

this, that you will fear that this casting out is according to that word in the 5th Mathew, "If the salt has lost its savour henceforth it is good for nothing but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot of men", and if ever you come there in your souls feeling, it will not only be that you are cast out of God's sight, but that you are cast out because your salt has lost its savour, and if salt represents grace, grace can never lose its savour, it will prove that your religion was false, your profession of grace was false, for the grace of God can never lose its savour. O it is a very solemn exercise ! You may feel it with respect to your profession and in connexion with this chapter is Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the Temple, where he anticipated all kinds of cases that would look toward that holy Temple. "Blasting and mildew and caterpillar" and all kinds of cases of those who knew their own grief and their own sore. So that it is a very solemn experience.

"Then said I, I am cast out of Thy sight". If one was destitute of grace that is where it would end, but having a living faith it did not end there. "Yet will I look again toward Thy holy Temple" and all the way through Solomon's prayer that is repeated: "If they shall look again toward this place and toward this Temple, then hear Thou from heaven Thy dwelling place and when Thou hearest forgive", and that Temple is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. All the sacrifices, the ceremonies, the incense and the slain beasts, all were types of the Lord Jesus, in His offices, His High Priesthood, Him, as a Mediator.

But Jonah was in a very low place and yet I have known what it is to envy one thing in Jonah's case, when I have felt to be cast out and fit for nothing but to be trodden under the foot of men. I would not speak of that lightly, when you feel savour going, the savour of the preaching is going, seems as though the virtue and power and life is going out of your soul and will leave you just like a dead and withered stick, it is very solemn; but there is one thing in Jonah's case I have envied, although he was in the belly of hell, it says this, "Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord HIS God", out of the fishes belly". Well, I really feel I should not mind what belly of hell I was in, or what depths I was in, if I had that assurance, that the Lord was my God. But still, he went into this experience. "I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord and He heard me". O the life of Jonah's soul ! though he had sinned yet the Lord sanctified even that disobedience and the judgement that it brought him into, yet how it did quicken his soul and exercise his faith afresh.

"Out of the belly of hell cried I, and Thou heardest my voice, for Thou hadst cast me into the deep, into the midst of the sea, the floods compassed me about, all Thy billows and Thy waves passed over me.". David found the same thing, exactly the same words in the 42nd Psalm. So that these Scriptures express by divine inspiration the effect of a living faith in the soul under the influence of the Spirit. "The waters compassed me about even to the soul". It shows this, that it is the soul that is most vital. You may get waters of affliction and adversity that may come round about and flow over your business. Prosperity might be overflowed by adversity. You might get the water of affliction flow over your body and reduce health and strength to weakness, but Jonah said, "The waters compassed me about, even to the soul" and when the soul is threatened everything for eternity is threatened. Have we been brought to feel the importance of the soul ? We know we have a body, the demands of the body every day are great, but the Lord in His goodness and power maintains the body from creation, but, do we as much know that we have a soul and is there a spiritual hungering and thirsting of the soul for the living God ? We are much occupied concerning this life, but is eternity as much to us as what time is ?

Now these exercises were made profitable to Jonah, he speaks of them. "The waters compassed me about, even to the soul, the deeps were round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head, I went down to the bottom of the mountains, the earth with her bars was about me for ever". He thought that that would continue for ever; and the Lord might have

brought you into such a state of soul conflict, soul destruction, soul destitution, that you feel that you will never see anything different, you forget prosperity and you are ready to despair. I know what that is, and I can tell you two lines of a hymn that saved me from sinking into despair, and they were these -

"Look from the boarder of the pit,
To my recovering grace."

And that is what Jonah did here. "I went down to the bottom of the mountains, the earth with her bars was about me for ever, yet" .. O these yets ! these yets of faith. Habakkuk he has a conspicuous yet where he speaks of the adversities in things that are temporal: "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine, the labour of the olive shall fail, the field shall yield no meat, the flocks shall be cut off from the fold and they shall not be heard in the stalls", what a state, everything gone to pieces, everything wrong, "YET I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

"Yet hast Thou brought up my life from corruption O Lord my God". There is something so very gracious, very sweet. If he had said, 'yet hast Thou brought up my life from corruption' and left it there, it would have been correct, but O the love in his heart, the worship, the reverence. It was the Lord that did it, it was the Lord that brought up his life from corruption, "O Lord my God". "When my soul fainted within me, then I remembered the Lord". We are going over these things to show some of the exercises which taught Jonah that salvation is of the Lord. This is the way he learned it, and we may well look into our own hearts and cases and ask ourselves how we learned it. If we say that salvation is of the Lord, How do we know it ? O it is blessed to trace the work of the Spirit in the Saints of old, and it will sometimes give you such a ray of hope when you say, well, now I have felt the same thing, I need the same mercy. I have such weakness and trembling in myself that the case of Paul suits me. I have thorns that I would like to be extracted, but I can join with Paul and say, I would rather glory in mine infirmity that the power of God may rest upon me. That is the inward working by which one knows that salvation is of the Lord, that his strength is made perfect in weakness.

