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A MESSAGE FROM GOD.

The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?—Amos iii. 8.

THE Lord God hath spoken; what hath he said? Listen to him who speaks from heaven. None can refuse to listen and be innocent.—HEB. xii. 25, 26.

No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. 2 Pet. i. 20, 21. The prophets were not self-appointed; they spake not of themselves. They were appointed by God to do his work; they must speak what he willed; they must declare what he communicated to them. When he made known to them his will, they felt it their duty to speak; they could not then keep silence; and if any opposed, or expressed surprise, they might say, as does Amos, The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy? Amos iii. 8.

The same may be said of the ministers of Christ at the present day. No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. Heb. v. 4. They are appointed of God. They are sent by him. They are to do his bidding; preach what he teaches; preach the preaching that he bids them. Jonah iii. 2. Saith Paul, We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. 2 Cor. iv. 5. And again, Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. 2 Cor. v. 20. In another place he declares, For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! 1 Cor. ix. 16. Peter and John, when commanded by the rulers not to preach at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus, answered, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. Acts iv. 19, 20. And when on one occasion the apostles were imprisoned, the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life. Acts v. 19, 20. And when they were again

threatened by those in authority for obeying the charge given them by the angel, Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. Acts v. 29. This is the spirit which every minister of Christ should possess. He should not fear the face of man. He should feel that he is commissioned by Heaven to declare Heaven's *message to men*; and that message he should faithfully declare. These words of Amos should be deeply impressed upon his heart,—The Lord God hath spoken it, who can but prophesy?

Reader, here is A MESSAGE FROM GOD. But, you ask, WHAT SAITH THE LORD? I answer,

1. The Lord God hath spoken in regard to *the fall and ruin of man*. The works of God, as they came from his hand, were pronounced very good. Gen. i. 31. Man was created in the image of God, with a heart to love him, and with powers to serve him. Gen. i. 26, 27. There was no conflict then between the passions and the judgment; no subjection of the mind and the conscience to the mere animal propensities of his nature. But how do we see him now? The image of God is obliterated from his soul; he has no heart to love his Maker and no disposition to serve him; the passions ruling over the judgment; the animal propensities enslaving the mind and stifling the voice of conscience. If man was made upright, he is not now as God made him. He is fallen. So God's providence declares. He deals with man as a fallen and rebellious creature. What mean those afflictions through which he is doomed to pass, if he be not a sinner? What mean the judgments with which he is visited? What mean the calamities which distress the nations, the wars, the pestilences, the famines? Could God in his providence declare, more unequivocally than he does, his hatred of sin, or teach more plainly that man, because of his transgressions, is the enemy of God? But we are not left to infer from the teachings of providence, what man now is. We have only to open the volume of inspiration and read *what the Lord God hath spoken*. Our first parents fell; and their "fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery." In Adam all die. 1 Cor. xv. 22. Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. Rom. v. 12—19. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of

God. Rom. iii. 23. And God hates sin. He is angry with the wicked every day. Ps. vii. 11. And he has declared, The wages of sin is death: the soul that sinneth, it shall die. Rom. vi. 23; Ez. xviii. 20. Now, since the Lord God hath thus spoken, *who can but prophesy?* It is not left optional with us whether we shall speak of your sinfulness or not. We must bring against you a charge of criminality—of rebellion against God—of treason against the King of kings. Nor are there any circumstances to mitigate your offence. It stands out in all its blackness, without excuse, and without a parallel. You live upon the bounty of God, and yet you sin against him! You are exposed to his wrath, and yet you rush on without a thought of what is before you! Your feet are pressing down to death, and yet you inquire not for a way of escape! Your immortal nature is in ruins; a fiery doom awaits you; and yet you are at ease! And who can refrain from speaking? Think you we are beside ourselves? Ah, no; we speak words of truth and soberness; and if Christians were not asleep, they would give you no rest while you remain unreconciled to God. We speak to you God's truth when we declare that you are exposed to his wrath; we utter only what God hath spoken, when we announce to you that you are condemned because of your sins, and are in the road to everlasting woe. A sinner? You confess it! Condemned? You feel it! At ease? How wonderful! Your very security—your indifference—is alarming; and it should cause a warning voice to arise in your ears from every tongue that can speak of sin and of the Saviour.

