

"WE MUST BE SAVED."

Acts iv. 12.

Have you ever said to yourself, "I MUST BE SAVED?" Have you said it often? Are you saying it now? It is so awfully solemn, and so surely true. "WE MUST BE SAVED!" Does it not thunder through your soul? I knew of one whom these words arrested, as if a serpent had reared itself in his path, forbidding another step in that direction—as if a gulf had suddenly opened at his feet. Oh that some lightning-flash from the throne of God might fling into the conscience of every unsaved one the blaze of this tremendous truth, "WE MUST BE SAVED! WE MUST BE SAVED!"

It was the language of the apostle Peter at a remarkable time. He was looking round on a vast assembly, and specially upon an array of embittered judges who were seeking his life; but filled with pity and concern for their souls, his words became more and more earnest, till he wound all up in this startling appeal.—"WE MUST BE SAVED!" ran through the Judgment-hall where not many weeks before the Lord Jesus had been condemned; "You and I, Caiaphas, must be saved!" "You and I, O august Sanhedrim, must be saved!" He speaks as one who saw nothing before him but the peril of perishing. He is handling a matter as to which there is no possibility of doubt, and so with an almost unconscious confidence and vehement boldness, he summons his judges to confront their true condition and realise their state as sinful men.

I. IT IS THE LANGUAGE OF ONE WHO SAW MEN IN DANGER OF ETERNAL PERDITION. We are sinners, and so we are undone. And yet we cannot make up our minds to die? For who among us could dwell with the devouring fire? who among us could lie down amid everlasting burnings? "WE MUST BE SAVED!"

Unsaved soul, every sin pronounces over again the sentence, "Thou shalt die;" and that death is the hell of which Jesus says three times in one breath, (Mark ix. 44, 46, 48,) "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." One unpardoned sin places you among the left

hand company who "go away into EVER-LASTING punishment," (Matt. 25, 46;)—"Unto the fire prepared for the devil." It is "The unquenchable fire," (Matt. iii. 12;) a fire that even God cannot quench, for so to do would be to forego the claims of justice, and the honour of His Law. You must, then, be a sinner for ever! an enemy and hater of God FOR EVER! Your nature must be sensual and devilish FOR EVER! You must lie down in misery FOR EVER! under God's wrath FOR EVER—under God's abhorrence—in blank despair—FOR EVER AND EVER! EVERLASTING! is written on the prison-walls.

God in His Word has taken every possible mode of declaring this truth. Every sinner, too, forebodes it, and hence dreads eternity. And truly there is no other fact so terrible as this. At the same time, there is no other MORE SURE. We said, Scripture asserts it in every variety of form; but conscience is continually pointing the sinner forward to it. Reason, too, declares, that were hell to have an end, then sin would have led to heaven at last: sin, only by a longer route, would have landed the sinner in bliss! and so sin and holiness, like two confluent streams, would have become one! O fellow-sinner, AN ETERNAL HELL is an infallible truth; and you and I must flee from the flames. "WE MUST BE SAVED!"

It is indeed a truth little believed. For the policy of Satan is to withdraw attention from it; to get men to doubt it because it is so terrible; to persuade them to forget it, if not to disbelieve it. But neither unbelief nor forgetfulness will quench the endless flame, any more than man's forgetfulness of God can cause God to cease to be. And the appalling reality will burst on men ere long. Soon their eyes shall see it all! Soon there shall be no way of escape to be found. It is now, only now, that it avails us to say one to another, "O brother, we must be saved!"

Say not, "Surely if this be true, and all so tremendously terrible, God would make us more sensible of it; God would take care to have us right awake to the peril." But in this idea you are mistaken. All is already done, in the way of alarming you, that need be done with responsible beings. What evidence could make you