"When my soul", it is his soul again, it is not the fainting of the body, it is the fainting of the soul, and I feel warranted to make a remark that may appear strange, and that is, there is a kind of fainting which is only known to a living faith. A false faith, a faith that stands in the power of the flesh, bodily exercise, that faith never faints. It can be manipulated. A natural religion you can manage yourself, you can believe when you like, pray when you like, preach when you like, hear when you like; but a living faith is susceptible to changes, and "They that have no changes fear not God".

You see those pilgrims in the 107th Psalm; they had a God given faith, invincible faith, it stood in the power of God, but it knew what fainting was, "Hungering and thirsting, their souls fainted within them", and there will be things that will cause your faith, not to die, but to faint. If the Lord hides His face, suspends the operation of His Spirit and covers the throne of grace with a cloud, you will find that faith will faint.

"When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord". This is beautiful language, it could never be written except that it was inspired. Although Jonah felt it, he could never have expressed it but that the Holy Ghost gave him words. "When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord". Because you must realise that he was not yet vomited out onto the dry land, he was still in the belly of hell, in the fish's belly, and he was there to teach him, he was there by

the chastening of the Lord for disobedience and therefore, he was cast out of the Lord's sight. He was in darkness, he was under a sense of destitution, but he remembered the Lord; and this was not with an ordinary memory of the mental faculties, it was the memory of faith and that was a different thing. The memory of faith will bring the comfort of things that faith remembers,

"I remembered the Lord". I remembered that He is omnipotent, omniscient; I cannot see Him, I am cast out of His sight, but I remembered that He can see me. I remembered that He is omnipresent. I am in the fish's belly, but He is present. This is faith acting, but where faith acting with no comfort, with no sense of His presence. Have you ever been there? I remember. I remember that He is omniscient, so He can deliver when He will, and hear my prayer. So he prayed in the belly of hell.

There are some peculiar places in which His people have prayed and if you are one of them you will trace some peculiar places and conditions in which you have been compelled to pray, and if you take notice, those prayers are not very long. No, there is a lot in a little. It is very irritating when there is a little in a lot. "And my prayer came in unto Thee, into Thine Holy Temple". O that is the prayer that prevails. It is not the length, it is not the number of prayers, it is the object of prayer. If it is the prayer of faith indited by the Holy Spirit, that prayer will reach its Object, It is not the words that have any power, but it is the answer. When the poor woman came and said, "Lord, help me", very weak words from a poor weak woman, but O the power and the answer of it. Some of you may at times, I have felt it, felt it lately, that my poor words and a sense of destitution in my soul is such that I feel they could not go beyond the ceiling of the room I was in.

"My prayer came in unto Thee, into Thine Holy Temple". Well, this is a way in experience that Jonah learned that "Salvation is of the Lord". Brought to a place where he could do nothing, nothing. It is a lifetime lesson to learn, "Without Thee, I can do nothing", and nothing is nothing, it is a great attainment. It needs much teaching to come with nothing in our hands. I believe that we shall be brought to have nothing, to be nothing, to know nothing except what we receive from the Lord, except what He gives us, what He makes us, then we shall know that "Salvation is of the Lord".

But as enabled we would look at this wonderful declaration, five simple words, "SALVATION IS OF THE LORD". It is in the present tense. There is a sense in which everything in salvation is in the present tense and the reason is because God fills His own immortal now, He is. "I am, that I am", and that will be a comfort! Doubtless it was a comfort to Jonah. Salvation in the main is in two parts. It is salvation wrought out by the Person and through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ and of that salvation He declared in the moment of victory "It is finished!" But that same salvation is wrought out by the Holy Ghost in a work of grace in the hearts of those who were chosen of God before the foundations of the world and pre-destinated to be conformed to the image of God's dear Son. Who, therefore, are to be called by grace, justified through the righteousness that is in Christ Jesus and glorified. Two parts. Not two different salvations. The one wrought out and the Holy Ghost taking of the things that accompany that salvation and works that salvation in experience. Salvation is an experience and it is a work. O how far removed it is from the general religion of this day! What a mercy if we are brought to know the truth. If we are brought to know the truth we shall be brought to know our need of salvation.

But we would as enabled speak in the first place of that salvation wrought out by the Lord Jesus. Salvation is related to a wreck. When a ship goes to a wreck it is salvaged. If it was not for the fall of man there would have been no need for salvation.

The ruin and wreckage of man in the fall was complete. We would not speak of this in a way of mere theory; if we are taught of the Spirit we shall know it. Man was not half dead, he was completely dead in trespasses and in sins. He was completely ruined throughout his whole being.

"The dire contagion filled the veins
And spread the poison to the heart".

How does it fall upon our ears? Is there anybody in whose heart there is a response, I know it, I know it. You will know it as much as one who goes to a surgeon and tells him that they have a cancer. You will say I knew it, I can feel it. It is a great thing to be a sinner. Are you? You will not be glad you are a sinner, O but you will be glad of salvation. It will be an amazing thing to you and perhaps the first ray of hope to realise that a sinner can be saved, even before you have a hope that you will be. The very fact that through the Gospel there is such a thing as salvation, that the Lord can love a sinner and hate sin, and that sin is removable, pardonable. "Salvation is of the Lord". It is the work of the Trinity, but it pleased the Father that the fulness should dwell in His dear son. Those whom the Father foreknew and loved He gave to His Son to redeem. His Son was set up in the covenant of grace for this work; set up as the Redeemer, set up as the foundation of all the counsels and purposes of God. Set up to be the propitiation for sin, to be the Substitute for His people. This was established in the covenant of grace, and everything was to that end, to the removal of sin from the Church, and for this purpose was the Son of God manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil.

