

THE SALVATION OF GOD

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The Pearl of Psalms
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and as

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Published by

B. McCALL BARBOUR
28 GEORGE IV BRIDGE
EDINBURGH, 1, SCOTLAND

Second edition, August 1960

MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
STANLEY L. HUNT (PRINTERS) LTD., GEORGE STREET, RUSHDEN, NORTHANTS

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PUBLISHER'S PREFACE

THE five chapters forming this little volume are the substance of talks given by Mr. George Henderson to a group of young men who had been converted to Christ during a season of special blessing. The talks were given in South Africa where Mr. Henderson, as many readers may know, spent much of his valuable life.

The talks were given with a view to strengthening the young converts mentioned; and they proved to be of such blessing to all who heard them that there was a demand for their being put into permanent form.

It is in the belief that these talks—dealing with the great and important theme of the “ Salvation of God ” in its past, present and future aspects—may prove helpful to an increasingly wide audience that they are now issued in this present permanent form.

CHAPTER I
SALVATION—
ITS BREADTH AND FULNESS

IT is related that on one occasion a Saxon prince presented a Saxon princess with a gift of a most wonderful egg. It was made of silver; and when a certain spring was touched, the egg opened and disclosed a yolk of gold. The golden yolk also had a secret spring, and, when it was pressed, the yolk opened and revealed a beautiful golden bird which held in its beak a costly ring that exactly fitted the finger of the princess.

The story forms an illustration of what is embraced in the majestic expression which forms the theme of this book—the Salvation of God. The gift, of which we become the possessors when we receive salvation—like the gift of the Saxon prince—has values which reveal themselves only as we penetrate to its inner meanings. And there are at least two reasons why it behoves us carefully to examine what the Scriptures have to say about it:

(1) It covers every experience through which a believer may pass from the moment of his acceptance of it until he enters the heavenly land.

(2) It is the only message which we are commissioned to proclaim to a sin-doomed world. If, therefore, our apprehension of it is inadequate we shall be robbed of

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much of its present blessedness ; if our grasp of it is incomplete, our presentation of it will be faulty.

The first thing which we shall have to do, then, is to define

THE MEANING OF THE WORD " SALVATION "

Careful examination of the way in which it is used in Scripture reveals the fact that it always signifies *deliverance*—the context of the passage in which it is found determining the *nature* of the deliverance. Thus, for example, when the Israelites were being pursued by Pharaoh they were commanded to " stand still and see the salvation of the Lord " (Exodus 14. 13) ; and after God had intervened and had taken them out from the grasp of the tyrant king, it is said, " Thus the Lord *saved* Israel that day " (verse 30). Salvation for Israel, therefore, meant deliverance from the thralldom of Egypt. Then again David says, " The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear ? The Lord is the strength of my life ; of whom shall I be afraid ? " (Psalm 27. 1) ; and the following verses go on to show that the salvation of which he spoke was deliverance from wicked men.

When, however, this word is used to denote the blessings which come to us, consequent upon the death and resurrection of Christ, it takes on a new and a much profounder meaning. Man's greatest need to-day is not deliverance from mere human foes, but from the thralldom of Satan and from the bondage of sin ; and hence we find that this important expression embraces within its comprehensive grasp three things :

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- (1) Deliverance from the guilt of sin, which is spoken of as an accomplished fact.
- (2) Emancipation from the tyranny of sin, which is described as a process that continues through life, and by and by,
- (3) Translation to a scene where no sin or evil shall enter, where God wipes the tears from every eye.

So great, indeed, is the significance of this wonderful word that the Scriptures have to employ another word to describe each of the three sections into which it is divided. Thus the word which describes our immediate deliverance from the penalty of sin is *Justification* ; the word which describes our gradual deliverance from the power of sin is *Sanctification* ; and the word which describes our final deliverance from the presence of sin is *Glorification*.

The first is something which we *possess*.

The second, something which we *experience*.

The third, something which we *anticipate*.

