

# Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

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DIRECTION IN DILEMMA.

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## A Sermon

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

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“Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord.”—Exodus xiv. 13.

GOD'S great design in all his works is the manifestation of his own glory. Any aim less than this were unworthy of himself. He cannot act for the good of his creatures as an ultimate aim, for that were for God to be impelled by a motive less great than his own nature. Since there can be nothing greater than the infinite, and there can be but one infinite—if the infinite God be moved by an infinite motive which is the only one worthy of him, that motive must be found in his own glory. It is, then, the Lord's will to manifest his glory to the sons of men. But how shall the glory of God be manifested to such fallen creatures as we are? Man's eye is not single, he has ever a side glance towards his own honour, and so is not qualified to behold the glory of his God. Vanity has covered our eyes with scales more dense, than those which fell from the eyes of Saul of Tarsus. We are always prone to put a high estimate upon what we are, or may be, or can feel, or do. It is clear, then, that self must stand out of the way, that there may be room for God to be exalted; and this is the reason, the true secret, why God bringeth his people oftentimes into straits and difficulties, that, being brought to their wits' end, and made conscious of their own folly and weakness, they may be fitted to behold the majesty of God when he comes forth to work their deliverance. A man whose life shall be one even and smooth path, will see but little of the glory of God, for he has few occasions of self-emptying, and hence, but little fitness for being filled with the revelation of God. They who navigate little streams and shallow creeks, know but little of the God of tempests; but they who “go down to the sea in ships, and do business in great waters, these see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep.” Among the huge Atlantic waves of bereavement, poverty, temptation, and reproach, we learn the power of Jehovah, because we feel the littleness of man. Self-esteem is that speck in the eye which most effectually mars human vision; the Great Surgeon of souls removes this from us chiefly by

sanctified afflictions. At the mouth of the furnace the Great Purifier sits as a Refiner to purify the sons of Levi, and when this work has been achieved, and they have become pure in heart, the divine purpose is accomplished, God's glory is manifested, for the pure in heart shall see the Lord. Thank God, then, dear brother, if you have been led by a rough road: it is this which has given you your experience of God's lovingkindness. Your troubles have enriched you with a wealth of knowledge to be gained by no other means; your trials have been the cleft of the rock in which God has set you as he did his servant Moses, that you might behold his glory as it passed by. Praise your God, O sons of sorrow, ye have not been left to the darkness and ignorance which continued prosperity might have involved. Bless him that you have been capacitated to show forth his glory by being permitted and honoured to endure a great fight of affliction. Our one aim in life is, I trust, to glorify our God, and if so, are not those afflictions precious which enable us to honour him? We will call them friends, if they help us to praise God. We will wear them as jewels, and rejoice in them as a bride rejoiceth in her ornaments, if they aid us in glorifying our blessed Lord. In this spirit, we may almost envy the children of Israel as we see them entangled in the wilderness and overtaken by their foes, for now shall they see the mighty arm of God made bare.

Our text exhibits the posture in which a man should be found while exercised with trial. Methinks, also, it shows the position in which a sinner should be found when he is under trouble on account of sin. We will employ it in both ways.

I. Take our text first, as A PICTURE OF THE BELIEVER WHEN HE IS REDUCED TO GREAT STRAITS. Then God's command to him is, "Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord."

In this brief sentence there are two things very conspicuous: first, *what is to be done*, "Stand still;" and secondly, *what is to be seen*, "See the salvation of the Lord."

