

JOY IN SALVATION

"I will rejoice in Your salvation."

Psalms 9:4

I DESIRE to continue the topic of the morning, only we will look at another side of the same important matter.

We spoke this morning, as you have not forgotten, upon these words, "Your own salvation." I trust most of us—would God I could hope all of us—were earnest about our own personal salvation! To those who are earnest, this second text will be the complement of the first. They desire that their own salvation shall be secure. It is their own salvation when they obtain it—but here is the guide as to what is the right salvation—what our own salvation ought to be. It is not our own in another sense—it is God's. "I will rejoice in Your salvation." While it becomes our own by an act of faith, it is not our own so that we can claim any merit or take any part of the glorying to ourselves. The only salvation that is worth being our own is that which is God's. "I will rejoice in Your salvation." Having this morning somewhat at length explained what salvation is, showing that it was not a mere deliverance from wrath to come, but from the present wrath of God and yet more essentially from sin, from the power of evil within us, there is no need that we should go over that again, I trust. But we shall begin by noticing the speciality which is in the text, dwelling upon the Divine Salvation. "I will rejoice in Your salvation." So, then, we look at once at—

1. A DIVINE SALVATION.

The salvation we have already spoken of is God's and it is God's salvation in many ways. It was His in the planning. None but He could have planned it. In His Infinite Wisdom He devised it. The salvation which is revealed in the Person of Jesus Christ in the Gospel is, every part of it, in all its architecture the fruit of Divine skill! We may say, "Or with whom took He counsel and who instructed Him and who taught Him knowledge?" In every part the Divine hand may be seen—it is of God's planning and ordaining, before the earth was. So is it of God's providing. You have salvation wrapped up in the gift of the Person of Jesus Christ. All of it lies in Christ. Because He died, our sin is put away. Because He lives, we shall also live. And Christ is the pure gift of God. All salvation is in Him and, therefore, all salvation is thus procured by God. It is God's salvation. And what is more, God not only plans and procures, but He also applies salvation. I believe in free agency, but I never yet met with a Christian who was able to say that he came to Christ of his own free will without being drawn by the Spirit of God! Whatever our doctrinal view may be, the experimental fact is the same in every case. All Believers will confess that they are God's workmanship, created anew in Christ Jesus. "No man can come unto Me except the Father which has sent Me draw him." There is a need of power. "You will not come unto Me that you might have life." There is a need of will and the Spirit of God, therefore, applies the salvation which God has planned and which God has provided. And as the first application of this salvation is of God, so is it all the way through. I do not believe, dear Brothers and Sisters, that our religion is like the action of a clock wound up at first by a superior hand and then left to go alone. No! Every day the Holy Spirit must continue to work upon us and in us, to will and to do according to God's good pleasure. And if you and I should ever get right up to the gate of pearl and should hear the songs of the blessed within that gate, we should not be able to take the last step, but should turn back to our sin and folly if He that began a good work in us should cease to carry it on! He is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending. "Salvation is of the Lord," from first to last. He makes the rough draft of it in conviction upon our conscience. He goes on to complete the picture and if there is one touch in the picture that is not of God, it is a blot upon it! If there is anything of the flesh, it will have to be wiped out—it is not consistent with the work of God. Of God is it in all respects!

Now we know that this salvation is of God, not only because we are told that He planned it, provided it and applies it, but because it has the marks of God upon it. There is a certain line of poetry. I know it is Shakespeare's. Well, you know, I cannot quite tell you why, but yet I am sure no one ever wrote exactly in that way. I am reading the Psalms through and I read and I say, "That is David's." I observe certain critics who say, "No, this belongs to the time of the captivity." I am certain it does not. And why? Because there is a Davidic ring about it! The son of Jesse, and he, alone, could have said such things! Now in salvation there are the marks of Divine Authorship. I once saw a painting by Titian at Venice—and he had written, "

