION.

A Sermon

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 10TH, 1881, BY

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“The common salvation.”--Jude 3.

JUDE says, “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you.” The apostle did not write for writing’s sake, and in this he sets an example: we are not to speak for speaking’s sake, nor even to preach for preaching’s sake. When we take upon us to write concerning divine things it ought to be because it is needful for us to write, and when we speak in the name of God it should be because we have something to say which it is needful should be said. Unless a man feels an imperative necessity to speak he will not speak as an ambassador of God. I wot that Jude would not have given all diligence to write if he had not first felt that necessity was laid upon him so to do. Before you instruct others endeavour to feel the obligation which rests upon you to impart the light which you have received, for if you have been called of God unto this ministry woe is unto you if you preach not the gospel. The souls of others require the truth which you have been commissioned to teach; but you also require to teach it to them; for, if you do not warn them, their blood may stain your skirts. “That the soul be without knowledge is not good:” neither is it good to any that he should withhold what he knows. That men should live and die in ignorance of Christ is terrible to conceive of, therefore when you speak or write do it because it is needful to be done, and needful that you should do it. You know how it behoved Christ to suffer, and even so it behoves us to hold forth the word of life.

The necessity in the present case was that he should write of the common salvation. If it was common—commonly understood and commonly received—why should he need to write about it? Surely a common subject has enough written upon it already, and it affords no room for freshness and novelty, which are so much desired by readers. Yet experience and observation prove that it is more needful to preach the common doctrines of the gospel than any other truths, and that just those things which appear to be the most elementary and the most generally received are those upon which it is most important to lay stress

again and again. If there be certain high doctrines, speculative theories, and dogmas which are rather outgrowths of the gospel than the gospel itself, let them be preached in due proportion; but if they be not preached, the risk and danger will not be extreme. As for the root facts, the fundamental doctrines, the primary truths of Scripture, we must from day to day insist upon them. We must never say of them, "Everybody knows them"; for, alas! everybody forgets them. We must not cease from proclaiming them from fear of being charged with uttering mere platitudes; that which is revealed of the Holy Ghost must not be spoken of so reproachfully. Let men call the doctrines of the gospel platitudes if they will; we will only answer, that on such platitudes our salvation rests. After all, on certain grand, wide, well-known truths of universal acceptance the church of God is builded; her basis is not a difficult philosophy, but a plain revelation. Let us not strain after matters of ultra refinement, theories of cultured intellects; but let us obey the necessity which calls upon us to write and to speak of the common salvation. The gospel message is full of world-wide truisms and well-known facts. What said Paul,—“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” If worthy of all acceptation it is surely worthy of all proclamation. It is worth while for the whole church continually to rehearse that Jesus came to save sinners, for common truth as it is there is a necessity that we should perpetually and diligently make it known. The common salvation should be commonly spoken of; but I fear it is uncommonly neglected in these days.

The immediate necessity to write of the common salvation arose out of certain men who had crept into the church unawares. Some of these attacked the gospel on its practical side with Antinomian subtlety. They cried up the grace of God, but said little of the holy living which it produces. They made light of sin under pretence of magnifying the grace of God; they called careful watchfulness a legal spirit, derided humble self-examination, and claimed as children of God to be in no sense bound by the precepts of the moral law. The apostle calls it “turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness.” Side by side with these there crept in another gang of evil ones, “who denied the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.” They robbed Christ of his divine glory, and so denied his atonement and sovereignty as to dethrone him from being either the Saviour or the King of his church. This was the essence of Arianism. They said that Jesus Christ was an admirable example, that he was one of a number of persons who have discovered important truths, and that he is therefore to be greatly admired; but they asserted that still higher truth would yet be discovered as the race proceeded in its progress, and so forth. These “men of thought” crept into the church, and stabbed at the heart of the common salvation. We used to have in our churches a sad amount of the Antinomian leaven; we had among us men who preached the doctrine of grace without the grace of the doctrine, and professors who for evermore spoke about “the truth,” but seemed little careful about following “the way” or exhibiting “the life.” I hope that this evil principle has pretty well departed from us, though I fear that in its removal it has dragged away precious truth with it: and now we are assailed by quite another school of thought. I see no choice in