1. *What is to be done?* The man is brought, we will suppose, into very extraordinary difficulties. He cannot retreat—that is sure destruction; he cannot go forward—that appears to be an impossibility: on the right hand he is shut up by providential hindrances; on the left an adversary prevents him. Here, then, is the counterpart of Israel's position: Egyptians behind, the Red Sea in front, the craggy steeps of Pi-hahiroth on the right, and the fortresses of Migdol and Baal-zephon frowning on the left. What is the believer now to do? The Master's word is the same to him as to Israel, "Stand still." Brethren, let me warn you of other advisers. *Despair* whispers, "Cast thyself down; lie down and die; complain against God; give it all up. You have been buffeting for years with circumstances, and you have made no headway; give up the unequal contest; float with the stream, even though you go over the cataract; let the worst come to the worst, for there is no hope of any success in life for you. If the Lord will always give you evil and not good, then curse God, and die. No longer attempt to provide things honest in the sight of all men, just let things go as they will; drift into poverty, or die in a ditch. God has given you up; evidently you have been the butt for all his arrows, the target for all his shots.

Now, despair; let there be an end of the thing." Not so, saith the God of our salvation; he loves us too well to bid us yield to despondency. He would have us put a cheerful courage on, and even in our worst times rejoice in his love and faithfulness. Faith hears the bidding of her faithful God, and is not willing to be shut up in the iron cage of despair; nay, she defies the old giant to put so much as a finger upon her. Lie down and die? that she never will, while her God bids her *stand*. See, beloved, the word *stand*. What does it mean? Keep the posture of an upright man, ready for action, expecting further orders, cheerfully and patiently awaiting the directing voice. This is a noble posture, but to despair, is mean and beggarly. Up, brother, play the man, be strong! While Jehovah lives there is no room for fear; a happy future awaits thee; yea, the present itself is bright with mercy, for the Lord's love is still the same.

"Behind a frowning providence  
He hides a smiling face."

"Ah," saith *Cowardice*, "Retreat." *Cowardice* whispered to the children of Israel that it was better to go back into Egypt. They are willing to go with ropes on their necks, and their hands bound behind them, and give themselves up to Pharaoh. To have their lives spared, they will relinquish their liberty. Hear them, they are basely talking about their graves while they are yet alive. So *Cowardice*, sometimes, when the Christian comes into a great strait, whispers, "Retreat to the worldling's way of action; you cannot play the Christian's part, it is too difficult. Evidently there are some men who can have faith in God, and can live in this world, but you cannot. If you must be in business, it is vain to attempt to be a Christian," says *Cowardice*. "Do as others do; follow the hollow maxims and tricky customs that once ruled you; let the shop be opened again on a Sunday; adulterate the goods once more; tell lies as you once did; be as other men are; go back and be Satan's slave; it is evident that religion will not keep a coat on your back and bread on your table; give it up now; go back. Relinquish the ways of God, and be once more a bondsman to your own corruptions and to the world's evil habits." Ah, trembler, however much Satan may urge this course upon you, you cannot follow it if you are a child of God. *Cowardice* may bid you do it, friends may advise it, and the devil drive you to it, but if God has quickened you by his divine Spirit, there is a something in you which is bound to go forward, which you yourself may struggle against, by virtue of the power of the old man, but which will get the mastery over you, and lead you in a divine captivity; so that even when evil is most rampant, the force of grace within will impel you towards the right, constraining you to stand in the ways of God. Where God impels forward, hell cannot drive back. O sun, thou turnest not back, because of the clouds which veil thy splendours. Predestinated of the Lord to persevere in thy perpetual path, thou climbest still the steep of heaven, and anon, thou dost descend to the western deeps; thou pausest not for tempest, hurricane, or storm; as a strong man runs a race, so dost thou speed onward towards thy far-off goal, for the Almighty bade thee move, and in his might thou travellest

onward evermore. So is it with thee, Christian, God has said "Forward." His divine fiat has bid thee go from strength to strength, and so thou shalt, and neither death nor hell shall turn thee from thy course. What, if for a while thou art called to stand still, yet this is but to renew thy strength for some greater advance in due time. Dream not, I pray thee, of so much as *looking* back; take courage, and in believing silence, possess thy soul while thy Captain bids thee "Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord."