2. Again—The Lord God hath spoken respecting *the way of recovery from sin and ruin*. Easy is the descent to misery, but not so easy is the return; to retrace our steps is the labor and the difficulty. Man has involved himself in difficulty, but to extricate himself exceeds his wisdom and his power. There must be deliverance, or he is lost; there must be salvation, or the threatened penalty of the law will be executed, and they who are now dead in trespasses and sins, must suffer the horrors of the second death. And where shall we look for deliverance? Nature speaks of our misery, but it says nothing of relief; it teaches our sinfulness, but provides no Saviour; it tells of our guilt, but offers no expiation. The schemes which human wisdom has devised, serve only to aggravate our case; they tantalize us

with hopes which they can never fulfil, with promises which they can never perform, with expectations which they can never gratify. But the Bible unfolds the way of life. Here God speaks; and here it is written that God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. John iii. 16. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Rom. v. 6, 8. Here, then, is the hope of the sinner; here is the way of deliverance and escape. Our iniquities were laid upon Jesus Christ; he bare our sins in his own body on the tree; in him the law was honoured, the claims of justice satisfied, and full atonement made. Isa. liii. 3—6; 1 Pet. ii. 24. While, therefore, we remind you of the fall, and endeavour to impress upon your heart a sense of your sin and misery, it is also our privilege to preach to you salvation through atoning blood. The Lord God hath spoken concerning a Saviour, Christ, the Lord; and how shall we refrain from speaking of him? A message from God concerning Jesus Christ! He is a precious Saviour; he is an all-sufficient Saviour; he is able and mighty to save, able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him. Heb. vii. 25. He is just the Saviour you need; he is **ALL YOU NEED**; and through him there is offered to you a gratuitous pardon. In him there is life; and without him you must die the second death. How, then, can we cease to point you to him, and say, Behold the Lamb of God? John i. 36. And yet how you treat this Saviour! He is the only begotten and the well beloved of the Father; he is God's dear Son; he speaks of him in the most endearing terms; and he is the only foundation on which you can build a sure hope of heaven; and yet you will not come to him that you may have life! John v. 40. You receive him not when he is offered to you; you will not have him to reign over you and rule in you; and you seem determined, rather than embrace Jesus Christ, to perish in your sins! Poor dying sinner, what has Jesus done that he should be thus slighted by you? What are your hopes for the eternal world, that you can afford thus to turn your back upon the Son of God? *The Lord God hath spoken*, and though you close your eyes to your danger, and shut your ears to the voice of mercy, we will yet *prophesy*

of *Jesus*; and if you perish, the last accents which fall upon your failing senses as you go down to the chambers of death, shall be the accents of entreaty, calling you to the cross of Christ. You may deride our earnestness, yet we will speak; we will deliver our souls from your blood; and you shall know your duty, though you do it not. The Saviour rejected? Oh, think of his bloody agony, and his dying groans! The soul lost when Christ has died? Oh, sinner, what desperate wickedness in your heart! And yet you dream of heaven! You hope to dwell forever with the blessed! How vain the hope! While Christ is rejected, there is no hope of heaven for you! How then can we cease to speak of Christ? and if we should, would not the very stones cry out, and reprove you for a rejected Saviour, a God dishonoured, and the Spirit grieved? Jesus rejected is the ruin of the soul; shall this be the ruin of yours? Will you longer reject him?

3. Again; the Lord God hath spoken concerning *the necessity of repentance*. Repentance is necessary because men are sinners; and though Christ has died, he did not die to save men in their sins, but from them. But how can men be delivered from their sins, if they do not repent of them? or, how can men be forgiven if they do not repent? Repentance includes confession; and this is necessary in order to forgiveness. Repentance includes sorrow for sin; and how can we expect the pardon of that for which we feel no regret? To repent of sin is to forsake it; and how can we look for pardon while we continue in our transgressions? And evangelical repentance is always connected with faith in Christ: there can be no repentance without faith, and no faith without repentance. And as Jesus Christ is the only way of access to the Father, it is impossible that the impenitent man should be forgiven, because he has no faith in the Saviour. He cherishes the sins which put the Redeemer to the shameful death of the cross; he lives on in open transgression against God; and he manifests no disposition to avail himself of the Scriptural way of pardon and life. As God hath spoken of the sinfulness of men; as he speaks of the Saviour who died for our sins; so he speaks of the necessity of repentance. Repentance, or perdition, is the alternative which he sets before us. Whatever else is neglected, this must be done, or the soul is undone. The sinner must repent or perish. Yes, sinner, you must