Fecit, fecit Titian. “He claimed it twice over, as if to make sure that someone else should not claim it. And God has put it three times over that there should be no doubt, whatever, that salvation is of God and He must have the glory of it. Now observe the marks of God—what I may call the broad arrow of the King—set on salvation. It is full of mercy. Here is salvation for the blackest of sinners—salvation for all manner of sin—forgiveness for all manner of sin—salvation so full of Grace that only God could have conceived it. “Who is a pardoning God like You?” But this salvation is equally congenial with justice, for God never absolutely forgives a sin. There is always punishment for sin in every case! Jesus Christ, the Substitute, comes in and satisfies Justice before the word is spoken to the sinner, “Your transgression is blotted out.” In the salvation which God has provided on the Cross by the death of His dear Son, there is as much justice as there is mercy—and there is an infinity of both! Now this is God-like! Man, if he brings out one quality, usually clouds another with it. But God exhibits His Character in harmonious completeness—as merciful as if He were not just, and as just as if He were not gracious! In the Gospel, on this account, we also see Divine Wisdom. Whatever some may say about the Doctrine of Substitution, Christ is still the Power of God and the Wisdom of God. The way, so simple, yet so sublime, by which God is just and yet the justifier of him that believes, exhibits the Infinite Wisdom of the Most High!

But I won’t keep you by mentioning all the Divine attributes. It is certain they all shine in the Gospel, nor can any tell which of the letters are written best—the Power, the Wisdom, or the Grace. They are all there, proving the salvation to be of God!

And there is one other matter. True salvation is of God because it draws toward God. If you have God’s salvation, you are being drawn towards your heavenly Father, nearer and nearer every day. The ungodly forget God. The awakened seek God. But the saved rejoice in God! Ask yourself this question, “Could you live without God?” The ungodly man would be happier without God than he is with Him. It would be the best piece of news in the newspaper to thousands, if we could publish it tomorrow, that God was dead! To ungodly men it would be like ringing the bells of universal joy—they would run riot after their own will! And where would the Believer be? He would be an orphan! His sun would be blotted out! His hopes would be dead and buried! Judge by this whether you are saved. If you are saved, you are drawn to God, you seek to be like God, you desire to honor God. If there are none of these things in you, then I charge you see to it, for you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity! God have mercy upon you! I need not further say that the salvation is of God and God must have all the glory of it. All on earth who are saved and all in Heaven who are saved will ascribe their salvation entirely to the ever blessed God and join with Jonah, who in the very depths of the sea made this, his confession of faith, “Salvation is of the Lord.” But now, secondly, our text (having noticed the Divine Salvation in it) has—

II. AN OUTSPOKEN AVOWAL.

“I will rejoice in Your salvation.” Here is someone springing out from the common crowd and saying, “I have heard of God’s salvation. I will rejoice in it! I will rejoice in it! Some despise it. They hear it and they turn a deaf ear. Whenthey have listened to it the longest, they are most weary of it. But I will rejoice in Your salvation.” Here is a distinguished character, who is made so, doubtless, by distinguishing Grace! Oh, I hope there are many of us here who could stand up and say—if this were the time and place—“Let others say what they will and count the Cross a thing to mock and Jesus Christ to be forgotten, I am His servant—I will rejoice in His salvation.” There are some that rest in anothersalvation. We all did so once. But he who speaks in the text throws aside self-righteousness as filthy rags! He puts it all aside and says, “I will rejoice in Your salvation.” If I were righteous, I would not say so. Had I a perfect holiness, I would not mention it in comparison with the righteousness of Christ, but being an unworthy sinner without a single merit of my own, I will not be so foolish as to patch up a fictitious righteousness, but I will rejoice in Your salvation! You see them there!—those worshippers of the scarlet woman—they are resting in their priest! He puts on millinery, blue, pink, scarlet, white and I know not what—all kinds of little toys to please fools with! And there are some that rejoice in that salvation that comes from an “infallible” sinner—that comes from a sham priest of God! But we are looking to Christ who stands before the Eternal Throne of God and pleads the merits of His own blood. We say—