*Precipitancy*, another evil counsellor, cries, "Do something. Something or other *must* be done. Do not despair; do not turn back, but stir yourself, and leave no stone unturned. To stand still and wait, is sheer idleness. There is no time to be lost, you *must* do something, be it right or wrong." Yes, but it is well to remember, that in some cases, the more haste the worse speed. When a Christian is in very sharp trouble, one of his strongest temptations is to be in an unbelieving, fretful state of agitation, which leads him to premature and unwise action. How sadly some who are weak in faith are doing and undoing themselves, by indiscreet haste! If they could but be quiet in faith, and stand still in patience, until the Master led the way, they would be led aright; but they run before the cloud, and fall into the net. So in haste are they to escape from Pharaoh's clutches, that they run into them at unawares. I am sure that much of the sin which we commit when we are in trouble, is produced by our being in a flurried state of heart; for then our soul is like a silly dove without heart, which has forgotten the dovecot, and therefore flies hither and thither, round and round, at imminent peril of its life from the hawk. We *must* be doing something at once—we must do it so we think—instead of looking to God, who will not only do something but who will do everything. Many of us when in a strait are hardly reasonable in our hasty endeavours. Fear blindfolds the judgment, and makes fools of us. Why is there any need of such speedy leaping—why not stand still and look? Are all means gone for ever if not snatched at in an instant? Will the Lord's arm grow short if I wait *his* time? Such questions we forget to ask; and, therefore, on we go, but our rash advance sinks us deeper in the mire; very soon we try something else, and only plunge into greater trials. We fly to this friend, and take his advice, and then to that, and get the reverse; then we go by our own judgment, and are, perhaps, greater fools still. O that we could learn to trust in the Lord with all our hearts, and lean not to our own understanding! What the Christian does with cool deliberation, when he has waited upon God, when, like David, he has said, "Bring hither the ephod," he does with a purpose, and God is with him; but what he does when he is excited or depressed, with an aching head and a fluttered heart, he will usually find cause to mourn over, and possibly he will be involved in more trouble through what he has done himself, than through the affliction which God sent him. But faith, I say, listens neither to Despair, nor to Cowardice, nor to Precipitancy, but it hears God say, "Stand still," and immoveable as a rock it stands.

Another hiss of the old serpent, is the suggestion of *presumption*. "On, on," says Presumption, "neck or nothing, make or break.

If the sea be before you, march into it and expect a miracle. It is true you have no divine command, but never mind, your own daring will work wonders. You know you are ordained to inherit Canaan, and therefore go on towards it, sea or no sea. God has not commanded you, and he has not as yet divided the sea, but still go on." Dear brethren, there is much hellish craft in this temptation; it is peculiarly adapted to beguile those advanced Christians, who know what it is to walk by faith. I am afraid it is very easy for us to mistake presumption for faith, although there is a wide difference between the two. There is so much of dash and dare about an incitement to presumption, that brave, Christ-loving spirits must be on their guard against it, for presumption will never work the wonders of faith. If Christ bids me come on the water to him, faith shall tread the billow; but if I spring upon the water myself, to walk to Christ, I must expect to sink far sooner than Peter did. When our illustrious Commander putteth a man upon an extraordinary work, he will give him extraordinary strength; but if a soldier runneth without the captain's order, and defieth a giant adversary, he may not expect assistance, and will be sure to return with defeat. What a needful prayer is that, "Show me what I am to do." In dilemmas between one duty and another, it is so sweet to be humble as a child, and wait with simplicity of soul upon the Lord. It is sure to be well with us when we feel and know our own folly, and are heartily willing to be guided by the will of God. Such standing still has more true valour in it than the mad charges and dashes of an arrogant presuming. My soul, seek thou earnestly the grace to stand still in obedience to thy Lord's behest.

