

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

HARVEST PAST, SUMMER ENDED, AND MEN UNSAVED.

A Sermon

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“The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.”—Jeremiah viii. 20.

THIS is a very mournful chapter, especially if we include in it, as we rightly should, the first verse of the ninth chapter: “O that my head were waters.” The passage is full of lamentation and woe, and yet it is somewhat singular that the chief mourner here is not one who needed chiefly to be in trouble. Jeremiah was under the especial protection of God, and he escaped in the evil day. Even when Nebuchadnezzar was exercising his utmost rage, Jeremiah was in no danger, for the heart of the fierce monarch was kindly towards him. “Now Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon gave charge concerning Jeremiah to Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard, saying, take him, and look well to him, and do him no harm; but do unto him even as he shall say unto thee.” The man of God, who personally had least cause to mourn, was filled with heavy grief, while the people who were about to lose their all, and to lose their lives, still remained but half awakened; complaining, but not repenting; afraid, but yet not humbled before God. None of them uttered such a grievous lament as that which came from the heart and mouth of the prophet. Their heads were full of idle dreams, while his had become waters; their eyes were full of wantonness, while his were a fountain of tears. He loved them better than they loved themselves. Is it not strange that it should be so, that the physician should be more anxious than the sick man? Perhaps, however, it is not so singular that the shepherd should care more for the flock than the sheep care for themselves. When the sheep are men it is certainly an unreasonable thing! The weeping prophet cries, “For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt;” he was more hurt than they were. A preacher whom God sends will often feel more care for the souls of men than men feel for themselves or their own salvation. Is it not sad that there should be an anxious pain in the heart of one who is himself saved, while those who are unsaved, and are obliged to own it, feel little or no concern? To see a man in jeopardy of his life, and all around him alarmed for his danger, while he himself

is half asleep, is a sad sight. See yonder man about to be condemned to die, standing at the bar, the judge putting on the black cap is scarcely able to pronounce the sentence for emotion, and all around him in the court break down with distress on his account, while he himself is brazen-faced and feels no more than the floor he stands upon! How hardened has he become! Pity is lost upon him, if pity ever can be lost. Such a sad sight we constantly see in our congregations: those who are "condemned already" on account of sin are altogether indifferent to their awful peril, while their godly parents are greatly distressed for them, Christian people are pleading with them, and earnest messengers from God expostulating with them. Heaven and earth are moved for them, and yet they are unaffected. Oh that it might not be so here this morning! May none of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. May God of his infinite mercy strike the rock, and make the waters of penitence to gush out from it. May his transforming hand turn stone into flesh, and cause a holy tenderness to banish all stubbornness and insensibility. Such is my agonising cry to the Holy Spirit.

Certainly there ought to be dismay, and even terror, in the heart of any who are compelled to use my text in reference to themselves. Those few words, "We are not saved!" sound like a peal of thunder. They should cut the soul as with a case of knives—"We are not saved!" What worse thing can men say of themselves? We are now under the abiding wrath of God; for "we are not saved!" We must soon stand before the judgment seat of God, and then we shall be condemned of the great Judge, for "we are not saved!" We shall ere long be driven from his presence and from the glory of his power, for "we are not saved!" We shall then be shut out in outer darkness, where shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, for "we are not saved!" Had men but reason, or having reason would they but use it upon the most important of all subjects, surely they would cry out in the bitterness of their souls, "Oh that our heads were water and our eyes fountains of tears, that we might weep day and night till we had found our Saviour and he had washed away our sin and saved us." How saddening to see the loaded waggons of harvest bearing no real blessing to us, and to watch the clusters on the vine ripen all unblest! Alas for that summer which amid all its flowers yields us no perfume of peace or joy. On the other hand, my brethren, how blessed to feel that the harvest is past, and the summer is ended, and blessed be God we are saved! Now let winter come with all its blasts, we have nothing to fear, for wrapped in our Saviour's righteousness, and hidden in the cleft of his side, we shall outlive every storm.

I earnestly pray the Lord to bless the words I am about to speak, that they may be rendered useful to many undecided persons to lead them to decision, and induce them to give themselves up to Christ at once. May the Holy Spirit work this blessed result in thousands. I have so long been silent that I am hungering to speak with power. Come Holy Spirit! Come!