the two kinds of foes, they are equally bad: these last are denying this truth and paring down the other, moving landmarks and overthrowing monuments, shaking every wall and kicking at every foundation. Having crept in among us unawares, defiant of common honesty, they preach against the gospel from our own pulpits and wage war against our Zion from within her own gates. It is essential at this day that such as fear God, and are his servants, should again and again both write and preach concerning "the common salvation," and over and over again rehearse the first lessons of Christ, the very alphabet of grace. We must make the joyful sound of the common salvation to be more common than ever. I wish to ring it out this morning with all the power that I have and with all that God will grant me by his Holy Spirit. If these men assailed certain speculations of theology it would little matter. What is the chaff to the wheat, saith the Lord? Let the chaff be removed, by all means. If they assailed certain peculiarities of method, either in work, or life, or teaching, it might be well for us to be taught something by their censures. If they attacked the specialities of a single person or sect, and the particular view of truth held by a mere party, it would not signify, for what are the fashions of men's minds? Who is Paul, and who is Apollos? But it is at the very root of the tree that they lay their axe, and, therefore, we must end all hesitation, take up our weapons, and for the sake of the common salvation earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. Our subject, then, is "the common salvation." Oh to speak in the power of the Spirit.

I. Our first observation at this time shall be that PRESENT SALVATION IS ENJOYED BY THE FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST, otherwise there could be among them no "common salvation." Those who are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called, are saved. In the church of God salvation is this day the privilege of all believers. *It is not a matter of the future alone*, a blessing to be sought for on a dying bed and reached in heaven; but it is a blessing for this world and this present time. Those greatly mistake the meaning of salvation who suppose it signifies nothing more than escaping from hell when you die and entering into heaven when the time has come. Salvation means being at once delivered from the power of sin, and being once for all washed from the guilt of sin. The very word used here—"the common salvation"—shows that Jude did not regard it as a hidden treasure put away from human reach throughout this mortal life. How could it have been common in such a case? He did not regard it as a distant attainment to be reached after twenty, thirty, or forty years of holy living, but as a thing to be tasted, and handled, and received as soon as faith enters the soul; for how else could it be common? "Unto us who are saved," says the apostle, "who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling," saith the Scripture in another place. Salvation has come to our house, we have it, it is a common blessing in the household of faith.

As salvation is not a future benefit only, so *it is not a benefit reserved for a few of the more saintly people among believers*. It is supposed by some that you cannot know whether you are saved till you are in the article of death; or that, if any do know it, it must be a few eminent teachers or specially holy persons, who have lived a very religious life, and consequently know that they are saved. It is to be confessed that

the more holy and godly our life the brighter our evidence of salvation becomes; but still, the blessing itself is common to all the children of God, and those whose faith is feeble, and whose spiritual life is weak, are still saved in the Lord. Beloved hearer, you ought not to rest without knowing that you are saved. You may know it: if it be true you ought to know it. I do not think that you have any right to sit quietly on that seat for ten minutes without knowing that you are saved; for it is an awful thing to be in doubt as to whether you are under the bondage of sin, in doubt as to your being at peace with God. This is not a subject upon which uncertainty can be endured. You say, "'Tis a point I long to know." It is well that you long to know it: I beg you to long to know it so intensely that you must either know it or become unutterably wretched. Let every doubt on that point be like a sword in your bones. May God cause your heart either to rejoice with full assurance, or else to be in agony as with death pangs till you are confident that you are built on the sure foundation. The salvation which is in Christ Jesus is the common salvation of all who know the gospel and live upon it. Among simple-minded believers salvation is the inheritance of every one of them, and the knowledge that they are saved is an everyday possession. We who have joined in church-fellowship in this place can truly say, "We rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh": "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." We count it no presumption to say that we are saved, for the word of God has told us so in those places where salvation is promised to faith in Christ Jesus. The presumption would lie in doubting the word of God; but in simply believing what he says there is far greater humility than in questioning it. Being, then, partakers of like precious faith we share in salvation bought with precious blood, which though it be costly beyond all price is, nevertheless, to all believers the common salvation.

