

PLAIN GOSPEL FOR PLAIN PEOPLE

NO. 1967

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 12, 1887,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“For this commandment which I command you this day, it is not hidden from you, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very nigh unto you, in your mouth, and in your heart, that you may do it.”
Deuteronomy 30:11-14.

OUR Lord Jesus Christ, in John's gospel, in the forty-sixth verse of the fifth chapter, says, “Moses wrote of Me.” Hence we may safely interpret much that Moses said, not only of the law, but also of the gospel; indeed, the law itself was given primarily to drive men to the gospel, it was meant to show them the impossibility of salvation by their own works, and so to shut them up to a salvation which is available even for sinners. The types of sacrifice and purification pointed to the method of pardon for the guilty by faith and acceptance for sinners by a righteousness, not their own. This is certainly one of the passages in which Moses wrote of the Savior yet to come.

We are not, however, left to conjecture this, for the apostle Paul, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, has quoted this passage in the tenth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. He has given us a sort of paraphrase of it, not quoting it with verbal exactness, but giving its sense, and then inserting his own interpretation of that sense, which interpretation, seeing that he spoke under the direct influence of the Spirit of God, may be accepted as decisive. The Spirit of God best knew what He meant by the words which He spoke by Moses. Even if Moses himself may not altogether have meant the same, the Spirit's own meaning must stand. I believe, however, that Moses did intend that which Paul attributes to him, and that he saw in the whole revelation of God under the ancient dispensation the spirit, the essential spirit, of the gospel, which was more fully declared to us by our Lord Jesus Christ. In this instance he was not speaking of the law as given upon Sinai, if we view it as a covenant of works. I showed you this by reading the first verse of the twenty-ninth chapter, which is the preface to the passage now before us. There we read, “These are the words of the covenant, which the Lord commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, *beside the covenant which He made with them in Horeb.*” We must understand Moses to be speaking now of God's way of salvation as it is set forth in the types, and sacrifices, and ordinances of the Mosaic dispensation—which Paul calls, “the righteousness of faith.” Paul interprets him as speaking of the gospel itself, and using these remarkable words concerning salvation by grace.

What is meant by these words is this—that the way of salvation is plain and clear, it is not concealed among the mysteries of heaven, “It is not in heaven, that you should say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it?” Neither is it wrapped up among the profundities of deep, unrevealed secrecy, “Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?” But the way of salvation is brought home to us, given to us in a handy form, and laid within grasp of our understanding; it is spoken to us in human language, and brought within the compass of human emotions. We can speak it with our mouths, and enjoy it with our hearts. It is a household treasure, not a foreign rarity. It is not so remote from us that only they can know it that travel far to make discoveries, neither is it so sublimely difficult that only they can grasp it that have soared to heaven and ransacked the secrets of the book sealed with seven seals. It is brought to our doors like the manna, and flows at our feet like the water from the rock. It is, as Moses says, “very near to us;” yes, very near to each one who hears the gospel, for Moses puts it in the singular, “It is very nigh unto *you*, in your mouth, and in your heart, that you may do it.”

I. And so I begin my discourse this morning with this first head, THE WAY OF SALVATION IS PLAIN AND SIMPLE. You have neither to look skyward nor seaward to find it out; here it is before you, near as your tongue, inseparable from you as your heart. You have neither to rise to the sublime, nor sink to the profound, it lies before you an open secret. As says Moses in the last verse of the previous chapter, "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever."

I think *we might have expected this if we consider the nature of God*, who has made this wonderful revelation. When God speaks to a man with a view to his salvation, it is but natural that in His wisdom He should so speak as to be understood. It is not wisdom which leads teachers to become obscure, if they teach at all, they should adapt themselves to the disciple's capacity. No doubt some men have obtained a reputation for wisdom because they have not been understood, but this was fictitious, and unworthy of true men. If they had possessed the highest wisdom, they would have aimed at making matters clear when their objective was to instruct. As a general rule, when a speaker is not clear to his hearers it is because the thought is not clear to himself. This can never be supposed of Him who knows all things, and sees all things as they are. The only wise God abounds to us in all wisdom and prudence in His manner of imparting to us the knowledge of His will; teaching, He does teach, and explaining, He does clearly explain. There may be, and there is, a sinful dullness in the minds of sinful men, but there is no such obscurity in the revelation itself as to excuse men for this blindness. God, who is infinitely wise, would not give to us a revelation upon the vital point of salvation, and then leave it so much in the dark that it was impossible for common minds to comprehend it if they desired to do so. God adapts means to ends, and does not allow men to miss of heaven from lack of plainness on His part.