But in what way are we to *stand still*, dear friends? Surely it means among other things, that we are to *wait awhile*. Time is precious, but there are occasions when the best use we can make of it, is to let it run on. If time flies, that is no reason why I am always to fly. Every experienced man knows that by being wrongly busy for one hour, he may make mischief which a lifetime would hardly rectify. I may cut my fingers if I am too fast in reaching down my sword; and if I run without waiting to enquire the way, I may run upon my ruin. Many who have been very busy in helping themselves, had better have been waiting upon their Lord. Prayer is never a waste of time. A man who would ride post-haste, had better wait till he is perfectly mounted, or he may slip from the saddle. He who glorifies God by standing still, is better employed than he who diligently serves his own self-will. Wait awhile, then. *Wait in prayer*, however. Call upon God, and spread the case before him; tell him your difficulty, and plead his promise of aid. Express your unstaggering confidence in him; *wait in faith*, for unfaithful, untrusting waiting, is but an insult to the Lord. Believe that if he shall keep you tarrying even till midnight, yet he will come at the right time; the vision shall come and shall not tarry. Wait in quiet *patience*, not murmuring because you are under the affliction, but blessing God for it; never murmuring against the second cause, as the children of Israel did against Moses; never wish you could go back to the world again, but accept the case as it stands, and put it as it stands simply and with your whole heart, without any

self-will, into the hand of your covenant God, saying, "Now, Lord, not my will, but thine be done. I know not what to do; I am brought to extremities, but I will wait until thou shalt cleave the floods, or else drive back my foes. I will wait, if thou keep me many a day, for my heart is fixed upon thee alone, O God, and my spirit waiteth for thee in the full conviction that thou wilt yet be my joy and my salvation, my refuge and my strong tower."

Well, brethren, this is what is to be done. I dare say you will think it a very easy thing to *stand still*, but it is one of the postures which a Christian soldier learns not without years of teaching. I find that marching and quick marching are much easier to God's warriors than standing still. It is, perhaps, the first thing we learn in the drill of human armies, but it is one of the most difficult to learn under the Captain of our salvation. The apostle seems to hint at this difficulty when he says, "Stand fast, and having done all, still stand." To stand at ease in the midst of tribulation, shows a veteran spirit, long experience, and much grace.

2. But now, secondly, *what is to be seen?* You are to see, O believer, the salvation of God. In your present temporal trials, you are to see God's power and love manifested. Now, I think I hear you say, "Well, one thing I know, *I cannot deliver myself* out of the dilemma in which I am now placed. I had some dependance once upon my own judgment and upon my own ability, but that dependance is entirely gone." I thank God for that. It is a good thing for you sometimes, Christian, to be wholly weaned from yourself. When you are made sick of self-dependance, it is not long ere your spirit shall be in a healthy state of trustfulness in your God. "Well, but," you say, "*I cannot conceive how* God can deliver me; I have tried to think by what means he will interpose, but I cannot see a door open, nor a way of escape." This is well too, for now this shows that human wisdom is dead. God has nonplussed your wit; he has made a fool of your judgment; he laughs to scorn all that keen intellect of yours which once was your confidence. Now you shall see divine wisdom. When self goes, God comes in; and when human wisdom goes, then God's wisdom appears. "Well, but," says one, "whatever God may do for me, I can clearly perceive it must be his own doing, for *I am powerless*, paralyzed. I am so utterly broken by the strength of this tremendous current, that if it be stemmed, it must be divine energy that stems it; I cannot do it." And this is well too, for now your power is dead. It is now that all the glory will be to God. While you had some power to help yourself, you would have shared the crown; but now, since all might is centred in the eternal arm, the whole of the crown shall be put on the eternal head. I am glad that your flesh is thus brought to a state of utter death. "Ah, but," you say, "sir, *I cannot believe* it possible that I should be delivered. I find my faith, this morning, reduced to the lowest ebb; it has run dry; I cannot believe the promise." "Ah, now," you say, "even my faith fails me." Everything that is of the creature has now gone; you are like the poor lost one in the desert, your tongue faileth for thirst; and now the Lord will save, for the God of Israel will not forsake thee. Evidently you are