This common salvation consists in many works of grace for us and in us. In part it consists of deliverance from spiritual death. We were dead in trespasses and sins, but the Spirit of God has quickened us into a new and heavenly life, and thus we have salvation from spiritual death. This belongs to-day to all believers; for how can a man be a believer and not have the inner life? Having that life he is conscious that it is there. True, he may fall into a fainting fit, and lie swooning, scarcely conscious of being alive; but such is not his usual condition. Healthy life is conscious life, and rejoices in being, acting, and growing. You who are strangers to the people of God may think me fanatical, but, indeed, I am only speaking words of truth and soberness when I say that the conscious possession of a heavenly life is common among believers, and is, in fact, a large part of the common salvation.

This common salvation consists in deliverance from that awful distance at which we once stood from God. We were far off from him by wicked works, and when the quickening began in us we felt that distance, and we mourned it, fearing also that it never could be removed. But now in Christ Jesus we are brought nigh, and have become dwellers in the house of the Lord. Abba, Father, is the cry which the blessed God hears and accepts, as it rises from our hearts. Once God was not in all our thoughts, but now our thoughts are sanctified, and sweetened

by a sense of his presence ; and we find our greatest joy in feeling that he is all around us and within us, that in him we live and move and have our being. Blessed is the common salvation which has brought us nigh to God by the blood of Jesus, and made us children and heirs of the Most High.

We have also been saved from the gloom of heart which once hung over us, because we were conscious of being under God's displeasure. We thought that we could never be forgiven, but we are forgiven ; we concluded that our heavenly Father would never accept us, but we are accepted in the Beloved ; we wrote ourselves down among the condemned, but now are we justified by faith which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. The darkness hath passed, and the true light shines into the spirits of the faithful. Peace with God is a sweet part of the common salvation.

Now are we delivered also from the love of sin. We cannot find pleasure in it as once we did. We sin, but it costs us dear. When we do so we lament it with our whole soul. It was our natural way to run the downward road, but now when our feet tread that path it is as wanderers who are out of their way. Once sin was our element, as the water is the living element of fish ; but it is far otherwise now, for sin is death to us. Transgression now breeds sorrow in our conscience, and creates misery in the heart, for it is alien to the life of God which is in us. If we could have our desire we would never offend again : we would have our souls clear as the firmament above us, and never should an evil thought or a loose desire flit over the pure heavens of our sanctified minds. We would do God's will on earth as it is done in heaven ; I say "we," for I speak for all believers in the Lord Jesus. We are all rescued from the iron yoke of the love of evil, and this is a most precious part of the common salvation.

The Lord has also delivered us from that cowardly fear of man which bringeth a snare, and holdeth men as slaves to evil customs. He has also brought us out of the dark dungeon of spiritual ignorance, and renewed us in knowledge ; thus has he broken the dominion of the former lusts of our ignorance, and given us liberty to serve him with godly fear. Pride, too, is laid in the dust, and we are saved from that dreadful tyrant. The dominant power of selfishness is destroyed, and we have learned to love. The woes of others afflict us, the joys of others rejoice us, our soul flows out beyond the narrow confines of our own ribs. Our heart is enlarged with love towards God and to all his creatures. Blessed salvation this ! And it is common to all believers.

We have again and again heard it said that evangelical ministers preach salvation to sinful men and talk to them of a future life, whereas if we were practical we should denounce the sinner, and speak only of present reformation in this life. The charge is, I fear, oftener made in malice than in ignorance. But if in ignorance I would reply,—O fools and slow of heart, neither to hearken nor to understand. Our constant theme is immediate salvation from sin, and we are perpetually insisting upon it that this salvation is a present business, to be attended to at once for the purposes of to-day. It is false, utterly false, that we have so preached about the world to come as to have pushed out of sight the duties and temptations of this present life. No, we have regarded the

life to come as commenced here below, and have viewed heaven itself as to a great extent the fruit of a heavenly disposition which must be implanted in us while yet on earth. Ah, if men did not hate the gospel they would not so often repeat stale objections and groundless accusations. It is surely time that infidelity should invent something fresh in the way of objection, for this has long passed the stage of toleration, and has become a worn-out impertinence.