We expect a plain and simple revelation, because God has made a revelation perfectly adapted for its end, upon which no improvement can be made. You must have noticed that when an invention first comes before the public eye, it is almost always complicated, and the reason for this lies in the fact that it is as yet in its infancy. As the invention is improved it is simplified. Almost every alteration in a piece of machinery which goes towards its perfecting, goes also towards making it simpler, and at the last, when the invention is complete, it is singularly simple. That which comes from the mind of God, being perfect, goes directly towards its desired end. I admit that certain parts of the divine revelation are hard to be understood, but these are intended for our education, that we may exercise our minds and thoughts, and may by the guidance of the Holy Spirit grow thereby. But in the matter of salvation, where the life or death of a soul is concerned, it is needful that the vision should be plain, and our wise and gracious Lord has condescended to that necessity. In all that concerns repentance and faith, and the vital matters of pardon and justification, there is no obscurity, but all is plain as a walking stick. He that runs may read, and he that reads may run.

You might have expected this from God, because of His gracious condescension. When He deigns to speak with a trembling seeker, it is not after the manner of the incomprehensible doctor, but after the manner of a father with his child, desirous that his child should at once know his father's mind. He makes the way so plain that the wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein. He breaks down His great thoughts to our narrow capacities, He has compassion on the ignorant, and He becomes the teacher of babes. Truly the knowledge which the Lord our God imparts to us is in itself sublime, but His manner of teaching is gentle, for He comes with precept upon precept, and line upon line, here a little and there a little. He does not come down to us half-way, but He stoops to men of low estate, and while He hides these things from the wise and prudent, He reveals them unto babes, "Even so Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight."

Remember, my brethren, that our great Lord always takes care that there shall be no provision made for the pride of men. The pride of intellect He hates as much as any other pride. No flesh shall glory in His presence. He takes the proud in their own craftiness, while He lifts up the humble and the meek, therefore, we may expect that He will speak in terms that shall be open to shepherds and fishermen, whom others call unlearned and ignorant men, lest the wise men of this world should exalt themselves over the humbler sort. It is no design of the Lord God Almighty that a class of self-constituted superior persons should monopolize the blessings of the gospel through the truths of revelation being wrapt up in learned terms which the vulgar cannot understand. The various systems of idolatry endeavored to surround their false teaching with a mystic secrecy, but the word of our God is a revealer of things hidden

from the foundation of the earth. We may be sure that when God deals with men He will do nothing which shall cause human wisdom to boast itself. None shall glory that, after all, their culture was the one thing needful to make the gospel of God effectual. Philosophy shall not pitch its tent in Immanuel's land and cry, "I am, and there is none beside me." It is after the manner of God, who bows down to the humble and the contrite, that He should make His salvation the joy of the lowly. "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings have You ordained strength because of Your enemies." Those who know the living God do not wonder as they read such words as these, "For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For, after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

We might also expect simplicity when we remember the design of the plan of salvation. God aims distinctly by the gospel at the salvation of men. He bids us preach the gospel to every creature. It had needs be a simple gospel if it is to be preached to every creature. I thank God with all my heart that the sage is here put on a level with the child, for the gospel must be received by him as a little child receives it. If the grace of God is given to the least educated person in yonder village, he is as well able to receive the gospel as the most profound scholar in the university. Would any of you wish to have it otherwise? Could you be so inhuman? Must the gospel also be enclosed for an aristocracy? Must the cultured few be gratified at the expense of the ruin of the masses? God forbid. But it must be so unless the saving doctrine of the gospel can be perceived by the untutored many. Every generous heart delights to think that "the poor have the gospel preached unto them." Brethren, to save the many the truth must be very simple and easy to be understood, for the many are busy with needful labor. From morning to night their hands are going to earn the bread that perishes, their thoughts must largely be taken up with their daily toil. I grant you that many are too much engrossed with the poor cares of common life, but still, to a large extent, they will by needful occupations be shut out from close study and steady thought, and they must have a salvation which can be grasped at once, and held without the strain of perpetual debate. If men cannot be saved without weeks and months of careful study, they will certainly be lost. As good have no salvation as one which is beyond ordinary comprehension. Our working men need a gospel which can be heard and thought upon while they earn their daily bread. It should be clear as the sun, and simple as A B C, that they may see it, and then hold it in their memories. Give me a gospel which can be written in a line of a boy's copy book, or worked on a girl's sampler; a gospel which the humblest cottager may learn, and love, and live upon.

