

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

THE DAY OF SALVATION.

A Sermon

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“Behold, now is the day of salvation.”—2 Corinthians vi. 2.

THE outward features of a day none can change. The kings of the earth cannot command for themselves bright days nor inflict upon their enemies days of tempest. It belongs to a higher than they to command the morning and cause the day-star to know his place. It is little they can do in reference to the light and the sun, and the clouds, and the rain; they cannot bind the sweet influences of the Pleiades nor loose the bands of Orion. Still rulers and governors and kings have accomplished much in shaping the social character of the days of their subjects. Sometimes, like the king of Nineveh, they have proclaimed days of fasting, and their subjects have been clothed in sackcloth; and on other occasions they have exercised the prerogative to ordain days of feasting, as Ahasuerus did at the palace of Shushan, when for a hundred and fourscore days “he shewed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the honour of his excellent majesty,” by filling the capital with feasting. Kings of the older stamp were more able to affect the days of their people than they are now; in former times, when men had less wit and more faith in the fable of divine right than they have now, a despot could cause a thick darkness over all the land, even darkness that might be felt. They made war according to their own fancy or frenzy, and what is that but moral midnight? What does war mean but crime, suffering, death, poverty? Is it not usually the sum of all villainies? Everything that is evil either marches with it or follows in its train. The very thought of war for our beloved country darkens our heavens. Alas, with what a light heart have despots drawn the sword and sought to wade through slaughter to imaginary glory, shutting the gates of mercy on mankind that they might seize a province or avenge a jest. Kings can also brighten men's days when they have a mind to be quiet: they make peace and then the nations bask in the sun, and earth covers her battle-fields with verdure. Peace gives the poor world

respite to bind up her gaping wounds and remedy a little of the mischief of the bloody fight. Hard labour and stern self-denial are not grudged by the suffering peasants if they may but have breathing time, and the land may enjoy her Sabbaths; but why should such toil and suffering have been demanded? Simply because kings quarrel, and their subjects must die to end the strife. Princes have also on occasion exercised their prerogative by proclaiming days of amnesty and oblivion: a long rebellion has been crushed out, and there has been no fear of its return, and then the monarch has thought it best to refrain from undue severity, and overlook the evil which he has subdued; accordingly he proclaims that the past shall be blotted out if by a certain time rebellious ones will surrender, yield up their arms, and promise loyalty. Such days are calm and clear, and bring light to despairing rebels who saw no end but the gallows tree. Thus, for humiliation or rejoicing, for war, for peace, or for pardon, monarchs can set their seal upon a day, and mark it with their signature in history. If earthly monarchs can somewhat affect the days of men; what then can be done by the King of kings? The Creator of day and night can surely order all our lights and shades. The Ancient of days is he who can give us "mornings without clouds" or make the day dark with gloom. How often has he made the sun of prosperity to gladden us, and how suddenly has he shrouded us beneath the thick clouds of adversity! Our days are in his hand; and he is Lord of all. You and I, looking back, may well bow before the power and majesty of the Eternal, who hath such infinite power over us that none of us can stay his hand nor say unto him, "What doest thou?"

The Lord has had his days of vengeance; are they not written in the book of the wars of the Lord? How terrible was the hour when he opened the sluices of the firmament that the rain might descend in torrents, and bade the fountains of the great deep rise to meet the descending floods. How dreadful were the forty days wherein the floods above the firmament, in tumultuous mirth, leaped downward to embrace their brethren of the ocean, till the whole earth was covered with one all-devouring deluge, and sea monsters whelped and stabled in the palaces of kings. That was the assize of justice, and the day of vengeance of our God. Such days have been at other times, as, for instance, when he poured hell out of heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah; when he overthrew Pharaoh and all his host in the midst of the Red Sea; and when his sword stayed not from blood till Hivite and Perizzite and all the Canaanites fell before the hand of Joshua because the iniquity of the people was full, and the hour of execution had arrived. Those were the "dies iræ," and there is another far more terrible yet to come, when heaven and earth shall flee away before the face of him that shall sit upon the great white throne. Blessed be God, we are not at this time living under the rod of vengeance, but our text tells us that "now is the day of salvation." When it is a day of vengeance the Lord does his strange but necessary work thoroughly; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." The prophet said of him, "The Lord revengeth, and is furious." Well did Miriam sing, "The Lord is a man of war, Jehovah is his name": but when he putteth on the silken robes of mercy, and proclaims with silver trumpet

the day of salvation, "blessed are the people that know the joyful sound." I trust that we are among that happy company, and have heard with the inner ear the note of grace. At any rate the Lord hath set a period of salvation, even from the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus to this present hour. The day of salvation has not been suspended, it lasts on, and it shall last till the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout: then shall come the judgment, and strict justice shall sit upon the throne.