repent or perish! I stop not now to inquire how the work is to be done. My business now is with the duty which God requires at your hands, and which you must do, or die! John the Baptist preached repentance; when Jesus came, he preached repentance; and he has commanded us to preach in his name, repentance and remission of sins among all nations. Luke xxiv. 47. From infancy upward this duty has been urged upon you, and yet it is not done! Sabbath after Sabbath, year after year, has the duty been enforced, and yet it is not begun! Your soul is soon to stand before the judgment seat, and yet you have not begun to prepare to meet your God! And, sinner, would you have us be silent? Would you be let alone, that you may make your destruction sure? But the Lord God hath spoken, and who can but prophesy? You may refuse to hear, and yet we will speak; you may turn away from our message—the message of God—and yet we will cry after you, *Repent!* REPENT! REPENT! for we know that except you repent, you must perish. Luke xiii. 3. Perish! Sinner, did you ever think of it? You have often heard the word—the sound is familiar to your ear—its accents may have been often on your tongue—but have you ever devoted a serious thought to the thing itself? It is not a mere name—not barely a sound—it is a stern and fearful reality. To perish! O, who can tell what it is? Yet if repentance be neglected, this must be your doom. Repentance? God requires it at your hands! Repentance? God gives you space for repentance; he has given you days, and months, and years; and he commands you to repent now! Acts xvii. 30. This is the time to begin. Every moment of delay is a moment of rebellion and disobedience! Every moment of delay is a moment of peril to your soul—a moment of suspense to the angels that wait to rejoice over you—a moment of rejection of the Saviour, who says, How often would I, and ye would not! Matt. xxiii. 37. There is danger, sinner, danger; and would you impose silence on us? But God has spoken, and we must speak. God cries after you, *Return*; and we will cry REPENT! REPENT!

4. Again, the Lord God hath spoken of *the necessity of faith*. Faith receives the testimony of God, the record which God hath given of his Son; and he who believes not makes God a liar! 1 John v. 10. Faith receives and rests upon Jesus Christ for salvation; and how can they be saved

who reject the only Saviour? Without faith it is impossible to please God; without faith there is no salvation. Heb. xi. 6. He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life. 1 John v. 12. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. John iii. 36. Such are the words which God hath spoken concerning the necessity of faith; and it is also declared, He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned. Mark xvi. 16. Faith is connected inseparably with repentance; and as unbelievers never repent, how can they be saved? Jesus Christ has died; he has shed his blood for the remission of sins; he has brought in an everlasting righteousness; he offers full and free pardon; but the blessings he has purchased are suspended upon our faith. It is by faith that we are justified; by faith that we are saved; we must believe to the saving of our souls. Rom. v. 1; x. 10; Heb. x. 39. Through Jesus Christ forgiveness of sins is preached; and all that believe are justified from all things. Acts xiii. 38, 39. This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent; this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ. John vi. 29; 1 John iii. 23. Here, then, is the alternative before you,—Faith or damnation. You must believe or be damned! You must come to Jesus, accept of Christ, kiss the Son, or perish. Ps. ii. 12. This is the work before you; and it must be done, or you are lost! I pause not now to ask how you are to do it. My business now is only with the fact—the duty—and I only declare to you what God hath spoken, when I say, you must believe in Jesus Christ, or your destruction is as certain as if you were now in hell! Yes, you *must believe*; there is no rest for your soul short of faith in Jesus Christ; and there is nothing without yourself, nor within yourself, which should prevent your reception of Jesus Christ by faith now—nothing to justify a moment's delay—nothing but your own wicked heart to hinder your coming to Christ and committing your soul to him now! Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation; now you should believe. 2 Cor. vi. 2. You can have no hope and no rest until you embrace Jesus Christ by faith. Sinner, the cross stands between you and perdition, and you must flee to the cross, if you would live. The cross stands between you and

