

A More Particular Account of the Way by Which This Salvation Is to Be Obtained

by Philip Doddridge

The way to salvation is through repentance and faith in Christ, seeking salvation by free grace and applying to Christ with a deep abhorrence of our sins and a firm resolution to forsake them.

Scripture: Hosea 13:9, John 1:29, John 4:28, John 6:29, Acts 4:12, Acts 17:27, Acts 20:21, Romans 6:13, Hebrews 13:8, Revelation 4:10

Topics: "Salvation By Faith", "Repentance And Grace"

Description

Philip Doddridge preaches about the way of salvation through Christ, emphasizing the importance of repentance, faith, and giving up self-dependence to seek salvation by free grace. He urges sinners to apply to Christ with deep abhorrence of their sins, firm resolution to forsake them, and a commitment to obey and imitate Christ in their daily lives. Doddridge highlights that salvation is only obtained through faith in Jesus and surrendering to Him completely, acknowledging our need for His grace and mercy.

Transcript

1. An inquiry into the way of salvation by Christ being supposed.--2. The sinner is in general directed to repentance and faith.--3. And urged to give up all self-dependence.--4. And to seek salvation by free grace.--5. A summary of more particular directions is proposed.--6. That the sinner should apply to Christ.--7. With a deep abhorrence of his former sins.--8. And a firm resolution of forsaking them.--9. That he solemnly commits his soul into the hands of Christ, the great vital act of faith.--10. Which is exemplified at large.--11. That he make it in fact the governing care of his future life to obey and imitate Christ.--12. This is the only method of obtaining Gospel salvation. The Sinner deliberating on the necessity of accepting it.

1. I now consider you, my dear reader, as coming to me with the inquiry which the Jews once addressed to our Lord, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" (John 4:28) "What method shall I take to secure that redemption and salvation which I am told Christ has procured for his people?" I would answer it as seriously and carefully as possible, as one that knows of what importance it is to you to be rightly informed; and that knows also how strictly he is to answer to God for the sincerity and care with which the reply is made.

May I be enabled to "speak as his oracle," (1 Pet. 4:11) that is in such a manner as faithfully to echo back what the sacred oracles teach! 2. And here, that I may be sure to follow the safest guides and the fairest examples, I must preach salvation to you in the way of "repentance toward God, and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ," (Acts 20:21) that good old doctrine which the apostles preached, and which no man can pretend to change but at the peril of his own souls and of theirs who attend to him. 3.

I suppose that you are by this time convinced of your guilt and condemnation, and of your own inability to recover yourself. Let me nevertheless urge you to feel that conviction yet more deeply, and to impress it with yet greater weight upon your soul; that you have "undone yourself," and that "in yourself is not your help found." (Hos. 13:9) Be persuaded, therefore, expressly, and solemnly, and sincerely, to give up all self-dependence; which, if you do not guard against it, will be ready to return secretly before it is observed, and will lead you to at-tempt building up what you have just been destroying. 4.

Be assured, that, if ever you are saved, you must ascribe that salvation entirely to the free grace of God. If, guilty and miserable as you are, you are not only accepted, but crowned, you must "lay down your crown," with all humble acknowledgment, "before the throne." (Rev. 4:10.) "No flesh must glory in his presence; but he that glorieth must glory in the Lord; for of him are we in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." (1 Cor. 1:29,30,31) And you must be sensible you are in such a state, as, having none of these in yourself; to need them in another.

You must therefore be sensible that you are ignorant and guilty, polluted and enslaved; or, as our Lord expresses it, with regard to some who were under a Christian profession, that as a sinner "you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." (Rev. 3:17) 5. If these views be deeply impressed upon your mind you will be prepared to receive what I am now to say. Hear, therefore, in a few words, your duty, your remedy, and your safety; which consists in this, "That you must apply to Christ, with a deep abhorrence of your former sins, and a firm resolution of forsaking them; forming that resolution in the strength of his grace, and fixing your dependence in him for your acceptance with God, even while you are purposing to do your very best, and when you have actually done the best you ever will do in consequence of that purpose. 6.