reduced to the extremity of an extremity, when hope and faith alike are drowned; but now it is that the Lord will manifest his mighty strength. But you are saying, "What shall I see?" Well, I know not precisely what you shall see, except I am sure of this, you shall see *the salvation of God*, and in that salvation you shall see two or three things, just as the children of Israel saw them. You shall see, if needs be, *all nature and all providence subservient to God's love*. They saw the waters stand upright, contrary to nature; the east wind was made at once to obey God's behests, and blow all that night; thus they saw how there was nothing upon earth which could stand against the divine will. And you shall see the same. If it be needful for your deliverance, fire shall not burn you, neither shall the floods drown you. If you cannot be helped in the common order of providence, God will give some extraordinary proofs of his power. It may be that as you look back upon the method of your deliverance, you will be so surprised at it, that you will say, "If anybody had told me this beforehand, I would have laughed at them; but now I admire and wonder at the love of God." You shall be led to see that all things, even the most deadly, work together for good to them that love God. The waters cannot drown them, but they shall drown their foes. You will see again, if you will but stand still and see it, that *the Lord reigneth*. You shall have such a picture of Jehovah sitting upon his throne, controlling and overruling all things, that you shall extol him with your whole heart as your God and King for ever. You shall see most distinctly, if you will but wait and look for it, how he can make you a wonder. *You shall be a wonder to yourself*, and marvel how it is that God supports you. You shall be a wonder to your enemies. You shall do what they cannot do; you shall walk through the depths of the sea, which the Egyptians, assaying to do, were drowned. You shall see *your enemies utterly destroyed*, if you will but wait. God's bow shall be made quite naked. He shall make bare his arm. Death and hell shall lie at your feet. Your spiritual and your temporal trials too, shall be subdued under you; you shall tread them as straw is trodden for the dunghill. And as for you, if you will but stand and see it, you shall go forth like Miriam, with your timbrel of mirth and with your dance of joy. You cannot think it possible, shivering as you now are with the sight of your troubles, alarmed and afraid, that ever you should be singing, "O let us sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously;" but you shall, in this life you shall praise him; and if not, in the life which is to come, on that glorious shore you shall look back on all these perplexities and tribulations, and you shall say, "Let us sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he cast into the sea." Only learn to "Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord."

I have had this text burnt into my own consciousness. I desire to be found in that posture with regard to my own position in Christ's Church, and the work that the Master would have me perform. There are hours of perplexity when the most willing spirit, anxiously desirous to serve the Lord, knows not what part to take. Then what shall it do? Vex itself by despair? Fly back in cowardice, turn to the right hand in fear, or rush forward in presumption? No, but just say, "Lord,

thou knowest what I know not. Make a plain path for my feet; because of mine enemies, be my guide. Guide me with thy counsel while on earth, and afterward receive me to glory." Depend upon it, beloved, if we can get and keep in that frame of mind, it will not be long ere God shall say to us, as distinctly as ever Moses said to the people, "Go forward;" and we shall go forward to our joy and rejoicing, praising and magnifying his dear name.