heaven, and you must embrace it or die. How often has the necessity of faith been urged upon you! And still you believe not. How reasonable the demand of faith! and yet how reluctant your heart to the duty! Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? Isa. liii. 1. And shall we cease to testify repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ? Acts xx. 21. Would you have us be silent, when your salvation is at stake? But the Lord God hath spoken, and who can but prophesy? Yes, sinner, we will continue to prophesy, while God spares us and you, and while you live you shall hear of Jesus, and be entreated to believe in him! Believe, and you shall be saved. And did you ever think what salvation is? You have dreamed of heaven; you have hoped for heaven; but have you given a thought to what heaven is? It is a place of purity; there is no sin there. It is a place of happiness; there is no sorrow there. It is a place of praise; there are everlasting songs. But, sinner, there is no heaven for man without faith in Jesus Christ; there is no heaven for you, unless you believe! That your soul may be saved—that heaven may be yours—we will continue to press upon your acceptance the Saviour of sinners; living, we will point you to the Lamb of God; and dying, our broken accents in death shall be, Look unto Christ and be saved! Believe and live!

5. Again, the Lord God hath spoken in regard to *the necessity of regeneration*. Think how much evil there is in your heart; what forgetfulness of God; what love to the world; what reluctance to duty; what aversion to holiness; what disregard of the gospel; what unbelief; what impenitence; what unholy desires; what evil thoughts and base imaginations: and can that heart be fit for heaven? Is that heart which resists the Holy Ghost, fit to be his eternal habitation? Is that heart which rejects the Saviour prepared to dwell with him forever? Ah, that heart must be made new, or take up its abode in the world of darkness. God hath spoken by his Son, and said, Ye must be born again. That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit. Ye must be born of the Spirit, or ye can never enter the kingdom of God. John iii. 3—8. Yes, reader, you must be born twice before you can die once, or it had been better for you never to have been born. Born again! This necessity lies upon you—

God's word places it there—I speak only what he has spoken, when I say, **YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN!** And God having spoken, it is not for us to be silent. This necessity has often been testified to you; it is now testified again; and the testimony will be continued while you are this side the grave! You must become a new creature in Christ Jesus, or be excluded from the paradise of God; you must experience the washing of regeneration, or receive your portion with the unholy and the unclean. You must be born again, for you resist the Spirit of God; born again, for you grieve the Holy Ghost from your heart! He will not always strive. Oh what infatuation to resist his influences! Can we be silent? No, sinner: you are ruining yourself; you are plunging a dagger to your heart; and we can but cry, *Do thyself no harm!* And we will cry till the suicidal act is done, and you are lost; or till you yield your heart to the Spirit of grace, and become a follower of the Lamb!

6. Finally, the Lord God hath spoken concerning *the certainty of future rewards and punishments*. There is a heaven of glory for the righteous, and a hell of misery for the wicked. These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal. Matt. xxv. 46. Life and death are set before you; and it is for you to choose between them. The way of life is pointed out; it is through faith in Jesus Christ. To walk in it, you must repent and obey the gospel. The way to death is the broad way in which you are already travelling. Continue in that way, and you shall soon reap the wages of sin. If you would live, you must enter the strait and narrow way. Enter it, and you shall receive the end of your faith, the salvation of your soul. There is no uncertainty here. The judgment is coming, and heaven or hell will follow. Thus God has spoken, and thus we speak. We are bound to eternity. There is no time for trifling; every thing is solemn as the judgment and the retributions which follow. Pause, then, and think what lies before you. Heaven or hell, eternal happiness or eternal misery! Pause and think; and let this moment be the turning point in your destiny. Turn now to God and live! Flee from hell! Press for heaven!