The first and most important advice that I can give you in your present circumstances, is, that you look to Christ and apply yourself to him. And here, say not in your heart, "who shall ascend into heaven, to bring him down to me?" (Rom. 10:6) or, "who shall raise me up thither, to present me before him?" The blessed "Jesus, by whom all things consist," (Col. 1:17) by whom the whole system of them is supported. "forgotten as he is by most that bear his name," "is not far from any of us;" (Acts 17:27) nor could he have promised to have been "wherever two or three are met together in his name," (Matt. 18:20) but in consequence of those truly divine perfections, by which he is every where present.

Would you therefore, O sinner, desire to be saved? Go to the Savior. Would you desire to be delivered? Look to that great Deliverer; and though you should be overwhelmed with guilt, and shame, and fear, or horror, that you should be incapable of speaking to him, fall down in this speechless confusion at his feet, "and behold him as the Lamb or God, that taketh away the sins of the world." (John 1:29) 7. Behold him therefore with an attentive eye, and say whether the sight does not touch, and even melt thy very heart!

Dost thou not feel what a foolish and what a wretched creature thou hast been, that, for the sake of such low and sordid gratifications and interests as those which thou hast been pursuing thou shouldst thus "kill the Prince of Life?" (Acts 3:15) Behold the deep wounds which he bore for thee, "look on him whom thou

hast pierced, and sorely thou must mourn," (Zech. 12:10) unless thine heart be hardened into stone. Which of thy past sins canst thou reflect upon, and say. "For this it is worth my while to have thus injured my Savior, and to have exposed the Son of God to such sufferings?"

And what future temptations can arise so considerable that thou shouldst say. "For the sake of this I will crucify my Lord again?" (Heb. 6:6) Sinner, thou must repent, thou must repent of every sin, and must forsake it; but, if thou doest it to any purpose I well know it must be at the foot or the cross. Thou must sacrifice every lust, even the dearest, though it should be like a "right hand or a right eye;" (Matt. 5:29, 30) and therefore that thou mayest. if possible, be animated to it, I have led thee to that altar on which "Christ himself was sacrificed for thee an offering of a sweet smelling savor?" (Eph. 5:2) Thou must "yield up thyself to God as one alive from the dead." (Rom. 6:15) And therefore I have showed thee at what a price he purchased thee; "for thou wast not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of the Son of God, that Lamb without blemish and without spot." (1 Pet. 1:18,19) And now I would ask thee, as before the Lord, what does thine own heart say to it?

Art thou grieved for thy former offences? Art thou willing to forsake thy sins? Art thou willing to become the cheerful, thankful servant of him who hath purchased thee with his own blood? 8. I will suppose such a purpose as this rising in thine heart. How determinate it is, and how effectual it may be, I know not; what different views may arise hereafter, or how soon the present sense may wear off. But this I assuredly know, that thou wilt never see reason to change these views; for however thou mayest alter, the "Lord Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and for ever." (Heb 13:8) And the reasons that now recommend repentance and faith as fit and necessary, will continue invariable as long as the perfections the blessed God are the same, and as long as his Son continues the same. 9.

But while you have these views and these purposes, I must remind you that this is not all which is necessary to your salvation. You must not only purpose, but, as God gives opportunity, you must act as those who are convinced of the evil of sin, and of the necessity and excellence of holiness. And that you may be enabled to do so in other instances, you must in the first place, and as the first great work of God, (as our Lord himself calls it) "believe in him whom God hath sent;" (John 6:29) you must, confide in him; must commit your soul into the hands of Christ to be saved by him in his own "appointed method of salvation."

This is the great act of saving faith, and I pray God that you may experimentally know what it means, so as to be able to say with the apostle Paul, in the near view of death itself, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him until that day;" (2 Tim. 1:12) that great decisive day, which, if we are Christians, we have always in view. To this I would urge you; and O that I could be so happy as to engage you to it while I am illustrating it in this and the following addresses!

Be assured you must not apply yourself immediately to God absolutely, or in himself considered, in the neglect of a Mediator. It will neither be acceptable to him, nor safe for you, to rush into his presence without any regard to his own Son, whom he hath appointed to introduce sinners to him. And if you come otherwise, you come as one who is not a sinner. The very manner of presenting the address will be interpreted as a denial of that guilt with which he knows you are chargeable; and therefore he will not admit you, nor so much as look upon you.