The apostle when he was writing this very wonderful sentence dreaded lest men should not avail themselves of its great truth. Read the first verse of the chapter,—“We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.” The day of salvation is a great favour from God, and it would be a fearful thing if we should live in it and miss its privilege. Dear hearers, it is only of divine favour that we enjoy this day of amnesty, oblivion, and forgiveness; and, therefore, we beseech you not to let its golden hours pass over you in vain. This is the great anxiety of my heart at this time in addressing you; I have great fear lest some of you should live in the day of salvation and yet die without being saved, should live in the midst of light with blinded eyes, should dwell with deaf ears, where the silver trumpet soundeth and so the kingdom of God should come very nigh unto you and yet you should not enter it. It will be sad indeed if you should see strangers from afar brought into the kingdom of heaven, and yourselves, who live on its borders, should be utterly thrust out. May the Holy Spirit bless the words which shall now be spoken, so that the evil which we fear may not come upon you, but that you may receive this grace or favour of God to your eternal good.

That you may not receive this grace in vain I shall try, first, to show *the grand reason for this day of salvation*; secondly, I shall speak of *the glorious day itself*; and thirdly, for a minute or two I shall dwell upon *the dark shade which may close that day*, if the Spirit do not lead us into salvation.

I. First, then, THE GRAND REASON FOR THIS DAY—“Now is the day of salvation.” Will you kindly read the context in order to understand why there is a present day of salvation? I will take you a little away from the text to the 20th verse of the preceding chapter, and ask you to bear in mind that the division into chapters is purely arbitrary, and we need take no notice of it whatever. The apostle says, “Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” Here then is the secret of the whole matter. This day is the day of salvation because “he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” There could have been no day of salvation if a Saviour had not appeared, and if that Saviour had not become our substitute and surety, salvation would have been denied us by the stern voice of justice. But now Christ hath come into the world and died for sin, and because he hath finished all the works which he undertook, the Lord our God proclaims for us the day of salvation.

Notice that according to the context *this is the day of salvation*, because *we may now be reconciled to God*. "We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." The Lord would not set his ministers to pray men to be reconciled to him if peace were out of the question. He would not send us upon an impossible errand. God is already reconciled to every sinner who has an interest in the blood of Jesus. Towards those the Lord is full of peace. Nothing is wanted now to reconcile God to the believing man. The great thing that is required is to bring men to believe in Jesus Christ that they may be reconciled to God. The feud between you and God, poor prodigal child, need not be continued. You quarrelled with your Father, and you went into the far country; and now you have spent your substance, but your Father sends to you this message, "Be reconciled. Come home, a loving reception awaits you; return at once." Because Jesus hath died the partition wall is broken down; the great gulf between a holy God and unholy man is bridged by the atoning blood. Ye may be reconciled; there is no reason why the terrible quarrel should continue, and therefore, because reconciliation is possible, it is a day of salvation. As long as man remains an enemy to God he cannot of course be saved, for enmity to God is the very essence of his ruin and the sting of his condemnation. While a man lives in enmity to God he is, and he must be, under the power of an evil spirit which curses him; and therefore reconciliation to God is absolutely necessary to the enjoyment of salvation. I repeat that, because reconciliation is possible, this day of salvation has come.

