

The Sinner Seriously Urged and Entreated to Accept of Salvation in This Way

by Philip Doddridge

Philip Doddridge urges sinners to accept the offer of salvation, emphasizing the majesty and mercy of God, the dying love of Jesus Christ, and the regard due to fellow-creatures.

Scripture: Psalm 119:122, Jeremiah 31:20, Matthew 25:34, Luke 23:34, Acts 4:12, 2 Corinthians 5:20, Hebrews 4:6

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

Description

Philip Doddridge passionately pleads with sinners to accept the salvation offered through Christ, emphasizing the danger of letting convictions wear off and the critical decision between accepting or rejecting the Gospel. He entreats the reader by the majesty and mercy of God, the dying love of Jesus Christ, the regard due to fellow creatures, and the worth of their own immortal soul, leaving the matter solemnly before them and God. The sermon concludes with a sinner yielding to these heartfelt entreaties, declaring acceptance of salvation by Christ with deep humility and surrender.

Transcript

1. Since many who have been impressed with these things suffer the impression to wear off.--2. Strongly as the ease speaks for itself, sinners are to be entreated to accept this salvation.--3. Accordingly the reader is entreated--by the majesty and mercy of God.--4. By the dying love of our Lord Jesus Christ.--5. By the regard due to our fellow-creatures.--6. By the worth of his own immortal soul.--7. The matter is solemnly left with the reader, as before God. The sinner yielding to these entreaties, and declaring his acceptance of salvation by Christ.

1. Thus far have I often known convictions and impressions to arise, (if I might judge by the strongest appearances) which after all have worn off again. Some unhappy circumstance of external temptation, ever joined by the inward reluctance of an unsanctified heart to this holy and humbling scheme of redemption, has been the ruin of multitudes. And, "through the deceitfulness of sin, they have been hardened," (Heb. 3:25) till they seem to have been "utterly destroyed, and that without remedy." (Prov. 29:1) And therefore, O thou immortal creature who art now reading these lines, I beseech thee, that, while affairs are in this critical situation, while there are these balancings of mind between accepting and rejecting that glorious Gospel, which, in the integrity of my heart, I have now been laying before you, you would once more give me an attentive audience while I plead, in God's behalf shall I say? or rather in your

own; while, "as an ambassador for Christ, and as though God did beseech you by me, I pray you in Christ's stead that you would be reconciled to God," (2 Cor. 5:20) and would not, after these awakenings and these inquiries, by a madness which it will surely be the doleful business of a miserable eternity to lament, reject this compassionate counsel of God towards you. 2.

One would indeed imagine there should be no need of importunity here. One would conclude, that as soon as perishing sinners are told that an offended God is ready to be reconciled, that he offers them a full pardon for all their aggravated sins, yea, that he is willing to adopt them into his family now, that he may at length admit them to his heavenly presence; all should, with the utmost readiness and pleasure, embrace so kind a message, and fall at his feet in speechless transports of astonishment. gratitude, and joy.

But, alas! we find it much otherwise. We see multitudes quite unmoved, and the impressions which are made on many more are feeble and transient. Lest it should be thus with you, O reader! let me urge the message with which I have the honor to be charged; let me entreat you to be reconciled to God, and to accept of pardon and salvation in the way in which it is so freely offered to you. 3. I entreat you, "by the majesty of that God in whose name I come," whose voice fills all heaven with reverence and obedience.

He speaks not in vain to legions of angels; but if there could be any contention among those blessed spirits, it would be, who should be first to execute his commands. Oh! let him not speak in vain to a wretched mortal I entreat you, "by the terrors of his wrath," who could speak to you in thunder; who could, by one single act of his will, cut off this precarious life of yours, and send you down to hell. I beseech you by his mercies, by his tender mercies, by the bowels of his compassion, which still yearn over you as those of a parent over "a dear son," over a tender child, whom, notwithstanding his former ungrateful rebellion, "he earnestly remembers still." (Jer. 31:20) I beseech and entreat you, "by all this paternal goodness," that you do not, as it were, compel him to lose the character of the gentle Parent in that of the righteous Judge; so that, as he threatens with regard to those whom he had just called his sons and his daughters, "a fire shall be kindled in his anger, which shall burn unto the lowest hell." (Deut 32:19,22) 4.