The mass of our fellow men are not only very busy, but from their poverty and other surroundings they never will attain to any high degree of education. We are thankful for all that is done by School Boards and other agencies, but these operate for the present world rather than for eternal and spiritual things. Men may learn all that books can teach them, and not be a jot nearer the knowledge of heavenly truth. Heavenly knowledge is of another sort, and is open to those who gain no certificates and pass no standards. Those who know their Bibles true, and find therein the appointed Savior, have not reached that point by the learning of the schools, we may say of each one of them, "Blessed are you; for flesh and blood has not revealed it unto you, but My Father which is in heaven." The word of life is meant for men as sinners, and not for men as philosophers, and hence the message is made plain and clear.

Moreover, we might expect the gospel to be very plain, because of the many feeble minds which otherwise would be unable to receive it. Remember the children. How glad we are that our boys and girls can know and receive the Savior who said, "Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not"! If in order to their salvation our children must all be learned divines, if they must understand the discussions of our monthly and fortnightly reviews before they can know the Lord, they are indeed in an evil case. Then might we close our Sunday schools, being convinced that the children must perish, or at least must wait until they reach a riper age. Would you have it so? O sirs! I am sure you would not; rather would you help to gather in the lambs.

Remember, also, that many return to feebleness of mind in their old age. How many who displayed considerable strength of intellect in middle life find their faculties failing them as their years multiply! We want a gospel which an old man can grasp when sight and hearing are failing him, when the memory is weakened, and the judgment is enfeebled. We want a gospel which can be laid hold upon in second

childhood, otherwise our venerable sires will miss the staff on which they have leaned so long, and other aged persons who have reached the eleventh hour without faith in Jesus must be abandoned in despair. Would you have it so? There is not one among us that would so desire it.

Remember, once more, the many feeble intellects which are to be found on all hands—not imbecile, but still not intellectual; not without thought and reason, but yet with an exceedingly narrow range of understanding. Shall these be shut out by a complicated, philosophical gospel? We cannot think so. Rather do we bear testimony that we have known many persons strong in faith, giving glory to God, and well instructed in divine doctrine, although in the judgment of boastful wits they have been utterly despised. The gospel of our salvation saves the feeble-minded as well as the clever; it reaches the slow and dull as well as the quick and bright. Is it not well it should be so? The Lord has given a gospel which he may grasp who can scarcely grasp anything else. He has put before us a way of salvation, in which trembling feet may safely tread and find no cause of stumbling. Our gospel needs not that we soar upon wings of imagination up to the heaven of sublimity, nor dive with profound research into the unfathomable sea of mystery; the Lord has brought it near us, put it into our mouths, and laid it near our hearts, that we who are of the common sort may take it to ourselves and enjoy its blessings.

What think you, my friends, would become of the dying if the gospel were intricate and complex? How would even the saints derive consolation in death from a labyrinth of mysteries? We are called at times to visit persons who are in their last hours, passing to judgment without God and without hope. It is a sorrowful business. It is always a cause of trembling with us, when we have to deal with the impenitent upon the borders of the eternal world. But we would never visit another sick bed, for we can never talk with another dying man with any hope, if we had not a gospel to take to such, which can be made plain even to those whose minds are bewildered amid the shadows of the grave. We need a gospel which a man may receive as he takes a draught of medicine, or, better still, as he takes a cup of cold water from the nurse at his bedside. We should expect, therefore, from the design of the gospel to save the many, and to save even the least intelligent of men, that it should be very simple, and so we find it.