II. I intend to take the text in reference to THE SINNER BROUGHT INTO THE SAME CONDITION IN A MORAL SENSE. I will trust that I have in this house of prayer this morning, some who have been led by God's Spirit out of the Egypt of their sins, where they did eat the leeks, and garlicks, and onions of their own sinful pleasures, but where they were made to smart as bondslaves under the law. You have begun to feel some divine awakenings. The Spirit of God has somewhat delivered you from the corruption of your former estate, but you are, as yet, under conviction. You have as yet found no peace, no solid peace. Your sins are around you; you can hear their hoarse voices as they threaten to drag you back or to destroy you. Before you flows the tempestuous and deep sea of divine wrath: you know how richly you deserve it; and your spirit sinks within you as you think how soon it may swallow you up. On the right hand and on the left, you see no method of escape. You had hoped to deliver yourself by your own righteousness, but the law, like Pi-hahiroth, riseth up with craggy battlements, and blocks the way. On the right hand, you seek to escape by ceremonies, but some dreadful threatening of God against the depravity of your nature, at once shuts out all hope in that direction. You are come, this day, to a dead stand. Well, now, *what are you to do?* What is the Master's word to you? O sinner, thus convinced of sin, my message from the Lord to thee, is "*Stand still.*" Understand what I mean, however, by it. I do not mean stand still in indifference, as though it were a little matter whether thou be damned or not; I do not mean stand still in inaction, without prayer, without repentance, without faith, but what I do mean is this, "*Stand still,*" first in the renunciation of all thine own righteousness, and of all attempts to seek a righteousness by thine own doings. Man, thou hast been hunting the whole world round to get something that may commend thee to God—cease thy hunting and stand still. Thou hast toiled and trodden many a weary league of performances, and prayers, and thinkings, and willings, and doings, but thou art not an inch the better for it. Thou hast tried to make thyself feel this, and to compel thyself to do the other, but thou art still as much in darkness as thou wast at the first. O, leave, leave, I pray thee, all these attempts to work out a salvation for thyself, and with regard to them all, "*Stand still.*" For, trembling soul, how canst thou hope to save thyself by thine own doings? Canst thou keep the law? Remember it is exceeding broad: it takes in all thine actions, private as well as public; thy words, even thine idle words; nay, it touches thy thoughts, the imagination and the thoughts of thy heart. Canst thou keep a law so spiritual as this? Dost thou believe that thou canst live without sinful thoughts? Now, mark thee, if thou hadst no acts of transgression, yet thy thoughts of

themselves were enough to send thee to the lowest hell. Why, when first of all a Christian gets a true view of the spirituality and extent of the divine command; when he hears the Master's words and understands them, "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart;" when he knows that this is true of every other command, that the *thought* of evil is sin, then he throws down the trowel with which he hoped to build himself a Babel tower of righteousness, and he saith, "I cannot do it; it is impossible; the law is too great; I cannot attain unto it." Besides, remember thine own weakness, sinner. Hast thou tried to keep the law? Hast thou not come down from thy chamber in the morning, full of as good resolves as ever were in a man's heart, and yet before the first meal was over, hast thou not committed thyself by some wrong expression, some angry temper? Didst thou ever pass a day without sin? Couldst thou do it? Your many break-downs and failures all tell you that there is no strength in your hand sufficient to open the gates of heaven, no power in your feet that shall be strong enough to make you tread the weary pathway that would lead to salvation by the works of the law. Stand still, sinner; why attempt a task for which thou art incapable? Do, I pray thee, recollect if thou couldst perform it for the future, yet thy past sins—where are they? Why, man, remember thy youth of folly. Didst thou always honour thy father and thy mother? Did thy young tongue always speak the truth? Is it not true of thee as the apostle said, "They go astray from the womb, speaking lies." Is it not one of the earliest things a child doth, to lie? and do not all these things stand in the book of God against you? There are your youthful sins. Who among us can look back upon our youth, with all its hot blood, without regret. "O God, lay not the sins of my youth to my door!" may be the prayer of even the most righteous man. And, bethink thee, what have been the crimes of thine age? O soul, if thou wilt but look back through the glass of the revelation of God, remembering that thy thoughts and thy words come into the account, thou wilt surely see it to be a long, black, dismal list of reasons for condemnation. You cannot find in your whole life any cause why mercy should be extended, but you can see twenty thousand reasons why justice should have its way with you. Why, then, dost thou seek, being already over head and ears in debt, to work out thine own salvation by the law? Thou hast already broken it, why try to keep it? That alabaster vase of God's command—if thou couldst have kept it spotless and whole would have been a passport of entrance for thee at the gates of heaven, but thou hast broken it—broken it to shivers, and thy black and foul fingers have taken away all whiteness from it. O, be not so foolish as to seek to do what thy past sins have rendered impossible! Moreover, soul, I do beseech thee to remember that thou canst not satisfy divine justice. What if thou shouldst put thy poor body through a thousand mortifications, starve it in a prison, or stretch it upon a rack, or broil it upon the fire, or drown it in the sea? None of these things could take away the anger of God against thee for thy sin. Nay, when thou shalt lie in hell, though the flames be hot, yet there is no power in the torments of