We would mention here an Old Testament illustration which will set these three aspects of salvation clearly before us. The national salvation of Israel consisted first in their deliverance from Egyptian bondage ; second, in their deliverance from wilderness dangers ; and third, in their deliverance from the wilderness itself. They looked back on the first part of their salvation which protected them from the stroke of divine judgment on the night of the passover ; they looked up to God as they journeyed through the desert and found in Him their present Deliverer from the

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trials of the way (Psalm 107) ; they looked on with glad expectancy to the time when they would tread the vine-clad hills and the fertile valleys of the Promised Land.

Take another illustration. When a man who is unable to swim falls into deep water, the moment in which the strong hand of his rescuer is placed upon him, there is a sense in which we would say that he *is saved*. As the deliverer, bearing up the man with one hand, swims to the shore with the other, we would say that the man *is being saved*. When, finally, he stands once more on solid ground, we would say that he *is completely and fully saved*. That sets forth precisely what is happening to the recipients of the Salvation of God.

We must never forget that while we think in terms of past, present, and future, with God time is an eternal *now*. "Standing on that tiny and ever-shifting point which we call the *present*, we constantly look backwards to the rapidly receding events of our experience, and forward to those which are as rapidly approaching ; and everything is pigeon-holed by us in one of the three great compartments—the past, the present, or the future. But with God there is no *time*. He is eternally the ' I AM ' (Exodus 3. 14). In thinking then of the past, present, and future of salvation, we must remember that what God reveals in time-terms is in relation to men, not to Himself. Speaking as we must from *our* standpoint,

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in the thought of God. ' Whom He did predestinate, them He also called ; and whom He called, them He

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also justified ; and whom He justified, them He also glorified ' (Romans 8. 30). The sanctification is with us present, the glory future ; but with God all is complete."

The Salvation of God is thus in three great sections which deal with our guilty past, our needy present, and our glorious future. *The past tense* of salvation is connected with the work which the Saviour accomplished on the Cross ; its *present tense* is associated with the Holiest where He ever lives to intercede ; its *future tense* is bound up with His Second Coming.

There is a sense in which the whole of the New Testament Scriptures may be said to form an exposition of the three aspects of this great and mighty truth. We look *back* in faith to the crucified One of the Gospels, and that delivers us from the *judicial consequences* of sin ; we look *up* to the living One of the Epistles, and that delivers us from the *present dominion* of sin ; we look *on* to the coming One of the book of the Revelation, and so to the time when we shall enter a sphere where sin is unknown.

What is expanded in the New Testament as a whole, is epitomised in one brief passage of it (Titus 2. 11-13). Verse 11 is a summary of the Gospels, and describes the salvation which we receive once for all ; verse 12 sets forth in detail those lessons which we learn as we penetrate to the inner meanings and present endowments of the gift with which we have been favoured ; verse 13 directs us to the glorious appearing of the One Who shall conduct us to the tearless land, and so to our completed and perfected salvation.

CHAPTER II

SALVATION—ITS PAST TENSE

UNDER each of the tenses of salvation which we have mentioned, very definite and marvellous blessings reach us ; and we shall now examine these somewhat in detail.

The PAST TENSE of salvation, as we have seen, is associated with the cross, the tomb, and the risen Lord.

“ Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures ; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures ” (1 Corinthians 15. 1-4).

By Christ's redemptive work the *guilt* of sin has been removed (I John 1. 7), the *penalty* of sin has been borne (I Peter 2. 24) ; and the gospel which brings us these glad tidings is declared to be the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth (Romans 1. 16). As the two other aspects of salvation—the present and the future—assume and have their basis in this one, let us pause and examine it in detail. We think first, then, of

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(a) THE SOURCE FROM WHICH IT SPRINGS

“ The grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men ” (Titus 2. 11, R.V.). Lord Macaulay has pointed out that some of the noblest rivers, which spread fertility over continents, and which bear richly laden ships to sea, have their sources in almost inaccessible mountains, incorrectly laid down in maps and rarely visited by foot of man. And the source from which comes that mighty river of grace divine, which has enriched and blessed a thirsty world, is the throne of God and of the Lamb. Love originated in heaven, but overflowed its banks and came down to earth ; and in contemplation of that fact we can only say with Faber :

“ How Thou canst be so kind to me
And be the God Thou art,
Is darkness to my intellect
But sunshine to my heart.”

