

Printed Pamphlets

Salvation — Liberty — Food — Security

John 10

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of all that which will, ere long, crown their hopes, aspirations, and yearnings.

The feet pursue the path marked out by His blessed footsteps, who has gone before. For this, divine energy is needed. The blessed apostle, who knew Christ in glory, heard His voice speaking to him from glory, and had seen Him in glory, follows him: "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." The mark denoted the spot, as it were, whither he pressed; the prize was that for which he ran. He did not think of his eye or his feet. That on which his eye rested, and for which his feet pressed on was everything to him: purpose of heart, earnestness, energy, there must be, as well as self-abnegation, every step of the course; diligence of soul and vigilance of heart too; -- but if Christ, seen in glory, and known in glory, does not form and maintain these in the heart, I know of no other motive or power. The Lord keep us hearing, and beholding, and following His own Son; that the tastes suited to Christ may be both formed and kept alive in us; and we ourselves, thus divinely strengthened to refuse everything of the first man, because we are so satisfied with the second Man; and that we may show forth His virtues, and glories, and excellencies, in a crooked and perverse generation, among whom we shine as lights (heavenly bodies) in the world, holding forth the word of life.

Salvation -- Liberty -- Food -- Security

In John 10:9, we find the above blessed realities expounded by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. First, we have Himself set before us, next His acting in grace.

It is a great comfort to know who and what He is who laid down His life for the sheep, and has put them for security in His own blessed hand. This is what we are taught in the commencement of John 10. The blessed Lord Jesus Christ declares Himself to be the true Messiah of Israel, the one who had been promised as to come; He it was who entered by the door into the sheepfold -- that is, He came by Divine appointment and sanction to be the Shepherd of Israel, who were the people of God's pasture, and the sheep of His hand. He did not climb up some other way, as all the false shepherds did; they were at best but thieves and robbers, claiming unlawfully that to which they had no right. Not so Christ. He came in by the door, submitting to every rule and ordinance appointed by the owner of the flock -- the Jehovah of Israel. Beloved reader, how blessed to think of Him, the eternal Son of God as He was, yet He comes down and humbles Himself to become a man, and as a man submits Himself *perfectly*! But Israel would not have Him; they slighted, despised, and rejected Him. So He leaves. He goes outside the fold of Israel, the enclosure which was peculiar to them. This is what is meant by, "He goeth *before them*" -- as rejected and despised of His own people, He Himself goes first, and then it is said, He puts forth His own sheep, and they follow Him, for they know His voice. This was exactly the case of the blind man in the 9th chapter, who was cast out, and had been found by Jesus. What a blessed Shepherd

by whom to be led and fed! How good to be under His care, outside all men's religion and the whole array of those ordinances which belonged to Israel!

Having thus set Himself forth in this way -- His *person* the only ground of connection with God -- He then opens out most blessedly what it is that replaces the old Jewish system, Himself the foundation and accomplisher of it.

First -- There is *salvation*. "By Me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved." He now presents Himself as the door. He, and He alone, is the door; to enter in by that door was to be *saved*. He would lay down His life, costly and precious as it was. His blood was to be shed. It was His own voluntary act to shed His blood, lay down His life; no one could take it from Him. As to necessity, there was none on His side, save indeed that blessed love of His, which would remove every barrier to its full expression.

Again, think of Him in contrast with an hireling. The hour of danger or difficulty would find the latter thinking of himself; Jesus thinks of His sheep. If He then interposes, if He lays down His life, sheds His blood, the first thing that meets us at the door is *salvation*. "By Me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved."

Again, there is also *liberty*. "He shall go in and out." Slavery and bondage is the birthright of every child of Adam. He is born into the world a lost slave. The moment he has to do with Christ, he is met with salvation and liberty -- he is liberated, he is set free and there is also *food* -- "shall find pasture." Oh for ability to describe the richness of the food! *Saved, liberated*, brought into a region where want is unknown -- "I shall not want." Not only this, but *filled, satisfied*; and hence it is, "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures." And observe, it is, "*if any man enter in*." It is not only now the children of Abraham the nation of Israel; the door of grace in Himself is wide open to all. Will you say, reader, if you know what it is to be blessed in this way under this gracious Shepherd Lord? Have *you* had to do with Him? It must be with Him; for it is, "*by Me*, if any man enter in, he shall be saved." Oh, what a contrast to all our purely natural thoughts of God and His Christ! What a contrast to all that was to be found in the *law or ordinances*! Neither the one nor the other could meet the first need to a poor outcast, either of Jew or Gentile. The law *required*, not saved -- the law brought in death, not *life* -- but, "By Me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved"; and, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly," is *grace* in its fullness.

Once more: we have here also *eternal security*. The life which Christ gives is eternal, everlasting but not this only, for of His sheep He says, "*they shall never perish*." But then, where will He put them to secure them against enemies from without. He makes them as strong *outside* as *inside*. No weakness within could endanger, for it was "eternal life" He gave; and no enemy outside could harm them, for He has the sheep in *His hand*. The hand that was nailed to the cross is the secure shelter and rest for all the sheep. Oh, what contrasts are awakened in the soul as we read that word "*My hand*" -- *My Father's hand*! Not the walls and barriers, the laws and