hell to make expiation for sin. The sinner is still as much an object of God's righteous detestation, after millions of years of agony, as when first the law's great whip began to fall. Wherefore then, dost thou go about hoping to do what the justice of God may well assure thee no creature of the race of Adam can do? And wilt thou recollect, too, that if—*if* thou couldst atone for the past, and if thou couldst prevent one sin for the future, yet thou thyself art vile. Thy nature is as evil as thine actions. The marrow of thy bones is impregnated with thy lust, and in thy blood there rolls a black stream of sin. Thou art thyself loathsome. Not only doth evil come from thee, but there is a fountain of evil within thee. The leprosy lies deep within. Thou art thyself an enemy to God, and thy carnal mind cannot be reconciled to God. No power can reconcile it. God can give thee a new mind, and a new heart, and a right spirit, but the old nature in thee is so bad that it cannot be mended; it must be dead and buried, crucified and slain with Christ, for while it lives, there is no perfection for thee; it cannot help thee, it can only mar God's work, till God strike the nail through its head, even as Jael slew Sisera of old. Sinner, why wilt thou be trying thy prayers, thy church-goings, thy sacraments, thy chapel-goings, thy baptisms, and the like? All these are a lie and a vanity, if thou trustest in them. Even God's own ordained ordinances become a farce and a delusion when once you make them the foundation of your hope—

“None but Jesus, none but Jesus  
Can do helpless sinners good.”

Sinner, stand still now.

But now, in the second and last place, upon this point, the sinner says, “Suppose then, I give up all hope, and do no more by way of trusting to myself, *what shall I see?*” Why, thou shalt see the salvation of God. Do remark, dear friends, that all the sinner can do, is to *see* this salvation. He is not to work it out, he is not to help it on, but he is to see it; yet, mark you, that sinner cannot even find out that salvation of itself, for if you notice, the next sentence to our text is, “which he will show you to-day.” God must show it to us, or else we cannot see it. “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.” There must be a manifestation of Christ to us, before we shall ever be able to perceive him. O that the Lord would now, while I talk for a few more minutes, reveal his great salvation to some sinner who is standing still. Now, soul, thou art thoroughly prepared to give up thy self-righteousness. Thou art willing to be nothing, and to do nothing, in order to save thyself, then let me tell thee, God has wrought out and brought in a glorious and complete salvation, more resplendent far than that which he meritoriously wrought for Israel in the Red Sea. I will tell thee of it. First, *it was ordained* of old, like that deliverance of the Red Sea. God had planned that. Before Pharaoh lived it was written in the eternal decree, “For this purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show forth my power in thee.” From old eternity God had chosen Israel to be the objects of his love, and cast away Egypt that it might show his honour in his terrible justice. The salvation of God's people was ordained of old. Before yon mountains lifted their