Salvation from sin, leading upward to perfection and heaven, is called in the text "the common salvation." It is, then, the salvation of all God's people—the salvation about which all true Christians are agreed; for, notwithstanding all you hear about our divisions into sects, the church is really one. The denominations of the Christian church are very like the divisions of a ploughed field by means of furrows which mark the surface, but the land remains to all intents and purposes one field. I speak not of mere professors, but truly spiritual people; such are all one in Christ Jesus, and their salvation is in all respects the same. If they have not all things common, at least they have one and the same salvation. All converted men and women believe in the same essential truths, feel the working of the same Spirit within them, and press forward to the same end, namely, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord. You shall take a high churchman, who is a truly spiritual man, and there are such people, and you shall set him down side by side with the most rigid member of the Society of Friends, and when they begin to talk of Jesus, of the work of the Holy Spirit in the soul, and the desire of their hearts after God, you will hardly know which is which. The nearer we come to him who is the salvation of God, the more plainly we see that among the children of God the basis of agreement is far wider than the ground of division. Andrew Fuller well and pithily said, "There are, I conceive, four things which essentially belong to the common salvation; its necessity, its vicarious medium, its freeness to the chief of sinners, and its holy efficacy." We may differ on the "five points," but we are agreed upon these four points. Ask any true Christian if it be not so. You shall get together, if you like, a collection of the odds and ends of Christianity—and certainly there are some queer Christian people about, whose light comes from above, so they say,—I think through a crack in the roof; but if they are really genuine, and their hearts are right, you shall find that even in these wrong-headed folk there is an agreement upon their need of a Saviour, their faith in his death, the freeness of his grace, and the change of heart which it produces. All believers in Christ have a common delight in a common salvation.

II. We go a step further, and note, secondly, that THIS SALVATION IS IN SOME RESPECTS COMMON IN THE WIDEST POSSIBLE SENSE. It is common because *it is to be preached to all nations*, to all classes, to all characters, to all ages, and to all conditions of men—in fact, it is to be preached to every creature under heaven. It is the common salvation so far as this, that a proclamation of mercy through Jesus Christ is to be made to all mankind; for it is declared that if they believe in Christ Jesus they shall be saved. You need not be afraid of being too free and unreserved in your delivering of the gospel. Let the great trumpet be blown, and let every mortal ear attend. I am as firm an adherent

to the doctrines of sovereign grace as any man living ; but never shall this tongue hesitate to declare the common salvation. Whenever I am called upon to address a congregation, I will always cry, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters!" "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." The invitation of the gospel is so far-reaching that it may well be called "the common salvation."

It is common in the widest sense, because *every man that believeth in Christ Jesus will be saved* ; not the Jew only, but the Gentile also ; not the poor man only, but the rich man also ; not the black man only, or the white man only, but men of every colour ; not the ignorant or the learned, the rude or the refined, exclusively, but every soul of Adam born that believeth in Christ Jesus shall be saved. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." And so to thee, dear hearer, whoever thou mayest be, comes this common salvation. It is a command addressed to thee, and a promise made sure to thee : "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

It is common in this wide sense, that *if any man be saved he will be saved by this common salvation*. Men talk as if there were half-a-dozen different roads to heaven, and yet there is but one : they prattle as if there were seven or eight Saviours at the least, or as if every man must be his own Saviour, as we heard the other day of every man being his own lawyer ; and yet there is but one name given among men whereby we must be saved. He who tries to be his own Saviour has a fool for his client. He will utterly fail to his eternal confusion : why did Jesus die to save us if we can save ourselves ? All of Adam born who enter eternal life come in by the one door. Infants are saved through Christ, and if any attain to heaven from among the heathen it must be by virtue of the salvation of Christ. He is the common life for all that live, the common bread for all who are fed by God, the common joy of all who have been blessed of the Lord. Thus in its publication, in its promise, and in its efficacy the salvation of Christ is the one and only gospel of life to men. As there is but one common air, one common sea, one common earth, so there is but one common salvation. O that we may be among those who prove its power in their own person by being saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation.