I beseech you further, "by the name and love of your dying Savior." I beseech you by all the condescension of his incarnation, by that poverty to which he voluntarily submitted, "that you might be enriched" with eternal treasures; (2 Cor. 8:9) by all the gracious invitations which he gave, which still sound in his word, and still coming, as it were, warm from his heart, are "sweeter than honey, or the honey-comb." (Psa. 19:10) I beseech you by all his glorious works of power and of wonder, which were also works of love.

I beseech you by the memory of the most benevolent person and the most generous friend. I beseech you by the memory of what he suffered, as well as of what he said and did; by the agony which he endured in the garden when his body was covered "with a dew of blood." (Luke, 22:44) I beseech you by all that tender distress which he felt when his dearest friends "forsook him and fled," (Matt. 26:56) and his blood-thirsty enemies dragged him away like the meanest of slaves, and like the vilest of criminals.

I beseech you by the blows and bruises, by the stripes and lashes which this injured Sovereign endured while in their rebellious hands; by the shame of spitting, from which he hid not that kind and venerable countenance. (Isa. 50:6) I beseech you by the purple robe, the scepter of reed, and the crown of thorns which this King of Glory wore that he might set us among the princes of heaven. (Psa. 113:8) I beseech you by the heavy burden of "the cross," under which he panted, and toiled, and fainted in the painful way "to Golgotha," (John 19:17) that he might free us from the burden of our sins.

I beseech you by the remembrance of those rude nails that tore the veins and arteries, the nerves and tendons of his sacred hands and feet; and by that invincible, that triumphant goodness, which, while the iron pierced his flesh, engaged him to cry out, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." (Luke, 23:34) I beseech you by that unutterable anguish which he bore when lifted up upon the cross, and extended there, as on a rack, for six painful hours, that you open your heart to those attractive influences which have "drawn to him thousands and ten thousands." (John 12: 32) I beseech you by all that insult and derision which the "Lord of Glory bore there;" (Matt. 27:29-44) by that parching thirst which could hardly obtain the relief of "vinegar," (John 19:28,29) by that doleful cry so astonishing in the mouth of the only begotten of the Father, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46) I beseech you by that grace that subdued and pardoned "a dying malefactor;" (Luke, 23:42,43) by that compassion for sinners, by that compassion for you, which wrought in his heart, long as its vital motion continued, and which ended not when "he bowed his head, saying, It is finished, and gave up the ghost." (John 19:30) I beseech you by the triumphs of that resurrection by which he was "declared to be the Son of God with power;" by the spirit of holiness which wrought to accomplish it, (Rom. 1:4) by that gracious tenderness which attempered all those triumphs, when he said to her out of whom he had cast seven devils, concerning his disciples who had treated him so basely, "Go, tell my brethren, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, unto my God and your God." (John 20:17) I beseech you by that condescension with which he said to Thomas, when his unbelief had made such an unreasonable demand, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold mine hands, and reach hither thine hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing." (John 20:27) I beseech you by that generous and faithful care of his people which he carried up with him to the regions of glory, and which engaged him to send down "his Spirit," in that rich profusion of miraculous gifts, to spread the progress of his saving word. (Acts 2:33) I beseech you by that voice of sympathy and power with which he said to Saul, while injuring his church, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (Acts 9:4) by that generous goodness which spared that prostrate enemy when he lay trembling at his feet, and raised him to so high a dignity as to be "not inferior to the very chiefest apostles." (2 Cor. 12:11) I beseech you by the memory of all that Christ hath already done; by the expectation of all he will farther do for his people.

I beseech you, at once, by the scepter of his grace, and by that sword of his justice with which all his incorrigible "enemies" shall be "slain before him," (Luke 19:20) that you do not trifle away these precious moments while his Spirit is this breathing upon you; that you do not lose an opportunity which may never return, and on the improvement of which your eternity depends. 5. I beseech you "by all the bowels of compassion which you owe to the faithful ministers of Christ," who are studying and laboring, preaching and praying, wearing out their time, exhausting their strength, and very probably shortening their lives, for the salvation of your soul, and of souls like yours.

I beseech you by the affection with which all that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity long to see you brought back to him. I beseech you by the friendship of the living, and by the memory of the dead, by the ruin of those who have trifled away their days and perished in their sins, and by the happiness of those who have embraced the Gospel, and are saved by it. I beseech you by the great expectation of that important "day, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven;" (2 Thess. 1:7) by "the terrors of a dissolving world;" (2 Pet. 3:10) by the "sound of the archangel's trumpet," (1 Thess. 4:16) and of that infinitely more awful sentence, "Come, ye blessed," and "Depart, ye cursed," with which that grand solemnity shall close. (Matt. 25:34,41) 6.