Furthermore, dear friends, *we see that it is so, if we look at its results.* “For you see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, has God chosen, yes, and things which are not, to bring to nothing things that are.” God’s chosen are usually a people of honest and candid mind, who are willing rather to believe than to dispute. The Holy Spirit has opened their hearts; He has not made them subtle and quibbling. He has not put them upon the key of perpetual doubting, and coming at nothing, but He has tuned them to another note, namely, to incline their hearts and come unto the Lord Jesus, and hear that their souls may live. Hence it follows, that the mass of those who follow the Lord Jesus are not anxious to be numbered with the wise and the philosophical; they are content rather to be believers in revelation than proficient in speculation. To us the knowledge of Christ crucified is the most excellent of the sciences, and the doctrine of the cross is the loftiest of all philosophies. We had rather receive the word of our Lord as little children than be held in repute as “men of thought.”

You shall find that those who have preached the gospel with the most acceptance, whatever their natural gifts and abilities, have almost always been persons who have preferred to use great plainness of speech. They have felt the gospel to be in itself so beautiful that to adorn it with meretricious ornament would be to dishonor it. They could say with Paul, “If our gospel is hid, it is hid to them that are lost.” “We use great plainness of speech.” We are not as Moses, who put a veil over his face. True servants of God take away every veil that they can remove and labor to set forth Christ evidently crucified among the people. The more they have done this, the more has God been pleased to own their message to the conversion of souls.

But, Beloved, I need not argue from what we expect or see, I bid you *look to the revelation itself*, and see if it is not near unto us. Even in the days of Moses, how plain some things were! It must have been plain to every Israelite that man is a sinner, otherwise why the sacrifice, why the purgations and the cleansings? The whole Levitical economy proclaimed aloud that man has sinned; all the Ten Commandments thundered out this truth! They could not avoid knowing it. It was plain also that salvation is by sacrifice. Not a day passed without its morning and evening lambs. All the year round there were

special sacrifices by which the doctrine of atonement by blood was clearly declared. It was written clear as a sunbeam, "without shedding of blood there is no remission." Plain enough also was the doctrine of faith, for each bringer of a sacrifice laid his hand upon the victim, confessing his sin, and by that act he transferred his sin to the offering. Thus faith was typically described as that act by which we accept the propitiation prepared of God, and recognize the God-given Substitute. It was also clear to every Israelite that this cleansing was not the effect of the typical sacrifices themselves, otherwise they would not have been repeated year by year and day by day, for as Paul well puts it, the conscience being once purged, there would be no necessity for further sacrifice. The remembrance of sin was made over and over again, to let Israel know that the visible sacrifices pointed to the real way of cleansing, and was meant to set forth that blessed Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world. In many ways the Jew was put off from resting in forms and ceremonies, and was directed to the inner truth, the spiritual substance, which is Christ. Equally clear it must have been to every Israelite that the faith which brings the benefit of the great sacrifice is a practical and operative faith which affects the life and character. Continually were they exhorted to serve the Lord with their whole heart. They were exhorted to holiness and warned against transgression, and taught to render hearty obedience to the commandments of the Lord. So that, dim as the dispensation may be considered to have been as compared with the gospel day, yet actually and positively it was sufficiently clear. Even then "the word was near" to them, "in their mouth and in their heart."

If I may say thus much of the Mosaic dispensation, I may boldly assert that *in the gospel of Christ the truth is now made more abundantly manifest*. Moses brought the moonlight, but in Jesus the sun has risen, and we rejoice in His meridian beams. Brethren, blessed are our eyes that we see, and our ears that we hear, things which prophets and kings in vain desired to see and hear. Now our Lord speaks plainly, and uses no proverb. In our streets we hear the gospel, and have no need to ride the sky or scour the sea to find it. This day we hear every man in his own tongue wherein he was born the wonderful works of God.