hoar heads, he ordained to save his people; and long ere the ancient deeps began to roar in their channels, he had chosen them. God did not choose the Israelites because of any goodness in them; they were a stiff-necked generation; they had no hand in their own choice; he called their father Abraham, as a Syrian ready to perish, and made him his chosen, and made a covenant with his seed after him. And so, God has prepared a salvation for his elect, chosen by him not because of any goodness in them, but because he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and will have compassion on whom he will have compassion. Is not this a salvation that will suit thee, O poor sinner? If God had chosen them out of any merit, or if that choice depended on anything which men did or could do, thou wert a damned soul, for thou hast no goodness, and thou canst do nothing. If God's election comes to those who are without merit, without hope, without strength, here is hope for thee. In the next place, the salvation which God shows is one *wrought by a mediator*. Moses was the mediator of that time. He stretched his rod over the sea. Jesus is the great mediator, of whom Moses was the feeble type. Sinner, Jesus Christ has divided the Red Sea of God's wrath, lifting up himself upon the cross, a mightier weapon far than Moses' rod; he made the floods of God's wrath retire, that all his chosen might march through. If thou believest in him; if standing still to-day thou wilt but see the salvation of God, thou mayst discern a path to heaven over which no waters of divine wrath can ever dash. Christ himself has substituted his own person for thine: he took your guilt and stood as a sinner in the sight of God. He was punished instead of your being punished, and it is impossible, according to equity, that God can punish two for the one offence. If Christ has paid the debt, the debt is paid. Since Jesus was the substitute, wrath is gone. If Christ drank all the hell-draught, then there is not a drop left for any of those to drink for whom he died; and if thou canst see this morning (it is all thou hast to do), if thou canst see that Christ has done this, rest thou assured that God who showed it to thee, has not showed thee a lie. Well do I remember when first my eyes saw the complete salvation of Christ Jesus. I had been gadding about after this, and that, and the other, but when I heard the gospel-message, "Look! look unto me and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth," I did nothing; I only trusted Christ to save me; I turned away from deadly doings and from soul-destroying feelings, to the wounded body of the Saviour, and believed that he had saved me, trusted to the merit of his life, and to the prevalence of his death, and to the mighty power of his plea, and then the Spirit of God bore witness with my spirit, that I was born of God, and sin was put away. Sinner, if thou art standing still—I pray God thou hast been brought to that—then *look!* Canst thou not see it? Was ever anything more plain. Jehovah's darling son becomes a man! Oh, mystery of mysteries. God was manifest in the flesh as a man. He stands as the representative head of all his elect. Being such, when Justice cried, "Bring hither the sinner," Christ came forward, bound like a captive and a malefactor. "Strip that sinner" said Justice; and they stripped him naked to his shame. "Bring forth the whip," said Justice. "Ply it hard." "He

gave his back to the smiter, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair." "Drag him to execution," said Justice, "a sinner must die." They pierced his hands and his feet; they lifted him up upon the tree; they gave him vinegar to drink in the midst of his bitterest grief; they mocked him in his extreme sorrows; he cried to God, but God could not help a sinner, and Christ stood as such, though in him was no sin. That shriek of "*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani,*" was the gathering up of all human misery. Hell did not know a more dolorous cry, than "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Let the thunderbolts be launched, let the lightning scathe him, let every demon of the pit come up against him, let every friend forsake him, let his heart break, let his tongue cleave to his mouth, let his mouth become a furnace, let his heart be melted like wax, let the joints of his bones be loosed, let him come into the jaws of death—the law requires it all. It is done. Justice, hast thou any more to demand? She answers "No." The mighty substitute exclaims, "It is finished;" and finished it is. The Red Sea of justice is effectually and perpetually divided. "But," saith one, "is this for the elect?" It is, and for them only. "But how know I whether I am one of them?" The elect are known by this—"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." The true mark of election is *trust*. If you will stand still and trust Christ, you are as certainly one of his elect as the apostles that are before his throne. *Trust* is the infallible mark of election; it is by this we make our calling and election sure. Believe thou in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. Stand still, then, and see salvation in Jesus. "Well," says one, "but you really do not mean to say that I am now, just as I am, to trust Christ to save me, and it is all done?" I do. Sinner, thou hast not misunderstood me. It is just that. Sinner, nothing do, either great or small, Jesus did it all, long, long ago. To add anything to him were to insult his perfect work; to hope to complete his matchless righteousness were impertinence; to imagine that thou couldst make better that which he has finished, were an idle, soul-destroying dream. Take a finished Saviour just as he is, and you are saved *now*, although you have no good thing of your own. Away with those rusty farthings of your own merit, those proposals and vows of your own doings. Take Jesus as he is, and that act of accepting Christ through his merit saves your soul. After you have done this, then will come the command—"Go forward." For the present, all we have to say to you, poor trembler, is, "Stand still, and see the salvation of God." May the Lord bless these last words to the sinner, and my first words to the saint, and we will together stand still and see what the Lord hath wrought; we will together sing unto him, for he will triumph gloriously, and all our enemies shall be cast into the midst of the sea. The Lord bless you for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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