

to holiness, to heaven. The apostle, it is important to notice, is not addressing unconverted sinners when he says, "Work out your own salvation." By no means: he was too well acquainted with systematic theology, with practical religion, with experimental Christianity, to do any such thing. The first duty of an unconverted sinner is to believe the gospel, or, in other words, to receive Christ. "Without me," says the Saviour, "ye can do nothing." "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."

When the apostle therefore says, *Work out your own salvation*, he must be addressing those who have believed the gospel, those who have received Christ, and in whose hearts the work of grace has had a commencement. This is abundantly evident from the context as well as from the nature of the case. The Epistle, as we learn from the first verse of the first chapter, is addressed "to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons." In the fifth verse he speaks of their "fellowship in the gospel;" and in the sixth of his confidence "of this very thing, that he who had commenced the good work in them would perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." See also verse 29.

This injunction then, you perceive, is not addressed to unbelievers but to believers; or, in other words, to the friends and followers of Christ.

Notice now what it is that Christians are called upon to work out,—it is *their own salvation*. If we are Christians, this injunction is addressed to us. We are to work out our own salvation. This is doubtless a great privilege, but Paul speaks of it here as a duty; and he presents very strong motives and inducements to encourage us to go on with and achieve the great work.

Of course there is no reference here to salvation from the curse of the law, or the condemning power of sin. This is a work too great and too difficult for us to accomplish ourselves, or any of the angels in heaven to accomplish for us. O it is delightful to know that faith, simple faith, faith alone without works, puts us in possession of salvation from condemnation. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." To work out our own salvation from the condemning power of sin or the curse of God's holy law, is what we never can do, what we are not required to do. O no: the Divine Man by his sufferings, and sacrifice, and death, has done it for us.