III. But I am persuaded that this is not what Jude meant, so I come, in the third place, to say that **IT IS COMMON TO ALL BELIEVERS**. Do you recollect what this same Jude once said to the Saviour ? He asked him, "Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us and not unto the world ?" He understands that matter now ; but he is not looking so much at the "not unto the world" as at the first fact in his question, "Thou wilt manifest thyself unto us." He is evidently full of joy that the manifestation of the salvation of Jesus is common to all believers. Upon that blessed fact let us dwell.

Certain offices, gifts, attainments and enjoyments are given to some and not to others. "Are all apostles ? are all prophets ? are all teachers ? are all workers of miracles ? Have all the gifts of healing ? do all speak with tongues ? do all interpret ?" It is not every believer that possesses full assurance, or enjoys ecstasy, or is made largely useful to others. But all believers have the common salvation. There they

share and share alike, and every one of them is saved in Christ Jesus and called. An apostle may say to the newest of his converts, "I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; that is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me."

For, first, it is a common salvation which all believers possess, since it springs from *the same grace*. There are not some saved by grace and others by works, many by pure grace and more partly by works; but salvation is altogether of grace in every case, and that grace is the same in all who possess it. All believers are chosen by the same electing love, for the same reason, namely, to the glory of the Father's grace; and being so chosen, they are all ordained unto the same life, secured by the same covenant, and given into the hands of the same Surety. Eternal love encompasses, enriches, comforts, and preserves each individual believer, and guarantees to each the same inheritance in Christ Jesus. Brother, are you saved by grace? so am I. Am I saved by grace? Then my sister, if thou believest in Christ, thou art saved as I am.

It is a common salvation—common because we are all saved by *the same Saviour*. We are not some of us looking to Jesus, and others to Moses, or to ourselves; neither are we some of us looking to the atoning death, and others to the perfect life of Christ; but we are all saved by the same one work, life, death, resurrection and intercession of Christ Jesus. When he made atonement by blood it was for all his redeemed; when he rose it was to justify all who are in him; when he stands at the right hand of God to plead, he intercedes for all the saints; and when he cometh it will be that all his saints may be with him where he is, and may behold his glory. Do not fall into the modern notion, which divides up Christ, and allots something to one class of believers, and another portion to others of the chosen. They tell us there are such and such promises for Israel, and other promises for the church; I have not so read the word, for I am persuaded that all believers are the Israel of God. God loveth all his saints, and the same blessedness shall be to them all, and you may rejoice and be glad that God will not give special raptures and upsoarings into the skies to a portion of his family, and leave the rest in the cold. In all that is "salvation" we have a common heritage, for Christ belongs to us all, and we are all members of his body, partakers of his life, and sharers of his glory.

It is a common salvation because we are all saved through the *same faith*, we believe the same precious truth, and receive Christ in the same way. All the saved possess faith, though not all to the same degree. Would God we were all strong in faith! Still, faith is a child-like confidence in God in the greatest as much as in the least of God's people, and this is the essential requisite to salvation in every case. He that believeth in Christ is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already. To all participation in Christian privilege we have only one right: "If thou believest with all thy heart thou mayest." Faith makes a man a fellow-commoner with the saints of God.

It is a common salvation because faith and spiritual life are wrought in us by the *same Spirit*. Faith does not come to one by the operation of free will and to another by free grace, but to every one by the same Spirit. You, then, my brother, are plucked like a brand from the burning

by the power of the Spirit of God, so also is thy friend who rejoices with thee. All are quickened by the same Spirit, and kept alive by the same Quickener. The love of the Spirit should be joyfully acknowledged by us all without exception, for the Spirit has wrought all our works in us.

It is a common salvation as to *its results*; for all believers are equally born again, and they are all renewed by him, who saith, "Behold I make all things new." Brought into the one family of God, they are all made children of God and joint heirs with Christ Jesus. They are all justified, accepted, preserved, guided, upheld, and comforted. Their feet are set upon the selfsame rock, they are led in the same King's highway, and a new song is prepared for every one of their mouths. The common salvation, like the common table of a household, satisfies all their mouths with good things, and renews their youth like the eagle's.

By-and-by they shall meet in *the same heaven*. There will be no division before the throne between the different tribes and denominations of believers. One family, we dwell in him even now, with all our petty strifes; but the great family relationship shall be more fully developed by-and-by when imperfections and errors shall be cast aside. The saints before the throne will sing a common hymn unto the common Saviour as they gather in the common home, saved with a common salvation.