First, I shall look at the text as a *complaint*—"We are not saved;" and, secondly, I shall suggest that out of it ought to come *consideration*: those who utter the complaint should be led thereby to solemn consideration.

I. First, we have before us the language of COMPLAINT. These Jews

said, "The seasons are going by, the year is spending itself, the harvest is past, the vintage also is ended, and yet we are not saved." Some of them were captives in Babylon, and they fondly expected to be brought back from the distant land, but they were disappointed. They hoped that when the produce of the Nile had been reaped Egyptian troops would march against Nebuchadnezzar and break his power. Others of them had fled into the defenced cities, and taken refuge behind the walls of Jerusalem, and they also dreamed that the march of the Chaldeans would be stopped, and the land would be delivered from their invasion as soon as the summer heats were over. The rescue did not come; indeed, they could from Jerusalem hear the neighing of the Babylonian horses: "The snorting of his horses was heard from Dan: the whole land trembled at the sound of the neighing of his strong ones; for they are come, and have devoured the land, and all that is in it; the city, and those that dwell therein." Therefore they complained that their hopes had failed. In effect they complained of God that he had not saved them, as if he was under some obligation to have done so, as if they had a kind of claim upon him to interpose: and so they spoke as if they were an ill-used people, a nation that had been neglected by their Protector. Husbandmen had gathered in the harvest, and vine-dressers had gleaned the grapes, yet they had not been cared for, but left to suffer: despite their hopes, they were not saved. Certain persons fall into the same state of mind in these days. They know that they are not saved, but they do not blame themselves for it; the fault lies,—they would not like to say where it does lie, but they will not own that it lies in themselves. They are not saved, and somebody should be blamed for it, or perhaps nobody, but they mention the fact, not as a confession of which they are ashamed, but as a misfortune for which they are to be pitied.

This complaint was a very unjust one, for there were many reasons why they were not saved and why God had not delivered them.

The first was *they had looked to the wrong quarter*: they expected that the Egyptians would deliver them. You remember that in the reign of Zedekiah the Jews revolted from their subjection to the Babylonians because they hoped that the king of Egypt would come up and fight with the Babylonian power. Those who were captives hoped that yet the great armies of the Pharaohs might break down the might of Chaldea, and so they looked to Egypt for help,—an old fault with Israel and a gross folly, for why should they look to the house of bondage for succour? The same folly dwells in multitudes of men. They are not saved, and they never will be while they continue to look where they do look. All dependence upon ourselves is looking to Egypt for help, and leaning our weight upon a broken reed. Whether that dependence upon self takes the form of relying upon ceremonies, or depending upon prayers, or trusting in our own attempts to improve ourselves morally, it is still the same proud folly of self-dependence. Vain is all searching for legal righteousness, hoping to merit something of God, or to do something without help from on high, for the Lord himself has assured us that by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified. My friend, you may have been very earnest and serious about divine things, but if you have looked in any measure or degree to what you are, or can do, or what any man can do

for you, it is no wonder that you are not saved, for there is no salvation there. I am afraid some think that it is a great thing to sit under a faithful minister, that if the gospel be thoroughly preached they may naturally expect that if they take a seat at the place they will be saved. But all dependence upon ministers is only another form of superstitious confidence in priestcraft. All trust but that which is found in Jesus is a delusion and a falsehood. No man can help you. Though Noah, Samuel, and Moses prayed for you, their prayers could not avail unless you believed in the blood of Jesus; there is salvation nowhere else. Though the whole church were to unite in one protracted intercession, and determine that all its ministers should preach to you alone for the next seven years, there would be no more hope of your being saved then than now, unless you would believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, who alone is the salvation of the sons of men. The most fruitful of harvests may pass and the most genial of summers may smile upon you, but while you look to yourself no sunshine from God shall cause you to flourish. Eternal barrenness is the portion of those who trust in man and make flesh their arm. While men go about to establish their own righteousness, and will not submit themselves to the righteousness of Christ, they shall be like the woman who spent all her living upon physicians, and was nothing better, but rather grew worse.