Next, lest any one should exclaim, "But how is it and why is it that so great a boon is conferred? I cannot understand it and therefore I am plunged in doubt"—the plain statement of the 21st verse explains it all: "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin." Here is the grand doctrine of *substitution*. Oh soul, if thou believest in Christ Jesus thou shalt be saved because he stood in thy stead, he took thy sin, and the Lord made him to be sin on thine account, and exacted at his hand satisfaction for thine iniquity. He bruised him and put him to grief, so that he was made a curse for us and bore in our stead the wrath of heaven. Now therefore the righteous God will not, cannot, need to vindicate his law a second time. If he has made the Lord Jesus to be sin for us, then he need not visit us for sin nor punish the same offence a second time. Nay, it would be injustice to lay sin once upon the substitute and afterwards upon the sinner; therefore well may there be a day of salvation proclaimed since Christ has finished transgression and made an end of sin.

To help us to understand mercy's great expedient still better, the Holy Spirit tells us that the divine design in Christ Jesus is to make us the "righteousness of God" in Christ. Wonderful expression! I shall not attempt to enter into its fulness, but I will content myself with saying that the two expressions of the verse set forth the imputation of sin to Christ and of righteousness to us, the substitution of Christ in our place, and the standing of our souls in Christ's place, in terms so forcible that he must be determined not to believe the doctrine who does not see it in the words before us. Our Lord is not merely made a sin-offering, but he is made sin, and we are not merely made righteous in Christ, but we are made righteousness itself, ay, and the

righteousness of God, too, which is the very highest conceivable righteousness. I never wish to strain expressions, nor push them one inch beyond their proper meaning, but I think it difficult to do so here, since the language is so very forcible and explicit. If the doctrine which I have explained were intended to be taught, I do not see how it could be more clearly stated. Now, soul, if thou desirest salvation, see how God can give it thee. As he takes thy sin and lays it upon Christ so he takes Christ's righteousness and lays it upon thee. He looks at thee as if thou wert as righteous as his Son who represents thee. He treats thee as if thou hadst been obedient to all his law; he looks upon the model man Christ Jesus, the perfect humanity, and he sees in Christ all his people, and treats them accordingly. He looks upon his people as if they themselves had magnified the law and made it honourable by a sinless life. Wondrous doctrine this, but he that believes it shall find rest unto his soul; and it is because of it that we are authorized to come forth this day and declare the day of salvation. The guilt of the believing sinner is put away, for Christ has carried it; and now righteousness belongs to the sinner, for God imputes it to him without works: therefore this is the day of salvation.

Still keeping to the context, and illustrating in an other way the grand reason for the day of salvation, will you kindly read the verse itself which contains our text? "For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." It is a quotation: Paul says, "he saith." Where does God say that? We have no difficulty in discovering: it is in the 49th of Isaiah, which passage should be carefully read by you and heartily pondered. I wish to call your special attention to it as opening up the glorious reason for the famous proclamation of which we are preaching. That chapter, from the sixth to the twelfth verse eminently applies to the Messiah, that is, to our Lord Jesus Christ. Of whom else could the prophet have spoken as in the seventh verse: "Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers"? Who is this but our Lord as he stood before Herod and Pilate? To this very day he is abhorred of the Jews: they mention him ordinarily by the name of "the Crucified," and to them that term is the embodiment of the utmost scorn. We glory in that word, but to them it is the essence of contempt. "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." We are sure that Isaiah spake concerning him, the Crucified, whom we adore, and our next enquiry is, what did he say of him? Read the fifth and sixth verses: "And now, saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength. And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." Beloved, are you not glad to hear these words. If you are not curious to hear *me*, but eager to hear my Master's truth, your heart will be rejoiced at this blessed news, that now *Christ has*

come to be the salvation of the Gentiles. We were out in the cold, we were the younger branch of the family, and the heir despised us, we had not yet come into our portion, we were left in darkness and in sin ; but now our turn has come, and we are favoured. From the day when Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" our privileges began. From the day when Paul said, "Seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles," ours has been a day of favour, and the portion which once belonged alone to the seed of Abraham we have obtained, only that we have obtained it to a far larger extent, and we see more clearly its deep spiritual meaning and wealth of blessing. What was veiled under types and shadows is evidently set forth before our eyes. Beloved, tell it all over the world to-day, that salvation has come to the Gentiles, and especially to the dwellers in the islands. How remarkable it is that islands are so often alluded to in the Scriptures, and that they receive the gospel so much more readily than any other parts of the world. As for the ends of the earth, surely we are intended by that term, for our forefathers dwelt where Phœnicians made distant and dangerous journey to find tin and other metals, and our land was thought to be upon creation's verge, inhabited by a barbarous people of uncouth tongue ; and yet to us, even to us, hath the gospel come, and now—

"The British islands are the Lord's,
Here Abraham's God is known ;
While powers and princes, shields and swords,
Submit before his throne."