This is the first, and perhaps the most difficult, lesson which we have to learn in the school of grace. A Christian man once said that it took him forty-two years to learn three things :

- (1) That he could do nothing to save himself ;
- (2) That God did not require him to do anything ;
- (3) That Christ did it all.

It is by grace that we are saved ; our misery, not our merit, was the magnet which drew the Saviour from above.

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Again, think of

(b) THE FOUNDATION UPON WHICH IT RESTS

The basis of God's salvation was well and truly laid at Calvary. People are saying to-day that we have got beyond the doctrine of salvation by *blood*; that such terms were all right in a barbaric age, but are out of place in an enlightened one like ours; that we ought to speak of the *love* of God but not of the cross, or the blood, or the rock-hewn tomb. But we would insist that, apart from the cross of Calvary, we have absolutely no evidence that God loves the world. Someone may draw attention to those mighty oceans which form the means of inter-communication between continent and continent, whereby the products of the one meet the needs of the other. But, let us not forget those colossal tragedies which took place on these self-same mighty oceans, when many a gallant vessel—the Titanic, the Royal George and oh, so very many others—was suddenly entombed in their icy depths—tragedies of the deep in which husbands were snatched from their wives, breadwinners from their families, parents from their children, and so on. Others may point to those lovely flowers which adorn the landscape, delighting the eye and filling the air with perfume. And they may insist that these are evidences of the love of God. But, likewise, we must not forget that there is a serpent which, in certain places, lurks beneath those gems of beauty, waiting to inoculate the unwary admirer with its deadly poison and so rob him of his life.

No ! These instances which we have quoted of the Creator's work are evidences of the power and of the wisdom of God, but *not* of His love.

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“ Hereby perceive we the love of God ”—how ?—
“ because He laid down His life for us ” (I John 3. 16).

“ Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins ” (I John 4. 10). Calvary is the proof and the measure of the love of God ; and, with the late Dr. Pierson, we would say emphatically that, to speak of that love apart from the cross of Christ, which alone has made the exercise of it righteously possible in a world of sin, is like mocking the prisoner in his cell.

“ No not the love without the blood,
That were to me no love at all ;
It could not calm my guilty soul,
Nor hush the fears which me appal.

The love I need is *righteous* love,
Inscribed on the sin-bearing tree ;
Love that exacts the sinner's debt,
Yet, in exacting, sets him free.

Love that condemns the sinner's sin,
Yet, in condemning, pardon seals ;
That saves from righteous wrath, and yet
Its saving righteousness reveals.

This is the love that calms my heart ;
That soothes each conscience-pang within ;
That pacifies each guilty dread,
And frees me from the power of sin.”

By means of the blood, atonement was effected (Leviticus 17. 11) ; peace was made (Colossians 1. 20) ; forgiveness is possible (Ephesians 1. 7) ; justification

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is secured (Romans 5. 9) ; redemption was accomplished (I Peter 1. 18, 19) ; cleansing is provided (I John 1. 7) and victory is achieved (Revelation 12. 11). It has to be very gently but very firmly declared that the only alternative to the *blood* of the Lamb is the *wrath* of the Lamb.

(c) THE PRINCIPLE UPON WHICH IT IS RECEIVED

If it is clear that grace is the source from which salvation springs and atonement the foundation upon which it rests, it is equally clear that faith is the principle by which it is received. “ For by grace are ye saved through faith ; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God ; not of works lest any man should boast ” (Ephesians 2. 8, 9).