Those people had *prided themselves upon their outward privileges*; they had presumed upon their favoured position, for they say in the nineteenth verse, "Is not the Lord in Zion? is not her king in her?" Because they belonged to the chosen nation, because the Lord had entrusted them with the sacred oracles, and manifested himself to their fathers, therefore they thought that they might sin with impunity, and reckon upon being delivered in the day of danger. I do not know how many of you here may be depending upon outward religiousness, or indulging some kind of thought that, apart from your personal faith in Christ, you will be saved by your pious connections and hallowed relationships; but if that is what you are depending upon, rest assured you will be deceived. Vain are the baptism or the confirmation of your youth, faith in Jesus is the one thing needful; vain is the fact that you were born of Christian parents, ye must be born again; vain is your sitting as God's people sit, and standing as they stand, in the solemn service of the sanctuary, your heart must be changed; vain is your observance of the Lord's-day, and vain your Bible reading and your form of prayer night and morning, unless you are washed in Jesus' blood; vain are all things without living faith in the living Jesus. Though you had been descended from an unbroken line of saints, though you had no unconverted relative, your ancestry and lineage would not avail you; the sons of God are born, not of blood, nor of the will of man, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God. All the external privileges that can be heaped upon you, though you had sermons piled up and gospel services heaped on them, as the giants piled mountain upon mountain, Pelion upon Ossa, that they might climb to heaven, would be useless; there is no reaching to salvation by such means. If your reliance be upon external ordinances, or professions or privileges in any measure or degree, no wonder that the harvest is past, and the summer is ended, and you are not saved, for you never will be saved till doomsday while you look in that

direction. Look like sinners to your Saviour and you shall be saved, but not else.

Thirdly, there was another and very powerful reason why these people were not saved, for, with all their religiousness and their national boast as to God's being among them, they *had continued in provoking the Lord*. He says in the nineteenth verse, "Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images and with strange vanities?" They lived in sin, disobeying God to his face; they set up new idols, and imported false deities from foreign lands, and yet they said, "We are not saved." Would they have the Lord sanction their degrading idolatry by sending them deliverance? Do you know a man who goes frequently into ill company, and gets intoxicated, and yet comes to hear the gospel, and murmurs that he is not saved? Is he not mad? Let me speak plainly to him. Do you think that you are going to heaven to reel about the holy streets? Shall the pure heavens be polluted by your profanities? You are dreadfully mistaken if you fancy so. Another person indulges lust, lives an unclean life, and yet he comes in and listens to the word of God as one who has a loving ear for it, and he also complains that he is not saved. O unclean man, how canst thou dream of salvation whilst thou art defiled with filthiness? What, thou and thy harlot, members of Christ! Oh, sir, thou knowest not my pure and holy Master. He receiveth sinners, but he rejecteth those who delight in their iniquities. Thou must have done with the indulgence of sin if thou wouldst be cleansed from the guilt of it. There is no going on in transgression, and yet obtaining salvation: it is a licentious supposition. Christ comes to save us from our sins, not to make it safe to do evil. That blood which washes out the stain brings with it also a hatred of the thing which made the stain. Sin must be relinquished, or salvation cannot be received. I spoke very plainly just now, but some here of pure heart little know how plainly we must speak if we are to reach some men's consciences, for it shames me when I think of some who year after year indulge in secret sin, and yet they are regular frequenters of the house of God. You would think they surely were already converted, or soon would be when you saw them here, but if you followed them home you would quite despair of them. O lovers of sin do not deceive yourselves, you will surely reap that which you sow. How can grace reign in you while you are the slaves of your own passions? How can it be while you are anchored to a secret sin that you should be borne along by the current of grace towards the desired haven of safety? Either you must leave your sin or leave all hope of heaven; if you hold your sin hell will ere long hold you. Jesus was not sent to be the minister of sin; he never came into the world to bleed and die to make the way of the transgressors easy by enabling them to be vicious without risk. The friend of sinners is the enemy of sin. There is a religion that will let you pay a shilling or two and purchase priestly absolution, but this we protest against. Such a faith may well breed iniquity. What can it be but like Egypt's Nile, when in the days of Moses it became the fruitful mother of ten thousand unclean frogs? Under the religion of Christ absolution for the past is only to be obtained through faith in Jesus, and that faith brings with it repentance for former offences, and a change of life for days to come. Wherefore do men say "We are not

saved" when they are still hugging their iniquities? They may as well hope to gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles, as to find salvation while they abide in sin. May God deliver us all from the love of sin, for such a deliverance is salvation.