*“Let all the forms that men devise
Assault our faith with treacherous art,*

*We'll call them vanity and lies
And bind the Gospel to our heart."*

"I will rejoice in Your salvation." There may be some tonight to whom I shall speak who are rejoicing in God's salvation through His abundant Grace who have very little else to rejoice in. You are very poor. Ah, how welcome you are to this house! How glad I am that you have come! I feel it always a joy that the people have the Gospel preached to them. Well, you have no broad acres, you have no gold rings on your fingers—you come in the garb of toil—never mind, my Brother or Sister, lay hold on eternal life and say, "I will rejoice in Your salvation." Perhaps you are sick tonight—your poor weak body could scarcely drag itself up to the assembly of God's people. Well, well, it is a heavy thing to have to suffer so, but if you cannot rejoice in a hale body, yet rejoice in His salvation! Look tonight to Jesus! Put your trust in Him, alone, and you will have a sufficient wellspring of joy if you have nothing else! Possibly some of you who lay hold on Christ and rejoice in Him will have hard times of it at home—your father will mock at you, your mother will not sympathize with you. Your workmates, tomorrow, if they hear that you are converted, will laugh and jest, and jeer at you. What say you? Are you a coward? Will you back out of it because it demands a sacrifice? Oh, if it is so, then you are, indeed, unworthy of the name and you count yourself so! But if you are what you should be, you will say, "Let them laugh at me as they will, and spit upon me as they please, I will rejoice in Your salvation."—

*"If on my face for Your dear name,
Shame and reproach may be.
I'll hail reproach and welcome shame,
For You'll remember me!"*

It takes some pluck, but we ought to have it in the cause of Christ. Your mean, miserable wretches that will only go out to follow Christ in sunny weather, but disappear when a cloud darkens the sky, deserve well the wrath that comes upon them! They are like the Nautilus, very well on the placid sea, but the first billow that arises, they furl their sails and drop into the deep and are seen no more! Oh, beware, beware, beware of a sunny-weather religion! Beware of a religion that will not stand the fire, but be you such that if all the world forsook Christ, you would say, "I will rejoice in His salvation." And if you were turned out of doors—if you were turned out of the world, itself, and thought not fit to live—you would yet be content to have it so—if you might be numbered with the people of God and be permitted to rejoice in His salvation! Does this, as I try to speak it, awaken a holy emotion in any soul here? Is there someone who has been a stranger to my Lord, who tonight can say, "I desire to rejoice in His salvation"? I cannot forget, when I sat as a young lad under the gallery of a little place of worship, hearing the Gospel simply preached—the blessed moment when I was led to resolve to follow Christ! I have never been ashamed of having done so. I have never had to regret it. He is a blessed Master! He has handled me roughly lately, but He is a blessed Master. I would follow at His heels if only like a dog, for it is better to be His dog than to be the devil's darling! He is a blessed Master, let Him say what He wills and do what He wills. Oh, is there no young man here, no youth, no child, no girl— is there no gray-headed one who will say, "I will rejoice in Your salvation"? O eternal Spirit, come and touch some heart and make this their spiritual birthright, that they may say, "I—I—I will rejoice in Your salvation!"