Brethren, I am right glad of all this. I feel inclined to stop the sermon and ask you to join in singing Charles Wesley's verse—

"Partners of a glorious hope,
Lift your hearts and voices up;
Jointly let us rise and sing
Christ our Prophet, Priest, and King."

To me it is a joyous thing that God's best gifts should be the commonest. It is so in nature: the sunshine, the dew, the air, the heavens, these cannot become the particular estate of a few; they are common blessings. When Richard the Second banished Bolingbroke that nobleman is represented as saying—

"This must my comfort be,
That sun that warms you here, shall shine on me;
And those his golden beams, to you here lent,
Shall point on me, and gild my banishment."

There is no monopolizing the best gifts, for heaven ordains them to be the right of all mankind; and so the chief things of the covenant of grace are common to all believers. One may have greater powers of speech than another; but God hath spoken to the silent brother the same promises. Gifts are to this man and to that; but the gift of salvation is to all who believe. The choicest saint may have far less of this world's riches than his brother; but the riches of God's grace are all his own by equal title. We live on common ground here, fed by our Father with the same bread from heaven. Thank God that in so many points the saints have fellowship, for all these should make them of one mind and of one heart towards each other. Some of God's children are not learned, but they shall all be taught of the Lord; all are not experienced in the deep things of God, but they are all entitled to the best things of God. There are some few points in which we are unlike, even as children of the same family differ in age, and height, or in

the colour of their eyes or hair ; but we are one in so many vital and conspicuous features, that we should with one voice and heart praise our common Father. We may not all wear the same form of garment, but we all breathe the same life. We may not eat from the same ware, but we all eat the same bread. We may not all drink from a silver chalice, but the wine is from the one cluster. "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all" It is a great comfort to my heart that, among you who are bound to me by such loving ties, I can speak without hesitation of the common salvation ; for you know it, feel it, love it, rejoice in it, even as I do this day.

IV. That brings me to close, by noticing that this fact of the common salvation was mentioned by Jude that he might use it as an argument. So then THIS FACT HAS MANY LESSONS IN IT.

First, this common salvation *forbids a monopolizing spirit*. The old divines used to say that enclosures were contrary to law. I am afraid that I may not say so now; for almost everywhere the commons have been taken from the poor man and his goose. May there yet be an end to such enclosings. But enclosures in spiritual things are contrary to the law of Christ. Who are we that we should cut off from fellowship with us those whose fellowship is with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ? Yet we have those around us who make it a point of Christianity to be *exclusive*. Their exclusions are perpetual. Shut that door! Shut that door! Shut that door! seems to be the one great command of their house, and the second is like unto it—make more doors, one within the other, and take care to bolt them all. Their sheep must keep within their fold without fail, for if they once get a bite of pasture outside the enclosure their doom is sealed. In many forms this spirit has been among our denominations, but I do not believe in it. If the spirit of Christianity begets in us love to all mankind, much more, my brethren, are we to love those in whom there is the life of God. Is it really so, that this man is to be un-Christianized because of a mistake and the other because of a misapprehension? Doth God make thy brother a Christian and dost thou try to unmake him? Doth God think so much of him as to forgive him, to give him power in prayer, and enjoyment of his presence, and dost thou think so lightly of him that thou wilt hardly own him to be a partaker in Christ at all? Does the Father smile on all his children, and do we frown on half of them? If I could do it, the last thing I should attempt would be to wall in my own special company and say, "The temple of the Lord are we." I would not wish to set a fence round about the baptized and say, "These be the church of Christ, even as many as have been immersed in water that they may be buried into his death." Beloved brethren, our Lord hath a people that are on other points as right as right can be who on the point of baptism are as wrong as wrong can be; but, for all that, they are his people, and in other respects are sound in the faith and valiant for the Lord our God. Unto such our love goeth forth, and must go forth, despite their grievous error. Upon other matters there are distinctions among believers, but yet there is a common salvation enjoyed by the Arminian as well as by the Calvinist, possessed

by the Presbyterian as well as by the Episcopalian, prized by the Quaker as well as by the Baptist. Those who are in Christ are more near of kin than they know of, and their intense unity in deep essential truth is a greater force than most of them imagine: only give it scope and it will work wonders. As for us, let us not be among the men of whom Jude says, "These be they that separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit."