II. Secondly, THE WORD HAS COME VERY NEAR TO US. I want your earnest attention to this point. I beg those of you who are unconverted to hear with attention. To us all the gospel has come very near; to the inhabitants of these favored isles it is emphatically so. "The word is very near unto you, in your mouth." It is a thing which you can speak of; you have talked about it; you still talk of it. It is "familiar in your mouths as household words." Most of you are able to speak it to others, for you learned it in your catechisms, you repeated it to your Sunday school teachers. You sing it in your hymns; you read it in books, and tracts, and pamphlets, and you write it in letters to your friends. I am glad that you have it upon your tongues; the more it is so, the better; but how near it has come! Oh, that your tongue may also be able to say, "I believe it. I accept Jesus as my Savior. I avow my faith before men!" Then will it be nearer still. Oh, that God the Holy Spirit may graciously lead you to do so! The word of life is not a thing unknowable, and consequently unspeakable; it is a thing that can be spoken of by tongues like ours when we sit in the house or walk by the way. The great thought of God has come very near to us when it can be expressed in the speech of men. I dare humbly, but boldly, to speak of my own ministry, and of you as my hearers that the word comes very near to you from this pulpit, for I have always aimed at the utmost plainness of speech and directness of address. There is not one among you but what may understand the gospel which you hear from me every Sabbath day. If you perish it is not for want of plain speaking. The word is on your tongue.

Moses also added, "and in your heart." By the heart, with the Hebrews, is not meant the affections, but the inward parts, including the understanding. My dear hearers, you can understand the gospel. That whoever believes in the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved, is not a dark saying. Salvation by grace through faith is a doctrine as plain as the nose on your face. That Jesus Christ gave Himself to die in the room and stead of men, that whosoever believes in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life, is a thing to be understood of the least educated under heaven. Moreover, the doctrines of the gospel are such that our inward nature bears witness to the truth of them. When we preach that men are sinners, your conscience says, "That is true." When we declare that there is salvation by sacrifice, your understanding agrees that this is a gracious mode by which God is just, and the justifier of him that believes. Even if you are not saved by it, you cannot help feeling that it is a system worthy of God that He should save, through the gift of His only-begotten Son as a sacrifice for sin. If you believe it, this gospel will

appear so plainly true that every part of your nature will attest it. Many of us have accepted this way of salvation; now we love it and delight in it, and to us it seems the most simple, and at the same time the most sublime system that could be conceived of. Our heart drinks it in as Gideon's fleece drank in the dew. Our souls live on it, and in it, as the fish lives in the sea. We rejoice in the gospel as the flowers smile in the sun. How glad we are that we have not a gospel wrapped up in hieroglyphics, or entombed in cold metaphysics! It has entered our hearts; it dwells within us, and has become our bosom's Lord.

There are no difficulties and obscurities about the gospel except such as we, ourselves create. What we think to be its darkness is really our blindness. If you do not believe the gospel, why is it that you do not believe it? It is supported by the best of evidence, and it is in itself evidently true. The reason for your unbelief lies partly in the natural tendency of the human heart towards legalism. Human nature cannot believe in free grace. It is accustomed to buying and selling, and therefore it must bring a price in its hand; to have everything for nothing seems out of the question. The notion of a wage to be earned is natural enough, but that eternal life is the gift of God is not so readily perceived, yet so it is. I have heard that a missionary trying to make an Oriental understand salvation by grace, set it out in many ways to him and failed, until at last he cried, "Salvation is a *backsheesh* of the Almighty." Then the Eastern caught the idea. Eternal life is the free gift of God, which He bestows on men not because of anything in them, or anything that they have done, or felt, or promised, but because of His own infinite bounty, and the delight which He has in showing mercy. You cannot get the idea of grace into a natural man's head, it requires a divine surgical operation to open a way for this truth into our mercenary minds; yes it requires that we be made anew before we will see it. That God freely forgives, and that He loves men solely and only because He is love, is a thought divinely simple, but our selfish prejudices refuse to accept it.

In many instances it is pride that makes the gospel appear so difficult. You cannot think that Jesus saves you, and that all you have to do is to accept His finished salvation. Like Naaman, you would prefer to do some great thing. You want to be something, do you not? Human nature craves to have a little hand in salvation—to feel something, to groan a certain time, or despair to a certain length, but when the gospel comes with the one message, "Believe and live," pride will not consent to be saved on such pauperizing terms. Yet so it is; accept it, and you have it; stretch out your hand and take what God most freely gives. The gospel itself is plain enough to a heart humbled by grace. When the scales of pride are removed from the eyes we see well enough. Alas for the unbelief that grows out of this pride, and out of our natural enmity against God! Man will believe anybody but his God. Any lie in the newspaper has legs with which to run round the world, but a grand truth that leaps from the lips of Jehovah Himself is made to limp in the presence of ungodly men. Unregenerate men cannot and will not believe their God. This is also caused by the love of sin. Those who do not wish to give up their favorite sins pretend the gospel is very difficult to understand, or quite impossible to accept, and so they excuse themselves for going on in their iniquity. After all, does any man really feel that it is right to throw the blame of his unbelief upon God? Do you dare to make the gospel the cause of your ruin? Do you ask pity for yourself, as if you could not help being an enemy to God, and a rejecter of His way of mercy? Do you murmur that you cannot see? Who has closed your eyes? There are none as blind as those who will not see, your blindness is willful. You do not understand; do you wish to understand? Nothing is as incomprehensible as that which we do not want to comprehend. If you do not desire to be reconciled to God, is it wonderful that you dream that God is unwilling to be reconciled to you? O soul, I beseech you, do not impute your damnation to your God, who in infinite goodness has brought His word so very near to you! Salvation is of the Lord, but damnation is of man only.