A young spendthrift living in a city in the western States of America put up a board in front of an empty house of which he was the owner, on which were inscribed the following words :

THIS HOUSE
WILL BE GIVEN AWAY GRATIS
TO THE FIRST MAN
WHO APPLIES

He was a better judge of human nature than many, as several days intervened before anyone made application for the house. The fact was, the people believed that it was a practical joke, and never imagined that the owner intended to make a present of it to anybody.

A few days after the notice board was exhibited he was called upon by an old negro, who left his whitewash

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brush and pail at the door, and with a broad smile on his black face saluted him, and asked if any one had been there before him.

“ Why ? ” replied the gentleman, “ what do you mean ? ”

“ Oh,” the coloured man answered, “ I mean 'bout the house and lot on Locust Street.”

“ No,” said the owner, “ there has not been anybody yet ; but you don't suppose I would give away my house and lot to an old darkie like you.”

Scratching his head for a moment, his face brightened up, and then the old negro answered :

“ Well, I don't suppose you are going to break your promise even to a poor old darkie like me.”

The young spendthrift was completely cornered by the old fellow, and with a hearty laugh exclaimed, “ Well, I declare you deserve to have the house, and you *shall* have it. I can't afford to break my word even to a poor old darkie like you.”

Faith in God and His Word is as simple as the faith of the negro in the word of the spendthrift. God is too *rich* to sell salvation, and man is too *poor* to buy it. But, as we have seen, grace brings that salvation to us ; and faith appropriates what grace provides.

(d) THE METHOD BY WHICH IT IS ASSURED

The New Testament speaks with great distinctness here ; because assurance of salvation is an absolute necessity for all who would live and work for God. It is the privilege of a Christian to be as emphatic about salvation and its assurance as the man in the ninth chapter of John was about his blindness and its cure—

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“ One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see ” (John 9. 25).

A story is told of a distinguished man of science who had to cross a ferry in a rowing boat. As the man at the oars pulled him across, the scientist said to him :

“ Do you know Astronomy ? ”

“ No,” replied the rugged oarsman, “ I do not.”

“ Well then,” said the man of science, “ a quarter of your life is gone. Do you know anything about Geology ? ”

“ No.”

“ Then one half of your life is gone. Do you know anything about Biology ? ”

“ No.”

“ Then three quarters of your life are gone.”

Just then the boat struck a snag and upset. As they plunged into the water the oarsman cried :

“ Do you know how to swim ? ”

“ No.”

“ Well, then, *your whole life is gone.*”

The ferryman struck out for the shore, but the great scientist was drowned. Knowledge of the sciences may be extremely valuable, but in a matter of life and death there is a form of knowledge which is indispensable. It is the knowledge of the way of salvation. There are three aspects of assurance set before us in the Scriptures ; and if we have the concurrent testimony of these, our doubts will vanish as the mists before the rising sun. There is

(1) THE WITNESS OF THE WORD

“ Who *hath* saved us ” (2 Timothy 1. 9).

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“ According to His mercy He *saved* us ” (Titus 3. 5).

“ We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ in them that *are* saved ” (2 Corinthians 2. 15).

From these and similar passages of Scripture we learn that the early Christians had no doubt of their acceptance with God. The finished work of Christ made them safe ; the faithful Word of God made them sure. The one gave them security ; the other gave them confidence.

This truth is very aptly illustrated in a poem which was written on the back of a one pound Bank of Ireland note. The lines read as follows :

“ This piece of paper in your hand
Declares to you that on demand
You twenty shillings shall receive ;
This simple promise you believe—
It sets your mind as much at rest
As though the money you possessed.
So Christ Who died, but now doth live,
Doth unto you this promise give—
That, if on Him you will believe,
Eternal life you shall receive.
Upon the first you calmly rest ;
Which is the safer ? Which the best ?
THE BANK MAY BREAK, HEAVEN NEVER CAN ;
'TIS SAFER TRUSTING GOD THAN MAN.”

Again, there is

(2) THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT

“ The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God ” (Romans 8. 16).