Next, this doctrine *fosters the spirit of benediction*. Jude begins his epistle with "Mercy unto you, and peace, and love be multiplied." Brothers and sisters, fill your lungs with this healthy air. You are saved with a common salvation; desire the profit, the growth, the happiness of all who partake of this one salvation. You are in one ship; seek the good of all who sail with you. You are enlisted in one army; pray the Captain of salvation to make every soldier strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. The common salvation should excite us to seek the prosperity of every part of Zion; we would seek the good, not of our Tabernacle alone, but of every tabernacle or temple where Christians meet to worship the Most High.

Next, this fact *arouses in us a common spirit of contention for the one faith*. For what saith the apostle? "It is needful that I write unto you of the common salvation, and exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints." When the gospel is assailed we must all rise in its defence, for it is the common salvation which is involved in it. When they frightened this nation years ago with the rumour of an invasion by the French, the Russians, or somebody or other, what was the result? Everybody became warlike. Our young men joined rifle clubs, and our elderly men furbished up their old blunderbusses. Everybody hastened to arm himself to protect the common country from the coming foe; and had the enemy really arrived even the women would have shouldered their brooms to sweep the intruder over our white cliffs. Every man, woman, and child would have found some fork, or scythe, or spade, or axe wherewith to protect the common fatherland. Community of interest begets community of feeling. We are all Englishmen, and we all sing, "Britons never will be slaves"; so, in this case, when the gospel of Jesus Christ is assailed, it does not matter by whom, I feel I may call upon all Christians to take action for the common salvation. Brothers, rouse you to the fight, for more than our hearths and homes is now attacked. Do they deny the deity of Christ? It is not only *my* religion that is assailed, it is yours as well. Do they turn the grace of God into lasciviousness? It is not this branch of the church that is now endangered. The entire church is placed in jeopardy. This gospel is not my heritage or yours, it is the common domain of all the faithful, and I beseech you feel it to be so. In your own spheres and in your own ways hold the truth, and hold it firmly. You who can neither preach nor write in defence of sound doctrine can at least give negative help by refusing to countenance error. Do not go to hear those who preach false doctrine, do not encourage them in any way, do not bid them God speed. Love all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, but if a word be spoken against the Lord or against the gospel which he has revealed, turn your back upon the speaker. Be like the loving John, who, when he went

to take a bath, found Cerinthus, the heretic, there, and departed at once with all speed. I want to see more backbone in all professors, more determination never to stultify their faith by pretending to believe that black is white and that white is a shade of black. Love: do I not preach it with all my heart, and do I not bid you manifest it in your deeds? But with that love mingle a firm adherence to the truth as it is in Jesus, and a zealous resolve that it shall not lose its honour while you are capable of upholding it. Let the common salvation be protected by the earnest zeal of the entire body of the church and by us also.

This fact, I think, *puts everyone of us to the question*, It is a common salvation, but have I a part in it? It belongs to all the people of God, but am I one of them? I should like you this morning, when you get home, to write on a piece of paper, if you will, whether you are saved or not. It would be a timely searching. Here you are, on this tenth of April—write down “Saved, bless the Lord for it,” and if you are obliged to feel you could not write that down, go up into your chamber and cry mightily unto God till you can. Well, if you are able to write “saved,” then inasmuch as it is a common salvation go and try to spread that salvation among others. “Others save,” says Jude. I know, he says, “others save with fear,” but still he says “others save;” try as far as ever you can to bring others to the Saviour. A man’s salvation that he never wishes to spread among others is a salvation that is not worth having. You are not saved from selfishness if you do not wish to see your children, and relatives, and neighbours, yea, and all the world brought to Jesus’ feet. If it be a common salvation go and make it common.

And, lastly, this text *calls for a common song of praise* from all those who have the common salvation, and I cannot suggest to you a better doxology than that with which Jude closes his epistle: “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Epistle of Jude.
