

When we say that to be saved is the immediate duty and privilege of every gospel hearer, we do not mean that it is the duty and privilege of every gospel hearer to be at once admitted into heaven. When a person believes the gospel and is saved and purified, he is fitted for God's service on earth. It may please God to keep him here to be a co-worker with himself. We mean that it is the immediate duty and privilege of every gospel hearer to be in the enjoyment of God's pardoning mercy and under the influence of the purifying gospel of grace.

Our object then, is to show that every gospel hearer ought to be saved at once; that it is wrong to continue unsaved; that to be unsaved is not his misfortune but his crime; and that to be saved at once, should be viewed by every gospel hearer in the light of a precious privilege.

We observe then, first, that to be saved at once is the duty and privilege of every gospel hearer, because God has made provision for the salvation of all men in the atonement of Jesus. The most prominent thing in the gospel is the atonement of Jesus for every sinner. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission. Without atonement there could be no pardon, and no way for the conveyance of sanctifying influence to the soul. No atonement, no salvation. Had atonement been made for some only, there would be salvation for those only for whom it was made. There is no salvation for the fallen angels because no atonement has been made for their sins. The judge of all the earth must express his hatred to sin. In the case of the fallen angels he does so in their punishment. In the case of man he has expressed his hatred of sin in the sufferings and death of the God-man, Christ Jesus, the Atoner. To devils he is unpropitiated, to men he is propitiated. Sinner, without an atonement you could not be saved. Atonement you yourself could not provide. Though you should weep oceans of tears and endure the most fearful hardships and toils, and expose yourself to unheard of perils, you could not atone for your sins against God, nor wash your soul from their filthy stains. But God, in wondrous mercy and amazing wisdom, gave up his Son to atone for your sins. God sent his Son into the world to die, that the world, through him, might be saved. It is, therefore, O sinner, your privilege to be saved through Jesus. It is your duty also, because God's great and gracious commandment is, that you should believe in his Son. Christ tasted death for every man.