Jehovah, the God of the whole earth is our God at this day ; in this let us exult, for it proves that to the Gentiles the day of salvation has come.

Further, he goes on to say in the eighth verse, "Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee." Mark this well. *God saves us because he heard the Lord Jesus.* There is the secret of all the answers of grace to the prayers of penitents. He saith, "I have heard thee in an accepted time : behold, now is the day of salvation." In the lonely watches of the night our great Intercessor prayed for his own. He lived a life of supplication, and he prayed not in vain, for he once said to the Father, "I know that thou hearest me always," and indeed it was always so. His prayers may be said to have reached their highest point when he offered the marvellous intercession recorded in John 17th, and followed it up by his strong crying and tears in the garden when he poured out his soul in agony, while prostrate among the olives he sweat as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground. Mysterious was that bloody sweat ! Oh ye precious drops, ye fell not by chance ; what wrote ye on the soil of Gethsemane in crimson hieroglyphs ? Ye wrote upon the earth the reversal of the curse which fell upon the ground, and the ending of the day of wrath in the day of salvation. That sacred sweat bedewed a garden which henceforth yields the oil of joy, wherewith believers may anoint their faces with gladness. Jesus was heard in that he feared, and henceforth to the chief of sinners it is a gospel of good cheer. "In an acceptable time have I heard thee." Is it not wonderful that Jesus in the garden made

intercession for transgressors who as yet had not learned to pray for themselves? I trust that among those who hear me there are persons unconverted as yet who nevertheless are special objects of the Redeemer's intercession, and who shall find salvation because their great Substitute was heard on their account. We were all heard when our Great High-priest was heard; the Father's answer to him was an answer of peace to all his people.

It is added, "In a day of salvation have I helped thee." Help came to the man Christ Jesus in his hour of agony; the Father succoured him, and there appeared unto him an angel strengthening him. How must that angel have marvelled as he saw the face of the incarnate God red with a sweat of blood. The whole scene is beyond conception strange and singular: the prostrate Saviour in agonizing pangs utters strong cryings, and is helped of his God.

"His earnest prayer, his deepening groans,
Were heard before angelic thrones;
Amazement wrapt the sky:
'Go, strengthen Christ!' the Father said:
The astonish'd seraph bow'd his head,
And left the realms on high."

The angel came to strengthen our champion, not to join in the fight. None could share the conflict, Jesus must tread the wine-press alone; but the angel was empowered to communicate strength to the manhood of Christ, and he did so. Then was it that, being succoured in his hour of need, our Master took the appointed cup so full of woe, and drank it to its utmost dregs, and said, "It is finished!" 'Twas then that by one dreadful draught he pledged the justice of God, and gave this day of salvation to the sons of men.

You see, then, that our present day of privilege has come to us through the Lord's hearing and succouring our Daysman and Redeemer; but, beloved, salvation comes to us also, because according to the eighth verse it is written, "I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth." *Jesus is now God's covenant with man*, and that covenant is one of peace and favour. The Lord says to each believing man "Thy sin will I remember no more. A new heart also will I give thee, and a right spirit will I put within thee. Thou shalt be mine. I will sanctify thee and glorify thee with my Son. Behold, in token of my faithfulness I have given my Son to be the seal, the surety, and the sum of my covenant. Behold, I have given him for a covenant to the people, a leader and commander for the people." Brethren, you are not under the covenant of Moses to-day, you are under the covenant of Jesus; you are not under law, but under grace, and because of this to-day is the day of salvation.

I cannot at this time enlarge upon the other blessed verses which make up the 49th of Isaiah; but let me say it is because Christ is now anointed to give liberty to all captives, and say to them, "Go forth"; it is because he brings the darkened ones out of death-shade and says, "show yourselves," that therefore this is a day of salvation. And, furthermore, when we are delivered from bondage and darkness then because Christ is a shepherd, and leads his flock, and makes them

to feed in the ways, and finds pasture for them in high places, and protects them from hunger and thirst, and gives them springs of water to drink of,—it is because of all this that now is the day of salvation.