This is what God hath said. This is the message which comes from him to you. It speaks of sin and the Saviour, of faith and repentance, of regeneration, of heaven and of

hell. It concerns yourself, reader, for time and eternity; and you refuse to hear it at your peril. It is God who speaks; and you are soon to stand before him. Death is near; death and the judgment. The judgment, sinner, the judgment! The hour hastens; are you ready? It is coming; will you prepare? Or will you "slight the message sent in mercy from above?" Oh, slight it not! Hear the voice of God; hear it and obey; believe and live! Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of men. O ye simple, understand wisdom; and, ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart. For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore, get wisdom: and with all thy getting, get understanding. Prov. viii. 4, 5, 11; ix. 10; iv. 7. Be wise unto salvation; wise for eternity. And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. 2 Tim. iii. 15—17; Jas. i. 5; iii. 17.

HEAR WHAT THE LORD GOD HATH SPOKEN; BELIEVE AND OBEY.

EXTRACT

From an old and scarce Sermon of the Rev. Samuel Rutherford.

ALL you into whose hands this little book shall come, O let me beg you to consider how your hearts can endure to think of being shut out of heaven, out of blessedness for ever! Ask your heart these questions. Can I burn? Can I endure the vengeance of eternal fire? Will a glowing oven, a scorching furnace, be an easy lodging for me? O why, my soul, wilt thou not be persuaded to repent? Is there too much pain in that? Talk to thee of crucifying the flesh, or parting with thy worldly companions, of entering in at the strait gate; O these are hard sayings, who can bear them? But how wilt thou dwell with devouring fire? How wilt thou dwell with everlasting burnings? Think on hell, O poor soul, and then think on Christ; and consider if a Redeemer from such misery be not worth the accepting of. Think on hell, and then think on sin, and carnal pleasures; consider how thou wilt relish them in the everlasting fire! Are these the price for which thou sellest thy soul to hell? O bid these lusts and pleasures be gone! bid your companion-sins be gone; and though you loved them well, and have spent your time sinfully with them, yet tell them you must not burn for them: that you will not damn your soul to please your flesh. Having thus briefly laid down the use of terror, to awaken some poor souls out of the depth of carnal security, I shall proceed to encourage poor sinners to lay fast hold on Christ before it be too late.

O poor soul! Hast thou kept Christ out a long time, and art thou not yet resolved to open thy heart to him? What shall I say to thee? Let me say this—Christ waits still for thee; Christ is still willing to receive thee! Why, then, wilt thou undo thyself by neglecting so great a salvation? Think what message He sends to thee, what errand he comes on; it is no dismal message, it is no dreadful errand. If Christ had come to destroy thy soul, could he have had less welcome than thou hast given him? O for thy soul's

sake receive Him! O ye fools, when will ye be wise? Come unto Jesus and he will have mercy on you, and heal all your backslidings, and love you freely.

But some poor soul will say, I have a desire to come to Christ, but I am afraid Christ will never receive such a wretched sinner as I am, who have stood out so long against him. In answer to this, let me give you some directions.

1. Ah poor soul, art thou willing to come to Christ? Then will Christ in no wise cast thee out, if thou comest to Him poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked. O sinner, come not to him in thine own strength! but come thou and say, O Lord, here is a poor soul not worth any thing! O Lord, make me rich in faith! here is a miserable soul, O Lord, have mercy on me! here is a poor blind soul, O Lord, enlighten me from above! here is a poor naked wretch, O Lord, save me, lest I perish, for I cannot help myself.

2. Come to Christ by believing in him. Yes, when thy poor soul is sinking into hell, and sees no way to escape the fearful wrath of God, O then at such a time seize fast hold on Christ! O apprehend and apply all his benefits to thy soul! Come and grasp him in the arms of thy faith, and say, I believe in thee, Lord; help my unbelief. And the answer which thy Lord will give thee, will be this—Be it unto thee according as thou wilt. Let Christ be in your hand, and the promise in your eye, and no doubt, though thou hast been a rebel and a traitor, yet Jesus Christ, having received gifts for the rebellious, will shew mercy to thee, and receive thee.

3. Come to Jesus Christ by repenting and forsaking all thy sins. Thou canst never come to the wedding without the wedding garment; the old man must be done away, before all things can be made new. “O Jerusalem, wash thy heart from wickedness, that thou mayst be saved; how long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?” Jer. iv. 14.