I beseech you, finally, by your own precious and immortal soul; by the sure prospect of a dying bed, or of a sudden surprise into the invisible state and as you would feel one spark of comfort in your departing spirit, when your flesh and your heart are failing. I beseech you, by your own personal appearance before the tribunal of Christ, (for a personal appearance it must be, even to them who now sit on thrones of their own;) by all the transports of the blessed, and by all the agonies of the damned, then one or the other of which must be your everlasting portion.

I affectionately entreat and beseech you, in the strength of all these united considerations, as you will answer it to me who may in that day be summoned to testify against you, and, which is unspeakably more, as you will answer it to your conscience, as you will answer it to the eternal Judge that you dismiss not these thoughts, these meditations, and these cares, till you have brought matters to a happy issue; till you have made resolute choice of Christ, and his appointed way of salvation; and till you have solemnly devoted yourself to God in the, bonds of an everlasting covenant. 7.

And thus I leave the matter before you, and before the Lord. I have told you my errand; I have discharged embassy. Stronger arguments I cannot use; more endearing and more awful considerations I cannot suggest. Choose, therefore, whether you will go out, as it were clothed in sackcloth, to cast yourself at the feet of him who now sends you these equitable and gracious terms of peace and pardon; or whether you will hold it out till he appears sword in hand to reckon with you for your treasons and your crimes, and for this neglected embassy among the rest of them.

Fain would I hope the best; nor can I believe that this labor of love shall be so entirely unsuccessful, that not one soul shall be brought to the foot of Christ in cordial submission and humble faith. "Take with you," therefore, "words, and turn unto the Lord;" (Hos. 14:2) and O that those which follow might, in effect at least, be the genuine language of every one that reads them.

Sinner yielding to these Entreaties, and declaring acceptance of Salvation by Christ.

"Blessed Lord, it is enough! It is too much! Surely there needs not this variety of arguments this importunity of persuasion, to court me to be happy, to prevail on me to accept of pardon, of life, of eternal glory. Compassionate Savior, my soul is subdued; so that I trust the language of thy grief is become that of my penitence, and I may say, 'my heart is melted like wax in the midst of my bowels.' (Psa. 22:14)

"O gracious Redeemer! I have already neglected thee too long. I have too often injured thee: have crucified thee afresh by my guilt and impenitence, as if I had taken pleasure in 'putting thee to an open shame.' (Heb. 6:6) But my heart now bows itself before thee in humble, unfeigned submission. I desire to make no terms with thee but these--that I may be entirely thine. I cheerfully present thee with a blank, entreating thee that thou wilt do me the honor to signify upon it what is thy pleasure. Teach me, O Lord, what thou wouldst have me to do; for I desire to learn the lesson, and to learn it that I may practice it. If it be more than my feeble powers can answer, thou wilt, I hope, give me more strength; and in that strength I will serve thee. O receive a soul which thou hast made willing to be thine!

"No more, O blessed Jesus, no more is it necessary to beseech and entreat me. Permit me rather to address myself to thee with all the importunity of a perishing sinner, that at length sees and knows 'there is salvation in no other' (Acts 4:12) Permit me now, Lord, to come and throw myself at thy feet like a helpless outcast that has no shelter but in thy gracious compassion! like one 'pursued by the avenger of blood,' and seeking earnestly an admittance 'into the city of refuge!' (Josh. 20:2,3)

"'I wait for the Lord; my soul doth wait; and in thy word do I hope,' (Psa. 130:5) that thou wilt `receive me graciously.' (Hos. 14:2) My soul confides in thy goodness, and adores it. I adore the patience which has borne with me so long; and the grace that now makes me heartily willing to be thine: to be thine on thine own terms, thine on any terms. O secure this treacherous heart to thyself! O unite me to thee in such inseparable bonds, that none of the allurements of flesh and blood, none of the vanities of an ensnaring world, none of the solicitations of sinful companions, may draw me back from thee, and plunge me into new guilt and ruin! `Be surety, O Lord, for thy servant for good,' (Psa. 119:122) that I may stilt keep my hold on thee, and so on eternal life; till at length I know more fully, by joyful and everlasting experience, how complete a Savior thou art. Amen."

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