Again, there was another reason why they were not saved, and that was because *they made being saved from trouble the principal matter*. Many make a great mistake about salvation; they mistake the meaning of the term, and to them salvation means being delivered from going down into the pit of hell, just as to these Jews it meant rescue from Nebuchadnezzar. Now, the right meaning of salvation is purification from evil. These people never thought of this: they never said, "We are not cleansed, we are not made holy," but "we are not saved." If their cry had been, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we have not yet conquered sin," that would have been a mark of something good and true, but they showed no trace of it. There is not much in a man's desiring to be saved if he means by that an escape from the punishment of his offences. Was there ever a murderer yet who did not wish to be saved from the gallows? When a man is tied up to be flogged for a deed of brutal violence, and his back is bared for the lash, depend upon it he repents of what he did; that is to say, he repents that he has to suffer for it; but that is all, and a sorry all too. He has no sorrow for the agony which he inflicted on his innocent victim; no regret for maiming him for life. What is the value of such a repentance? Here is the point, my hearers; do you wish to have new hearts? If you do you shall have them. Do you wish to leave the sins you have loved? Do you desire to live as Christ lived? Do you wish to keep the commandments of God? Do you sigh for purity of life? Do you wish henceforth to be as God would have you to be, just, loving, kind, chaste, after the example of the great Redeemer? If so, then truly the desire you have cometh of God; but if all you want is to be able to die without dread, that you may wake up in the next world and not be driven down to the bottomless pit, if that is all, there is nothing gracious in it, and it is no wonder that you should say, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved." You do not know what being saved means. God teach you to love holiness, and there shall not pass another harvest, nay not another day, before you shall be saved; indeed, that very love is the dawn of salvation. Seek salvation as the kingdom of God within you, seek it first and seek it now, and you shall not be denied.

Again, there was another reason why these people were not saved and could not be. Read the ninth verse, and see their fault and folly: "Lo, *they have rejected the word of the Lord*, and what wisdom is in them?" We hear persons complain that they are not saved, though they neglect the saving word. They go to a place of worship and therefore wonder that they are not saved; how can they be when that which they hear is not the object of their heart's attention? Do you read your Bible privately? Did you ever read it with an earnest prayer that God would teach you what you really are, and make you to be a true believer in Christ? Have you done that just as earnestly as you studied a book when you were trying to pass an examination? I do not know what calling you follow, but I will suppose, for instance, that you wish to be a chemist; if so, you go through a course of studies, and

you acquaint yourself with certain books, in order that you may pass an examination. You stick to your work, for you know that you will not pass unless you are well informed as to the matters needful to your profession. Do you show the same diligence in reference to your soul and your God? Have you ever read your Bible with anything like the same intensity with which a man must study a class-book in order to pass his examinations? Have you read it with regard to yourself, asking God to teach you its meaning, and to make the sense of it press upon your conscience? Do you reply, "I have not done that"? Why then do you wonder that you are not saved? To put a slighter test than the former: when you hear the gospel, do you always enquire, "What has this to do with me?" or do you listen to it as a general truth with which you have no peculiar concern? What a difference is perceptible in hearers! Numbers of persons have come hither at this time merely to hear Spurgeon preach, and form an estimate of him. Is this a fit errand for God's day, and for an assembly gathered for worship? Do not imagine that we are flattered by such attentions. We do not covet such hearers. What care I about their estimate? A poor soul that wants to find Christ is a diamond in my eyes, but he who comes to hear me because of public talk is a common pebble that one might sling away, only it is well that even he should hear the word if perchance God might bless him. Many of you Christian people hear sermons that you may remember well-turned sentences and pithy sayings, or that you may gauge the preacher's earnestness, and judge whether he is likely to be useful. Hearing for others is a very common amusement. There is a deal of difference between walking through a baker's shop when you are well filled and counting all the loaves upon the shelves, and rushing in at the door to get a bit of bread at once, for fear of dying of starvation. Water seen as a picturesque object by a traveller is one thing, but a living draught swallowed by one dying of thirst is quite a different matter. O that men would treat the gospel as a necessary of life, which they must each one feed upon or perish. That is the style of hearing when a man prays that the word of God may search him, and try him. It is well when the hearer bares his bosom and cries, "Lord, cut this cancer out of my soul, I pray thee. I beseech thee, let me live!" That kind of hearing ends in saving. "Incline your ear," saith the great Lord, "and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live." "Hearken diligently unto me," saith he again; and in so doing he certifies that diligent hearkening shall bring a blessing with it. Alas, with the bulk of hearers the word goes in at one ear and out at the other. The noise of God's voice is drowned by the din of the world's traffic, the six days crush the influence of the seventh, and it is no wonder that January comes and December goes, and yet worldlings are not saved. They never will be while they slumber as they do.