There I leave the matter. I can bring you to the water, but I cannot make you drink. May God the Holy Spirit apply to your hearts and consciences the important truth that, whether you enter it or not, "the kingdom of God has come near unto you!" O Lord, grant that none of these, my hearers, may put from them Your word, and count themselves unworthy of eternal life!

III. I close with this, that THE DESIGN OF THIS SIMPLICITY, AND NEARNESS OF THE GOSPEL IS THAT WE SHOULD RECEIVE IT. Observe how the text expressly words it—"The word is very near unto you, in your mouth and in your heart, *that you may do it.*" "That you may do it." You, who have your Bibles open, will note that the twelfth verse finishes—"That we may hear it, and do it," The thirteenth verse also says, "That we may hear it and do it," that is twice; but when it comes to the third time, in the fourteenth verse, it is not, "That we may hear it and do it," but, "That we may do it."

You have had enough of hearing, some of you; you have heard until your ears must almost ache with hearing. You begin now to say, "It is the old story, we are always hearing that, and nothing else." Will you not go a step further, and be no longer hearers only? "Now, then, do it."

The gospel is not sent to men to gratify their curiosity, by letting them see how other people get to heaven. Christ did not come to amuse us, but to redeem us. His word is not written for our astonishment, but, "these are written, that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, you may have life through His name." Ever has the gospel a present, urgent, practical errand. It says to each man, "I have a message from God unto you." It cries, "Today!" and warns men not to harden their hearts. Observe again how the text puts its last address in the singular. You can *hear* it in the plural—"That *we* may hear it, and do it," but the actual *doing* is always in the singular—"That *you* may do it." I cannot come round to everybody in the Tabernacle, and take a seat by your side for a minute, but I wish I could do so, and put my hand on every unconverted person and say, "The word is very near unto you, in your mouth, and in your heart, that you may do it."

As the word of the Lord is not sent to gratify curiosity, so also it is not sent to coolly inform you of a fact which you may lay by on the shelf for future use. God does not send you an anchor to hang up in your boathouse, but, as you are already at sea, he puts the anchor on board for present use. The gospel is sent us as manna for today, to be eaten at once. It is to be our spending money as well as our treasure.

Oh, my hearer, as you are a dying man, I charge you to accept at once the present salvation, so that you may at once do what the word requires of you.

It is not even sent to you merely to make you orthodox in opinion as to religious matters, although many persons seem to think that this is the one thing needful. Remember, that perdition for the orthodox will be quite as horrible as eternal ruin for the heterodox. It will be a dreadful thing to go to hell with a sound head and a rotten heart. Alas! I fear that some of you will only increase your own misery as you increase your knowledge of the truth, because you do not practice what you know. God save us from dead knowledge, and give us the gracious action which is the fruit of knowing, "That you may do it!"

Oh, that I could forego language now, and that my *heart* could speak in some mysterious inward fashion to your hearts! Oh, that the Holy Spirit would now incline each of you to serious personal attention to this matter! Oh, my hearer, you have come here to listen to me "that you may do it!" Oh, that it may be done!