Now if you know you are a sinner, these will be great Scriptures and they will help you to come with all your ruin. Perhaps it would hardly be right to tell you how I have had to come lately. I have; in the vestry this morning I said, Lord, if I am a reprobate, help a reprobate to preach. Have you ever sunk?

"Then said I. I am cast out of Thy sight, yet I will look again toward Thy Holy Temple". That is the way he knew "Salvation is of the Lord", and it proceeds from everlasting love, the everlasting love of the Father. Sovereign, immutable love, uncaused love. The entrance of sin into heaven, the entrance of sin into the human race is a mystery, it is not for us to pry into it - and a poor sinner would say, I don't want to, I know one thing that sin has not only entered into the world, but it has entered into me. I believe for want of this conviction of sin there is so much lightness and superficial religion about. When you get here, a pleasant Sunday afternoon will not reach your case:

"Deep are the wounds which sin has made"

Then salvation will become more than a word, it will become a necessity.

"Salvation is of the Lord". So that it is a work. The Lord would not that the whole human race should be left in the ruins of the fall. The end for which Jehovah acted outside of Himself was for His own glory. That was the end of all. It might truly be said that the real end of salvation is not first the salvation of the church, but it is the glory of God in salvation, and the glory of God is declared in the work of salvation in a way in which it could not be declared no way else. Had Adam never fallen it would not have displayed the glory of God as in the work of redeeming lost sinners. Have you ever felt that? Have you ever looked at your sin, yourself in what you are and then seen the glorious Gospel of the grace of God and how it reflects His glory and the way it was done, in the mystery of godliness, "God was manifest in the flesh".

"Salvation is of the Lord". He determined to save, and He knew the people Whom He would save. "Hath not the Potter power over the clay ?, over the same lump to make one vessel unto honour and another to dishonour ?". Very solemn is that sovereignty and I have thought of that two or three words there. Of the same lump, of the same lump of clay. Did not even take a lump from that ~~another~~ district and a lump from some other, but out of the same lump of clay. In His sovereignty He made some vessels unto honour and some to dishonour. "Salvation is of the Lord".

But it is different from the work of creation. The work of creation was an act of naked omnipotence. God had not to take into account His justice, His holiness in creation of the world, "He spake, and it was done, He commanded and it stood fast." But in the work of redemption the honour and glory and holiness and character and justice of God must be vindicated, and therefore, salvation could not be an act of naked omnipotence, because there is one thing God cannot do and that is, to deny Himself. Salvation must be just, and the only way was that the eternal Son of God should take human nature. "Salvation is of the Lord". If the Holy Ghost connects your soul's salvation with the Lord Jesus, in His Person and His work, O how rich you will be ! How precious Christ will be. ! and so the Lord Jesus in His sacred, sinless humanity he wove out a righteousness, every act, every thought was pure. We cannot express the glory of the sacred, sinless humanity which the eternal Son of God took into union with Himself. He could not work out salvation in His deity alone. It needed a Mediator, a Daysman, a Ransom, and that word in Job comes to our mind whenever we think of this Ransom, and it is there to that end really; it says there, "Deliver him from going down into the pit for I have found a ransom", and in that blessed chapter it is put in that way and the method of the Scriptures is very blessed, as, though the poor man was just about to be delivered to the pit because they could find no ransom and there must be one. They are just about to deliver him to the pit and a messenger comes, "Deliver him from going down into the pit for I have found a ransom". As much as to say, I have searched everywhere and a ransom is found. "Deliver him from going down into the pit", and if that word by the Spirit reaches your heart you will know that "Salvation is of the Lord".

"Salvation is of the Lord". So that He fulfilled the law, He honoured it, He magnified it. He went to the end of it, He exhausted the law by fulfilling it. And all this He did as a Substitute. It is the substitutionary nature of the Person as well as the work of the Lord Jesus Christ that is so precious and this means that we shall be brought into union with Him. If we are the objects of the Father's love, the objects of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the work of the Holy Ghost, we shall be brought into union with Him.

Well, these are unsearchable riches. This is an inheritance, a kingdom. A real kingdom in the heart, a portion for the soul. Why my friends, it would make a large estate in this world to look a poor affair. O may the Lord teach us, I do feel to be taught more and more and this is it, to be taught "Salvation is of the Lord". And you see sometimes, there is a main teaching in some narrative, you take for instance the whole book of Job, there are two things mainly that Job learned, one thing was, "Behold, I am vile", he learned that. The second thing was, "I know that my Redeemer liveth" and blessed be God, the latter is greater than the former. Yes, His Redeemer swallowed up all his vileness.

Amen.

(Transcribed verbatim and not edited for publication).