And accordingly our Lord, knowing how much every man living was concerned in this, says, in the most universal terms, "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." (John 14:6) 10. Apply therefore to this

glorious Redeemer, amiable as he will appear to every believing eye in the blood which he shed upon the cross, and in the wounds which he received there. Go to him, O sinner! this day, this moment, with all thy sins about thee. Go just as thou art; for if thou wilt never apply to him till thou art first righteous and holy, thou wilt never be righteous and holy at all; nor canst be so on this supposition, unless there were some way of being so without him; and then there would be no occasion for applying to him for righteousness and holiness.

It were indeed as if it should be said that a sick man should defer his application to a physician till his health is recovered. Let me therefore repeat it without offence, go to him just as thou art, and say, (O that thou mayest this moment be enabled to say it from thy very soul!) "Blessed Jesus, I am surely one of the most sinful and one of the most miserable creatures that ever fell prostrate before thee; nevertheless I come, because I have heard that thou didst once say, 'Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' (Matt. 12:28) I come, because I have heard that thou didst graciously say, 'Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.' (John 6:35) O thou Prince of Peace, O thou King of Glory!!

I am a condemned, miserable sinner; I have ruined my own soul, and am condemned forever, if thou dost not help me and save me. I have broken thy Father's law and thine; for thou art 'one with him.' (John 10:30) I have deserved condemnation and wrath; and I am, even at this very moment, under a sentence of everlasting destruction, a destruction which will be aggravated by all the contempt that I have cast upon thee, O thou bleeding Lamb of God! for I cannot and will not dissemble it before thee, that I have wronged thee, most basely and ungratefully wronged thee, under the character of a Savior as well as of a Lord.

But now I am willing to submit to thee; and I have brought my poor trembling soul to lodge it in thine hands, if thou wilt condescend to receive it; and if thou dost not, it must perish. O Lord, I lie at thy feet: stretch out 'thy golden scepter that I may live.' (Esth. 4:11) 'Yea, if it please the King, let the life of my soul be given me at my petition!' (Esth. 8:3) I have no treasure wherewith to purchase it, I have no equivalent to give thee for it; but if that compassionate heart of thine can find a pleasure in saving one of the most distressed creatures under heaven, that pleasure thou mayest here find.

O Lord, I have foolishly attempted to be my own savior, but it will not do. I am sensible the attempt is vain, and therefore I give it over, and look unto thee. On thee, blessed Jesus, who art sure and steadfast, do I desire to fix my anchor. On thee, as the only sure foundation, would I build my eternal hopes. To thy teaching, O thou unerring Prophet of the Lord, would I submit: be thy doctrines ever so mysterious, it is enough for me that thou thyself hast said it. To thine atonement, obedience, and intercession, O thou holy and ever-acceptable High Priest, would I trust.

And to thy government, O thou exalted Sovereign, would I yield a willing, delightful subjection: in token of reverence and love, 'I kiss the Son:' (Psa. 2:12) I kiss the ground before his feet. I admit thee, O my Savior! and welcome thee, with unutterable joy, to the throne in my heart. Ascend it and reign there for ever! Subdue mine enemies, O Lord, for they are thine; and make me thy faithful and zealous servant: faithful to death, and zealous to eternity." 11. Such as this must be the language of your very heart before the Lord.

But then remember, that, in consequence thereof it must be the language of your life too. The unmeaning words of the lips would be a vain mockery. The most affectionate transport of the passions, should it be transient and ineffectual, would be but like a blaze of straw, presented, instead of incense, at his altar.

With such humility, with such love, with such cordial self-dedication and submission of soul must thou often prostrate thyself in the presence of Christ; and then thou must go away, and keep him in thy view; must go away, and live unto God through him, defying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and behaving thyself "soberly, righteously, and godly, in this vain ensnaring world." (Tit. 2:12) You must make it your care to show your love by obedience, by forming yourself, as much as possible, according to the temper and manner of Jesus, in whom you believe.

You must make it the great point of your ambition, and a nobler view you cannot entertain, to be a living image of Christ; that, so far as circumstances will allow, even those who have heard and read but little of him may, by observing you, in some measure see and know what kind of a life that of the blessed Jesus was. And this must be your constant care, your prevailing character, as long as you live. You must follow him whithersoever he leads you; must follow with a cross on your shoulder, when he commands you to "take it up;" (Matt. 16:24) and so must be faithful even unto death, expecting "the crown of life." (Rev. 2:10) 12.