What is to be done? There are two things to be done. First, that you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior. Take Him to be your sacrifice, trust Him wholly and alone from this time forth as your ransom from sin. Take Him to be your Lord as well as your Savior, yield yourself up to Him as your prophet, priest and king. Let Jesus be your all in all, and be you wholly His. The second thing is that you confess your Lord with your mouth. Avow yourself to be a believer in Jesus, and a follower of Him. Do this in His own way, for He has said, "He that believes, and is baptized, shall be saved." But let your confession be sincere, do not lie to the Lord. Confess that you are His follower, because you are indeed so, and henceforth all your life bear His cross and follow Him. This is what you are to do; to yield yourself up to Him whom God has appointed to save His people from their sins.

"But," says one "I thought that there was a certain experience." Indeed there is an experience, but all true experience ends in this, in leading the heart to accept Christ as its Savior. "But I thought," says another, "that you would dwell at length upon the work of the Holy Spirit." I rejoice in that work, and will tell you a great deal about it at another time, but the chief work of the Holy Spirit is to strip you of yourself, and bring you to receive that simple word of God which is the subject of this morning's discourse. "Well," says one, "I grant you that it is simple, I think it is even too simple." I know it, I know it. And because it is so simple, therefore you kick against it. What folly! Hence you need the Holy Spirit to bring you to accept it. Sometimes you quarrel because it is too hard, and next because it is too easy. This shows how hard and stubborn a thing is the will of man. Almighty grace is required to bring you to accept your own salvation. To lead you to take Christ to be your Savior needs a miracle of grace! Let Him save you, that is all, but this is too much for our proud self-confidence. Oh, strange resistance, proving the deep depravity of man's nature, that he will not yield even to this! Again I say, the difficulty is not in the gospel, but in the man, whose evil heart will not receive the choicest gift of heaven. If you are willing to have Christ, Christ is yours. The fact that you are willing to receive Him proves that He has come to you. Believe that He is yours, and be at peace. If you will now bow before the Christ of God, and take

Him, henceforth, to be your Savior, you are saved. The simple act of trusting Jesus has brought your justification, and your open confession of Him in His own appointed way shall bring you a fuller realization of salvation. By coming out on the Lord's side, you shall gather strength to overcome the sins which now beset you, and you shall be helped to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, because God is working in you to will and to do of His own good pleasure.

I will preach the gospel once more, and I have done. The apostle Paul, thinking of what Moses said about going up to the sky or down to the sea to find the sacred secret, says in effect, "That is right, Moses, there was a necessity for someone to come down, and an equal necessity for someone to go up, but that necessity exists no longer."

The whole gospel lies in this—there was One in heaven at the right hand of the Father, very God of very God and in order to save you, poor lost and ruined sinner, this adorable Son of God came down, down, down to the manger, to the cross, to the grave, to the lowest parts of the earth, and down in grief, in rejection, in agony, in death. Because He came under the weight and curse of sin, He came down indeed! Because Jesus has come down thus, and borne the punishment of sin, he that believes in Him is justified. By that coming down of the Lord from heaven the sinner's sin is put away and the transgression of the believer is forgiven. Do you believe this? Do you believe that Jesus bore your sins in His own body on the tree? Will you trust to that fact? **YOU ARE SAVED!** *Doubt it not.*

So far this clears you of sin. But it was necessary that we should not merely be washed from sin—for that would leave us naked—but that we should be clothed with righteousness. To that end our Lord Jesus rose again, and so came up from the depth. When our Redeemer had finished His going down, and so had made an end of sin, He had yet to bring in everlasting righteousness, and so He returned by the way which He went. He rose from the tomb, He rose from Olivet, He rose until a cloud received Him out of His apostles' sight, He rose through the upper regions of the air, He rose to the pearl gate, He rose to the throne of God where He sits as one who has accomplished His service, expecting until His enemies are made His footstool. His resurrection has brought to light our righteousness, and has covered us with it, so that at this moment every man that believes in a risen Savior is robed in the royal robes of the righteousness of God. "If you believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved." O brothers, live because Jesus lives, rise because He has risen, sit in heaven because He sits in heaven.

"He that believes is justified," so says the Scripture. Do you see this? I believe it, I believe it with my whole heart, and therefore I confess it before this multitude with my mouth, and I am saved. Will you believe and confess. Oh, that the blessed Spirit may bring you to this, this is the entrance into the way of eternal life. This is the dawn of a day which shall never die down into darkness. May the blessed Spirit bring you to this faith, and this confession, for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—DEUTERONOMY 30
ROMANS 10:4-10.**

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—916, 488, 495.

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