But we must pass on, for time presses. We have, in the third place, to consider in the text—

III. A DELIGHTFUL EMOTION.

We have noticed the Divine Salvation and the outspoken avowal. Now we will notice the delightful emotion. "I will rejoice in Your salvation." It is an unfortunate thing that Christianity gets associated with melancholy. I will not forbid the blahs, for they are not very near of kin, but I wish they were further apart every day. It is a good thing for the melancholy to become a Christian—it is an unfortunate thing for the Christian to become melancholy! If there is any man in the world that has a right to have a bright, clear face and flashing eyes, it is the man whose sins are forgiven him and who is saved with God's salvation! In order for any man, however, to rejoice in God's salvation, he must, first of all, know it. There must be an intelligent apprehension of what it is. Next, he must grasp it by an act of faith as his own. Then, having grasped it, he must study it to know the price at which it was bought and all the qualities—the Divine Qualities that follow from it. Then he must hold it fast and

seek to get out the sweetness from it. What is there in God's salvation that should make us rejoice? I do not know what to select, for it is all joy and all rejoicing! It is enough to make our heart to ring with joy to think that there should be a salvation at all for such poor souls as we are! We may well hang out all the streamers of our spirits and strew the streets of our soul with flowers, for King Jesus has come to dwell there! Ring every bell! Give Him a glorious welcome. Let all the soul be glad when Jesus enters and brings salvation with Him, for the salvation of Christ is so suitable that we may well rejoice in it. Dear Brothers and Sisters, if you are saved, I know the salvation of Christ suited you! It did me—exactly—it was made on purpose for me! I am as sure of it as if there were no other sinner to be saved. It was the Gospel that brought power to the weak, no, it brought life to the dead! It brought everything to those that had nothing. It is just the sort of Gospel for a penniless, bankrupt sinner like myself. We rejoice in the suitability of the Gospel. We rejoice in the freeness of it. We have nothing to pay—we have no price to pay, neither of promise, nor of anything that was our own. Salvation was freely given to us in Christ Jesus. Let us rejoice in it, then! Oh, rejoice in the richness of that salvation! When the Lord pardoned our sins, He did not pardon half of them and leave some of them on the book, but with one stroke of the pen He gave a full receipt for all our debts! When we went down into the fountain filled with blood, and washed, we did not come up half-clean, but there was no spot nor wrinkle upon us—we were white as driven snow! Glory be to God for such a rich salvation as this! And He did not in that day save us with a perhaps and a chance salvation that set us on a rock and said, "Keep yourself there—you must depend upon yourselves." No, but this was the Covenant He made with us—"A new heart also will I give you, and a right spirit will I put within you." It was a complete salvation which would not permit a failure!

The salvation which is given to the soul that believes is on this wise, "I give unto My sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand." "The water that I shall give him shall be a well of water springing up unto everlasting life." I believe the perseverance of the saints to be the very gem of the Gospel! I could not hold the Truth of Scripture if this could be disproved to me, for every page seems to have this upon it, if nothing else, that "the righteous shall hold on his way and he that has clean hands shall grow stronger and stronger." In this my soul rejoices, that I have a salvation to preach to you which, if you receive it, will effectually save you if your hearts are given to Christ and will keep you, and preserve you, and bring you into the eternal Kingdom of His Glory. I will rejoice in the certain and abiding character of that salvation. Oh, there is enough in the salvation of Christ to make Heaven full of bliss! There is enough to make us full of praise! Let us take up the theme. Let us talk by the way to one another about it! Let us talk to sinners about it. Let us recommend religion by our cheerfulness. Levity be far from us, but happiness let it be the happiest sphere in which we live if we have little else to rejoice in, we have enough here! Whatever may be our condition or prospects, we may still rejoice in God's salvation—and let us not fail to be filled with this most blissful emotion!

And now I must close. The text has in it a word of the future which we must not quite overlook. Here is a joyful Gospel, "I will rejoice in Your salvation." You may read it, if you like, "I shall"—"I shall" or, "I will"—it would be quite right. The Hebrew has no present. It seems to have given up all tenses—like God, Himself, who Was, and Is, and is to come. I shall rejoice in Your salvation! Now here is—