This, so far as I have been able to learn from the word of God, is the way to safety and glory: the surest, the only way you can take. It is the way which every faithful minister of Christ has trod, and is treading; and the way to which, as he tenders the salvation of his own soul, he must direct others. We cannot, we would not alter it in favor of ourselves, or of our dearest friends. It is the way in which alone, so far as we can judge, it becomes the blessed God to save his apostate creatures.

And therefore, reader, I beseech and entreat you seriously to consider it; and let your own conscience answer, as in the presence of God, whether you are willing to acquiesce in it or not. But know, that to reject it is thine eternal death. For as "there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we can be saved," (Acts 4:12) but this of Jesus of Nazareth, so there is no other method but this in which Jesus himself will save us.

The Sinner deliberating on the Expediency of falling in with this Method of Salvation.

"Consider, O my soul! what answer wilt thou return to such proposals as these? Surely, if I were to speak the first dictate of this corrupt and degenerate heart, it would be, 'This is a hard saying, and who can hear it?' (John 6:60) To be thus humbled, thus mortified, thus subjected! To take such a yoke upon me, and to carry it as long as I live! To give up every darling lust, though dear to me as a right eye, and seemingly necessary as a right hand! To submit not only my life, but my heart, to the command and discipline of another! To have a master there, and such a master as will control many of its favorite affections, and direct them quite into another channel! a master, who himself represents his commands, by taking up the cross and following him! To adhere to the strictest rules of godliness and sobriety, of righteousness and truth; not departing from them in any allowed instance, great or small, upon any temptation, for any advantage, to escape any inconvenience and evil, no, not even for the preservation of life itself; but, upon a proper call of Providence, to act as if I 'hated even my own life!' (Luke 14:26) Lord, it is hard to flesh and blood; and yet I perceive and feel there is one demand yet harder than this.

"With all these precautions, with all these mortifications, the pride of my nature would find some inward source of pleasure, might I but secretly think that I had been my own savior, that my own wisdom and my own resolution had broken the bands and chains of the enemy, and that I had drawn out of my own treasures the price with which my redemption was purchased. But must I lie down before another, as guilty and condemned, as weak and helpless? And must the obligation be multiplied, and must a Mediator have

his share too? Must I go to the cross for my salvation, and seek my glory from the infamy of that? Must I be stripped of every pleasing pretence to righteousness, and stand, in this respect, upon a level with the vilest of men; stand at the bar amongst the greatest criminals, pleading guilty with them, and seeking deliverance by that very act of grace whereby they have obtained it.

"I dare not deliberately say this method is unreasonable. My conscience testifies that I have sinned, and cannot be justified before God as an innocent and obedient creature. My conscience tells me that all these humbling circumstances are fit; that it is fit a convicted criminal should be brought upon his knees; that a captive rebel should give up the weapons of his rebellion and bow before his sovereign, if he expects his life. Yea, my reason as well as my conscience tells me that it is fit and necessary that, if I am saved at all, I should be saved from the power and love of sin, as well as from the condemnation of it; and that, if sovereign mercy gives me a new life, after having deserved eternal death, it is most fit I should `yield myself to God as alive from the dead.' (Rom. 6:13) But, `O wretched man that I am! I feel a law in my members that wars against the law of my mind,' (Rom. 7:23,24) and opposes the conviction of my reason and conscience. Who shall deliver me from this bondage? Who shall make me willing to do that which I know in my own soul to be most expedient? O Lord, subdue any heart, and let it not be drawn so strongly one way, while the nobler powers of my mind would direct it another! Conquer every licentious principle within, that it may be my joy to be so wisely governed and restrained! Especially subdue my pride that lordly corruption which so ill suits an impoverished and condemned creature, that thy way of salvation may be made amiable to me in proportion to the degree in which it is humbling! I feel a disposition to `linger in Sodom, but O be merciful to me, and pull me out of it,' (Gen. 19:16) before the storm of thy flaming vengeance fall, and there be no more escaping!"

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