There is a further reason why some men are not saved, and that is because *they have a great preference for slight measures*. They love to hear the flattering voice whispering—"Peace, peace, where there is no peace"; and they choose those for leaders who will heal their hurt slightly. They wish for something very comfortable, and in their folly they prefer poisoned sweets to healthful salts. "I felt so miserable," said one, "when I left that place that I said I would never enter it again." It

was a foolish vow. He who is wise will go where the word has most power, both to kill and to make alive. Do you want a physician when you call upon him to please you with a flattering opinion? Must he needs say, "My dear friend, it is a very small matter; you want nothing but pleasant diet, and you will soon be all right"? If he talks thus smoothly when he knows that a deadly disease is commencing its work upon you, is he not a deceiver? Do you not think you are very foolish if you pay such a man your guinea, and denounce his neighbour who tells you the plain truth? Do you want to be deluded? Are you eager to be duped? Do you want to dream of heaven, and then wake up in hell? Have I such an idiot here? May heaven save him from his ruinous folly.

For my part, I should like to know the worst of my case, and things must be very bad with any one of you who cannot say the same. When a merchant dares not face his books, you know where he is. When he says to his clerk, "No, no, I do not want to know on which side the balance stands. I cannot bear to be worried. I dare say money will come in as well as go out, and my credit will raise me another loan. Things will come round, and the less we dive into difficulties the better." We shall hear of that gentleman very speedily in the Bankruptcy Court, I think. He is in the same condition spiritually who does not dare to face himself, but would rather not be troubled with questions and examinations. What, dare you not look yourself in the face? Have you covered up the looking-glass? Have you hid the word of God from yourselves, and dare not see how you look? Ay, then be sure you are in an evil plight. While men will not have the thorough-going truth preached to them, while they like some siren strain, while they would fain listen to soft music and float upon gentle streams that bear them down to destruction, there is little hope but what harvests and summers will come and go and they will not be saved.

All this while these people have wondered that they were not saved, and yet *they never repented of their sin*. The Lord himself witnesses against them, "I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright: no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? Every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle." "Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush." Repentance was a jest with them, they had not grace enough even to feel shame, and yet they made a complaint against God, saying, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." What monstrous folly was this! Where has the Lord given half a promise to those who will not confess and forsake their sins? How can impenitent sinners hope that they should be forgiven?

We have said enough upon this unjustifiable complaint.

II. Now, may the Spirit of God help us while we would lead unconverted persons for a few minutes into the CONSIDERATION of this matter.

First consideration, "*we are not saved*." I do not want to talk, I want you to think. "We are not saved." Put it in the personal, first person singular. Will everyone here only do me the favour of saying that to himself if it is true, "I am not saved! I am not saved! I am not saved from sin, I love it still. I am not saved from guilt, I am condemned for my failure to keep the law. I am not saved from wrath,

I am not saved from judgment, I am not saved from the eternal curse. I am not saved ! My dear child in heaven is for ever happy, but I am not saved. My dear wife is a happy Christian, but I am not saved. I am one of a family where many have been converted, but I am not saved. I am a grey-headed old man, and I am not saved. I am beloved in my family by my dear mother, for I am yet a child, but though she prays for me I am not saved." "I am a member of a church and am not saved." Are you obliged to say that, any of you ? Be honest, then. Do not cover up the truth, however terrible it may be ; better far to face it. What if some one must confess, "I am a preacher of the gospel, but I am not saved." Oh, my heart, what terror is here ! It is an awful thing if anybody here has to say, "I am a teacher in a Sunday school, and this afternoon the little ones will gather round me, but I am not saved. People respect me, they say I have all things good about me, but I have not the one thing needful, I am not saved." Teachers, does this touch any one of you ? I pray you let it have its due influence. Now you down here in the area, and you in these galleries, will you do one of the two things ; either say "By God's grace I have believed in Jesus and I am saved," or else just sigh out silently in your soul, "I am not saved." It will do you good to end all questions, and know once for all whether you are in Christ or not.