IV. A BLESSED PROSPECT.

You may live to grow old. Well, we shall never grow weary of Christ. If we are His people, we shall never have any cause to part from Him. "I will rejoice in Your salvation." I could bring up to this platform an aged Brother whom all of you would know, who has infirmities and has age creeping upon him. But there is not a happier soul in this house than he! And when I had made him speak to you, I could bring you many more aged women, too, and I would ask them what they think of Christ and I am sure they would say with greater emphasis than I can, "I will rejoice in Your salvation!" I almost wish my grandfather were alive and behind me tonight, for on one occasion I preached with him in the pulpit and when I came to speak of experience, he pulled my coattail and came to the front and said, "My grandson can tell you that he believes it, but I can tell you experimentally"—and on the old gentleman went with it! Well, many an aged Christian can tell you he has rejoiced in God's salvation! He does rejoice and, instead of age making the joy of his youth to become dim, it has mellowed and sweetened the fruit which was sweet even at the first! Oh, that we may, when these hairs grow gray with years and the snows of many winters lie white upon our head—may we still rejoice in God's salvation! But then, whether we reach old age or

not, there is one thing that is certain—we shall assuredly die—and when we come to die, what shall we do? I know what you are thinking. You say, “I will groan.” Yes, Sinner, you are thinking of the friend that is wiping away the clammy sweat from the brow and those closed eyes. Now those may never occur! We often hear if we did lose sight itself before life fails—what then? Why, the vision of the Christ, who is our salvation, and in whom we rejoice, shall then be more gloriously clear and radiantly beautiful—because the sights and sounds of earth will have vanished from us!

Now, instead of looking at these outward parts of dying, think of this, “I will rejoice in Your salvation.” When I parted from our dear brother, Cook, a few days ago, he could not say much. He was very, very weak, but what he did say was just this, “Jesus, Jesus, Jesus is All.” Well, I talked, and read, and prayed, and so on, and when we had done, he simply said, “The blood—the blood, the blood—that is all my hope.” Why, he looked as calm in prospect of dying as any of you do in sitting here! And he was as delighted with the hope of being where Jesus is as ever bride was at the coming of the marriage day! It was delightful to see the blessed calm and peace that was upon that man of God! And when I come to die, whoever I may be, however little my standing in the Church of God is, if I am in Christ, I will rejoice in His salvation! I will make the dark valley ring with His praises! I will make the river of Death, itself, roll back as the Red Sea did of old, with my triumphant songs! I will enter Heaven with this upon my heart and upon my lips, “I will rejoice in Your salvation! Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive honor, and power, and dominion, and glory forever and ever!” And, Brothers and Sisters, if that is what we may do in dying, this is what we shall do forever and ever—“I will rejoice in Your salvation.” Millions of ages, throughout all the cycles of years that interpose before Christ delivers up the Kingdom to God, even the Father, and then onward, even through eternity—this always shall be our own ground of rejoicing—“I will rejoice in Your salvation.”

Now I cannot come and stand at the door and speak to everyone as the congregation withdraws, but if it were possible, I would like to stand there and shake the hand of everyone that has been in the house tonight, and say, “Well, Friend, how fares it with you? Can you say, ‘I will rejoice in Your salvation?’” If I cannot do that, I wish it were possible to speak in the silent shades of night to you when you awoke, so that you might hear a voice ringing in your ears, “Do you rejoice in God’s salvation?” Perhaps some of you may have come a long distance across the sea. You may be, by-and-by, on shipboard again. It may be that you will be in peril, or it may be that afterwards you shall be in sickness. Well, may this evening’s congregation in this day of July rise up before your minds. And if you forget the preacher (and that will not matter), yet if you hear a voice that says, “Can you rejoice in God’s salvation?” I hope that, even if it is 20 years to come, it may then be as the voice of God to your soul and bring you to the Savior! But better far would it be if you would come to Him tonight—and you may! May the Spirit of God bring you! Whoever believes on the Lord Jesus Christ has everlasting life! The whole of the Gospel is wrapped up in Christ’s message which He has sent by His Apostles, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” To you each this—this—is the word, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved, and your house.” God add His own blessing, for Christ’s sake! Amen.