I will not further enlarge, but only say if I now preach the day of salvation, as I will try to do, with the utmost boldness and fulness, if any of you enquire, “How is it? How is it? Why is grace so free at this day?” I shall tell you that the cause is quite as marvellous as the fact, that the way of salvation is as surprising as salvation itself, and that Jesus Christ the Son of God, who hath done, and is doing it all, is the most wonderful of all. In his eyes I see the stars which can shine away the midnight of despair; in his hands I see the majestic might which can break the fetters of Satanic bondage; and in his face I see the sacred guidance which shall bring the sacramental host of his elect safe home in unbroken ranks, to the land of the tearless eyes.

II. Now, kindly leave Isaiah and turn again to the text. Under the second head we have to speak upon **THE GLORIOUS DAY ITSELF**, for the day of salvation is rich with blessing.

First, I would commend that day because of *its fourfold excellence*. Read again the verse in which our text stands. Although the words must be regarded as spoken, in the first place, to our Lord, the best expositors say that they are also addressed to his church in him. The word came to him as the Head and Representative of his people, and so to his chosen as one with him. So then, beloved, in this day of salvation our *prayer will be heard*: “I have heard thee in a time accepted.” Dear hearer, if you will sincerely pray in the name of Jesus you will be heard. Are you very guilty? Ask mercy, and you will be heard. “I have heard thee in an accepted time.” Have you condemned yourself? Have you written your own death warrant? Are you bowed down with a sense of guilt? Pray and pray, and pray again! Oh, brother, pray, I beseech thee. If thou be between the jaws of hell, still pray, for now is the day of salvation, and it is a day in which he that asketh receiveth, he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

Secondly, we are further told that this day *help will be given*. What does it say? “In the day of salvation have I succoured thee.” Are you helpless, are you hopeless? This is a day in which God will come to your relief. Do you need strength to break the chains of habit? Do you need power even to repent? Do you need help to feel your helplessness? Do you need everything? “Behold,” he says, “in the day of salvation have I succoured thee.” He will help you; only ask him, only trust him. When there was a great straitness of business in the Manchester district during the American war, and many were out of work and starving, many instances occurred in which persons were found near to death’s door, “clammings” as they called it, or dying of starvation. When they were kindly visited and asked why they did not apply for relief, they answered that they could not ask. British independence, as we call it, and a very noble spirit it is within proper bounds, was strong within them, and many a man said, “I could not bring myself to ask.” I admire that spirit between man and man, but I do not admire it when it touches the matter of the soul, and lies between a poor worthless sinner and the great and ever blessed God. Do not be proud and say, “I cannot bring myself to ask,” for behold your prayer will be answered now

and whatever help you require will be freely given you. Does not that one fact show that we live in the day of salvation?

And then it is added, "Behold, now is the accepted time," so that the third blessing is that *coming sinners will be accepted*. If you will come to God he will not reject you, whoever you may be. However poor your repentance and weak your faith, it is a gracious time and the Lord will freely accept your sincere desires for his Son's sake. Does not this fact encourage you to come? The door of mercy is open and no man can shut it. The Lord Jesus has never yet rejected a coming sinner and he never will, for it is written, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." It is a season of acceptance, not of rejection: come and partake in the blessing.

And then the fourth excellence is that it is *a time of salvation*, of which we will speak at greater length. You need saving; be glad then that it is salvation's own day. All that can be needed to secure the salvation of a sinner has been fully prepared by Christ and is now freely presented in the preaching of the word to every soul that is willing to receive it. Jesus was born to save, he died to save, and lives to save.