Furthermore, not only am I not saved, but *I have been a long time not saved*. Let me put language into the mouths of those who are ruining themselves by delay. "Time flies. How quickly it is gone ! I was a young man a very little while ago, now I am getting into middle age, getting a little bald, grey hairs are upon me here and there. Why, dear me, here are grandchildren come—it seems but yesterday that I was married. Yes, harvests have passed, vintages have been gathered, and I am not saved. Twenty years ago I sat listening to this same preacher, and I was not saved then ; and I remember how he touched my conscience, but all those years have gone, and I am not saved. The world has had its opportunities and used them ; they sowed and they reaped their harvests. The vine-dresser used the knife and the vine was pruned, and in due season he gathered the clusters, but I have had no harvest, I have known no vintage. I have made money, I have got on in business, or at least I have just paid my way and supported my family, but I have had no spiritual harvest ; no, for I never sowed. I have had no spiritual vintage, for I was never pruned. I never went to the great Husbandman and asked him to dig about me and make me fruitful to his name. What opportunities I had ! I have been through revivals, but the sacred power passed over me ; I remember several wonderful occasions when the Spirit of God was poured out, and yet I am not saved."

Worse still, *habits harden*. "If I was not saved during the last twenty or thirty years I am less likely to be impressed now. I do not feel as I once did. Sometimes the vile unbelief which now taints the very air creeps over me, and I am half a sceptic. Considerations that used to thrill me, and make my flesh creep, are now put before me, but I seem like a piece of steel—nay, I do not even rust under the word, I am unimpressible. Harvests have dried me, summers have parched me, age has shrivelled my soul : my moisture is turned into the drought of summer, I am getting to be old hay, or as withered weeds fit for the

burning." It is a dreadful consideration for a man to turn over in his mind, but it is a very needful one, for it is an undoubted fact that every year fixes the character and engraves the lines of evil deeper in the nature. Harvests and summers leave us worse if they do not see us mend. As true as you are alive, unless God of infinite mercy arouse you out of your present condition to seek and immediately find Christ, and obtain everlasting life, some of you will settle down into a condition which will be the eternal state of your hearts. O for grace to repent at once, ere yet the wax has cooled and the seal is set for ever.

The last summer will soon come, and the last harvest will soon be reaped, and you, dear friend, must go to your long home. I will apply it mainly to myself: I must go up stairs for the last time, and I must lay me down upon the bed from which I shall never rise again; if I am unsaved my room will be a prison chamber to me, and the bed will be hard as a plank, if I have to lie there and know that I must die,—that a few more days or hours must end this struggle for existence, and I am bound to stand before God. O my God, save me from an unready death-bed! Save these people from dying and passing into hell! You will have no doubts about it then, you know; you will see clearly that you are bound to stand before God. This naked spirit of mine, disrobed of its body, must appear before the Judge! What shall I do? What shall I say? Before my Maker's burning eyes, stripped naked to my shame, oh! what shall I do? And when I speechless stand before him, by my silence owning to my guilt, what shall I do? The gate of heaven is shut, I cannot enter there. I have not the password; I have rejected the way thither; I have rejected Christ, who is the King of the place; oh! whither must I go? I will not paint the picture. Souls, I charge you by everything that is rational within you, escape for your lives, and seek to find eternal salvation for your undying spirits. You are not dogs nor cats, nor horses nor cattle, as men tell you; you are nobler things, and an immortality awaits you, and you shall make to-day that immortality the most awful curse that can fall upon you, or a privilege infinite, unutterable. It is a grand alternative. God help us by his infinite mercy to choose eternal holiness and everlasting joy, and choose it now.

Come, let us consider a little longer a few practical truths which may be of service. It is quite clear that, if you are to get right, you must not go on in the old way. The harvest is past, and the summer is ended, and by the way in which you have been going on you are not saved. There must be a change of tactics. Salvation must be thought of in another light, and sought for in another spirit. Come, my friend, if you are to find salvation you must be more earnest about it, you must be more intense about it; there must be a greater valuing of this salvation, and a more solemn resolve that if heaven or earth or hell can yield it to you, you will have it, for "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence,

and the violent take it by force." Never did a man sleep himself into eternal life. Salvation is all of grace, but sluggards have no grace. The Lord does not work in us to sleep and to slumber, but to will and to do. Men reach the Celestial City, not by drowsiness, but by their spirits being stirred to feel that there is nothing else that is worth a thought compared with going on pilgrimage to glory.