Now, let me notice that this ought to be *peculiarly pleasant news to those who are heavily laden with guilt*. I have known the day when, if I had heard such words as those I try to speak, I think I should have leaped at them at once, as a hungry dog doth at a bone. Sinners, this is the day of salvation, not a day of justice. Come and confess your sin: you shall not be accused, condemned, and punished, but freely forgiven. It is a day in which you may mourn to think you have sinned, but need not despair nor indulge a single unbelieving thought, for that would be unsuitable to the time, which is a day of good tidings. From now till the day when you shall pass out of this mortal state it is one long and blessed day of grace. There was a week of creation, and the Lord God performed great wonders of creating power and put not forth his left hand to destroy; so now there is a day of salvation, and all around angels of love are hovering, singing still, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, goodwill towards men." God is saving all that come to him by Jesus Christ. Everything proclaims salvation; the air is full of gentle voices; in fact, your very existence, continued by longsuffering, is a message of grace. You being found in a house of prayer this morning has an eye towards your being saved. Your eager attention gives me hope it shall be so. Shall it not be now accomplished by your believing in Jesus? The fountain to wash your guilt away is filled; the "best robe" to cover you is prepared; the finger ring of everlasting love is ready to be put upon your finger, and the shoes of gladness and of peace are waiting you. Oh, poor soul, to-day I have nothing to preach but salvation; salvation through the blood of Jesus Christ. "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel," said our Lord Jesus, and that gospel is salvation, free salvation to the sons of men.

The truth of our text should also be *very encouraging to those who are fighting against inward sin*. I know some who can trust Christ for pardon, but their chief difficulty is how they can be made holy. I greatly delight in seekers in whom this is the main thought; not so much to escape punishment as to avoid future sin. Well, if you are fighting

against evil in the name of Jesus Christ, do not be discouraged, you will master it, because it is the day of salvation, and it is written, "They shall call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." Do I address a drunkard? Has the intoxicating cup a strange fascination for you, and have you gone back to drinking, after having often loathed yourself for it? You need not be a slave to it any longer, for this is a day of salvation from that sin: by faith in Christ you shall be delivered out of that deadly snare. Or have you been tempted to some other gross iniquity which holds you spellbound? Does a certain vice fix its basilisk eyes upon you and enchant you till you can no longer restrain yourself? Rejoice, then, for this is the day of salvation from sin. Neither saint nor sinner need sit down under the power of any sin, for in Christ Jesus' name we can overcome the power of evil. Do not excuse yourselves by talking of besetments, ye must thrust away all sin; ye must overcome temptation, for if any sin shall totally vanquish you, you will be lost for ever, since it is only to "him that overcometh" that the crown is given. How, then, can you overcome? Why, only by the power of Christ, who bids us this day lay hold upon salvation from sin. Come to him and trust him, and he will destroy the works of the devil within you.

While this is very encouraging to penitents and to those who are fighting with sin it should be equally cheering to *tried believers*. Beloved, are you in deep trouble just now? Is your spirit overwhelmed within you? Be of good cheer, for this is the day of salvation. It is not a time for saints to die in; it is not a day in which the enemy shall triumph over believers; it is for us the day of salvation. Be glad, then, O ye who are assailed by the enemy. Though your foe may put his foot upon your neck, yet he cannot crush your life out, but you may boldly cry, "Rejoice not over me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise again." It is the day in which believers must be saved. Did not Christian, in "Pilgrim's Progress," find it so from the very day in which he left the city of destruction to the time when he passed through the river and said, "I feel the bottom, and it is good"? He had days of conflict, days of weariness, and days of deep distress of mind, but all along he was saved, saved from the lions, and saved from Giant Despair, saved from the flatterer's net, and saved from the last river with its chill floods. We also live in the day of salvation. "Ah," said a Popish bishop once to one of our martyrs, "You are a heretic, and you will be damned." "My lord," said the heroic man, "there I am at a pass with you; I may be burned, but I never shall be damned." "Why so?" said his adversary. The man replied by quoting that passage in the old translation, "There is therefore now no damnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." Who shall condemn those for whom Christ hath died? it is the day of salvation, not of accusation. It is the day of victory, not of defeat, not of captivity, much less a day of destruction to the true people of God. Let us, then, as is most meet, hang out the streamers of joy, and with glad music set our souls in fit trim to keep the feast of salvation.

And do you not think this truth should *encourage all who are at work to win souls for Jesus*? Brethren, if I had my pick of days I should like to go forth and preach the gospel when it was a day of salvation,

would not you? One likes to go down the river with the tide, and if you can have a fair wind as well it is grand sailing: but surely, now, whenever you seek for souls you have wind and tide with you, for it is the day of salvation. God is saving men, it is his daily business, and his crowning glory, and he has set his heart on it; just as I remarked that Ahasuerus ordained a season of feasting and banqueted the people, and there is no doubt that they did feast at a royal rate, so when the infinite Jehovah proclaims a day of salvation the people shall be saved, and there shall be no question about it. Thousands upon thousands of erring ones shall repent and believe, and so shall be saved to the glory of his grace. Do not tell me that London is very wicked, I know it is; but the Lord has much people in this city, and he will redeem them from all iniquity. Our rural population may also be in many places perishing in gross darkness, but "the Lord knoweth them that are his": he has jewels in yonder cottages, and he will make them to be his own. His chosen are hidden away in the dark mines of iniquity, but he will find out his gold and purify it. His everlasting purpose shall not fail, and his infinite pity shall not be stayed. Glory be to his blessed name, he will accomplish all his purposes, for this is a day of salvation, and his people shall be called to him by some means, by any means, by every means. They shall be brought up out of the horrible pit, and out of the miry clay; and they shall know that the Lord saveth not by might, nor by power, but by his Spirit.

I think I have worked out that point sufficiently. "Now is the day of salvation."

I wonder whether anybody mistakes me. Dear friends, you know we commonly call this year 1878 a year of grace. We are quite right, for it is so. We say *Anno Domini*, the year of our Lord, and so it is; it is Jesus Christ's year. Any time between the first of January and the last of December in which you seek him, he will be found of you. Suppose you try it now. There cannot be a better hour. Here, where many have found him, consecrate that seat on which you sit. Dear brother, may the Holy Spirit help you to do so by now saying, "I would be reconciled to thee, my God, by the great Mediator: I would accept this salvation which thou hast freely set before me." I pray you do so.

III. To some of you I have spoken these many years, getting now into the twenty-fifth year, and shall I speak in vain? Our last word was to be something about A DARK CLOUD WHICH MAY DARKEN THE CLOSE OF THIS DAY OF SALVATION. I pray it may not, yet I fear it. My dread is lest you receive this great favour in vain, lest you live in this day of salvation and yet are lost. That will be for me a calamity, for I shall lose my labour; and more, there will be your mother's tears all lost, your father's prayers all lost, and your Sabbath school teacher's earnest instructions all lost, and other ministers' frequent invitations all gone for nothing. May it not be so, for that is unprofitable for you as well as for us. You will have lost all those Sabbaths, all those Bible readings, all those prickings of conscience. I know some of you are very attentive hearers and yet you have not found grace in this day of salvation. Salvation is all round you, yet you have it not. You have wasted golden opportunities. Ah, there

will come a day when you will wish for another Sabbath but it will be denied you ; your last sermon shall have been heard and your last warning shall have been received. Do not lose, I pray you, the privileges you enjoy of being born in a Christian land, of having an open Bible, of listening to an earnest ministry. Do not let those who never enjoyed such privileges have in the eternal world the start of you. Do not let Sodom and Gomorrah and Tyre and Sidon have to tell you that it is more tolerable for them in hell than for you. The Lord Jesus assures us that it will be so if you have been hearers of the gospel and lived in the day of salvation and received this grace in vain. The text says it is *a day* ; and a day comes to an end. These are no words of mine, but the words of Scripture. "Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To-day if ye will hear his voice." Do you not see that the day of salvation, though it has lasted eighteen hundred years and more, is still a day, and will surely end ? The opportunity of mercy lasts not for ever, let none deceive you as to that matter. The hope of grace will end with the day of grace ; let not the smooth-tongued ministers of the devil who enter the pulpits of Christ now-a-days delude you as to any vain hope that another day of grace will come. I have no such flattering message to speak to you, but I speak as this Book teacheth. If you let this day of salvation pass, and if you glide into another world unsaved you are lost for ever. I know no more, but I know that this Bible so declareth it. "These shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal." Do not indulge vain dreams. If the Lord speaks of a day, be sure that he hath limited the day ; and if he declares this to be the day of salvation, you are not authorized to expect that another such period will ever come. "If he that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses" (listen to that) : "of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God." Oh, yield to the Lord Jesus, accept his salvation, and trust him at once. I pray you in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Isaiah xlix.

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—241, 239, 406.