There is one thing certain, that, as the harvests have past and the summer is ended and we have not been saved, we must have been looking in the wrong place. Very likely we have been looking to something on earth for salvation. If so, we have not found it, because it is not there. The prophet enquires: "Is there no balm in Gilead: is there no physician there?" He knew that there was none in that region which could meet his people's dreadful hurt. There was a balm in Gilead, but it was the resin of a tree; there were physicians there, but they were mostly quacks, that duped the people. If there had been any true balm and any real physician there, the health of the daughter of his people would have been recovered. No, my hearer, there is no balm in Gilead for you. The balm of Gilead was only good for certain bodily wounds and sores, but not for cuts and wounds and sores like these, for these are in the soul. The physicians of Gilead could only heal some few complaints, and seldom enough did they heal even these, but all the physicians of Gilead in a row cannot heal your *complaint*. I will tell you of another and better health-resort than Gilead—it is Calvary. Where Jesus bled you will find a balm; where Jesus lives you will find a physician.

Another thing must have suggested itself to you while I have been preaching, dear friend, if you have listened in earnest; and it is this, that the great point must be that if I am to be saved *I must get rid of sin*. I will again speak for those whom I address. "I have been thinking that I should undergo some strange transformation, and some kind of mysterious shock, or have a vision or see some strange sight, and that then I should say I am a converted man. This morning I discover that the main point is to get rid of sin; it must be driven out of my heart. I have not only to leave off the act of it, and the thought of it, but all love to it must go. I cannot be a saved man unless that is the case." If you have kept pace with the preacher so far, I think the next thought will come,—“Then this is deep water; this is a place where my own strength utterly fails me. If I must have a new heart—well, I cannot make myself a new heart. If the very love of sin has to go, I cannot accomplish that; I can stop outside the theatre, but I cannot prevent my wanting to go in. I can renounce dishonesty, but I cannot help having an itching palm. Even if I dare not transgress yet I may feel the wish to do so if the punishment could be escaped. This makes the matter too hard for unaided nature; since it is true that unless the love of

sin is gone nothing is done. God must help me, or this will never be accomplished. This is the centre of the truth. Your great Creator must come and make you over again. His dear Son must come and end your captivity to the power of evil. He has come, he has died. Nothing can ever take out the stains of your past sin but the blood of the Son of God. Nothing can take from you the love of sin but the application of the atoning blood, and the work of the Spirit upon your entire nature, creating you anew in Christ Jesus. "Oh," saith one, "I see it all now. I seem to have come up against a wall of rock, and I can go no further. I wonder not that the summers have gone and the harvests have ended, when it is like this; for now I am brought up before a dread impossibility. What can I do?" Thou canst do this. God helping you, trust Christ to do it all. Throw thyself down at his feet. "Saviour, Saviour, from the highest heaven look down, here is a sinner in his blood. I read of others that when they were in their blood thou saidst to them, Live! Say that to me. Here is one condemned, and near to die; save him, forgive him impute thy righteousness, make me to be accepted in the Beloved. I trust thee!" Do you indeed trust Jesus? Is it true that you believe on him? Then you are saved! His merit is yours, his blood has cleansed you the moment you believe in him, it is done: you shall not love sin again. You shall be tempted, and often have to groan because of secret lustings that will linger there; but you have a new life now, for you have believed in Jesus, and that new life will abhor sin, and will fight it, and will conquer it, and God will help you, and the Spirit will dwell in you, and you shall get sin more and more under your feet—yea, you shall bruise Satan under your feet ere long, and you shall triumph, and one day you shall burst this shell which holds you in, and you shall shine in the image of Christ, "without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing." Yes, you, sinful man, shall be made perfectly holy, even you, now full of iniquity, transgression, and sin. You are a God-provoking rebel this morning, but if you trust in Christ Jesus you shall be washed and made God-pleasing this very day: black as hell to-day, you shall by infinite mercy be made as bright as a seraph before God, and all that because you trust the Saviour. O God, grant us thy saving grace for Jesus' sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Jeremiah viii., ix. 1.