The Holy Spirit Who, in the Scriptures, bears witness to our acceptance with God now indwells the

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believer, illuminating his mind, pacifying his conscience, assuring his heart. Ungrieved and unhindered, He will bear constant witness with our spirits that we belong to the family of God, and will give us the unbroken peace which springs from the consciousness of that great and blessed fact. That, however, will not lead to self-complacency ; for the Spirit's testimony is ever about Christ—His finished work, His blessed person, His faithful word. The words of the late C. H. Spurgeon in this connection are eminently wise : " I looked at Christ and the dove of peace flew into my heart ; I looked at the dove of peace and she flew away."

A complete exposition of this subject will be found in I John 5. 9-13.

Finally, there is

(3) THE WITNESS OF THE LIFE

The great book on this subject is the first epistle of John which indicates that the evidence in our lives that we have been accepted by God will manifest itself in three ways :

In practical righteousness (2. 29 ; 3. 10),

In implicit obedience (2. 3 ; 5. 2),

In brotherly love (3. 14-18 ; 5. 2).

Not in surges of emotion, over which we have no control, but in patient continuance in well-doing ; along these three lines may we assure our hearts before Him.

A story is told by the late Dr. Scofield which illustrates, negatively and positively, the last of these three sets of evidence—love of the brethren (chapter 3.

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14). Two excursion steamers, one chartered by a large number of Sunday-school people, and the other by sporting men, were about to start on a holiday trip.

A betting man, almost too late, leaped by mistake into the wrong steamer and found himself in the midst of people who were singing hymns and who, even in their amusements and talk, had nothing to his liking. "Oh," he said afterwards to his friends, "it was like hell to me."

A Christian excursionist, also behind time, hastily got on to the wrong steamer and, to his dismay, found himself among a card-playing, swearing, drinking crowd. And what did he say afterwards? Just what the sporting man said: "Oh, it was like hell to me."

"We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren." Can we truthfully make that statement? Is there not among us a general lack of appreciation of the uncrowned kings and queens who are our brothers and sisters in Christ? However lowly in life their position may be, they are dear to Christ; they belong to the royalty of heaven; they have hopes high as the throne of God and vast as eternity. Not one of them is yet perfect; for **the grace that made them Christians left them men.** But if we are living in the enjoyment of our salvation, we will instinctively prefer their companionship to the most exalted of earth's fellowships. Many of them are fighting stern battles; numbers of them are carrying heavy burdens; others are bearing nameless sorrows. Love will find a thousand ways in which to minister to them, and innumerable opportunities of doing them good. And, as an incentive to this, we suggest that, with the poet, we begin to thank God afresh for them.

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“ For all the saints who have not left us yet,
Whom, hidden in the crowd, we oft forget,
For humble souls who heaven’s love reflect,
Hallelujah.

For saints at home, on lowly duties bent,
Who take each task as from the Master sent,
And thus make every deed a sacrament,
Hallelujah.

For saints at shop, or factory, or mine,
Around whose head no radiant halos shine,
Yet who on life’s high road cast light divine,
Hallelujah.

For patient saints who suffer day by day,
Saints of the bleeding track and lonely way,
Who for our bright example with us stay,
Hallelujah.

For all the saints who have not yet found rest,
But live amongst us by Thy grace possessed,
We praise Thee, Father, Son, and Spirit blest,
Hallelujah.”

CHAPTER III
SALVATION—
THE ETERNAL SECURITY
OF THE SAVED

BEFORE we examine the evidence on this subject it may be well to have before us one or two simple principles which will guide us to a right conclusion as to what the Scriptures teach about it.

The first we take from that prince of devotional writers, the late Mr. James H. McConkey, of America :

“ There is a rule of legal interpretation to the effect that where a clear statement is made in a document, no subsequent obscure statement shall be permitted to set it aside. Thus, if a clause in a will gives all a man’s property to a certain heir, no subsequent clause which seems to give a part of the same property to another, shall stand. The certain must not give place to the uncertain. The plain shall not yield to the doubtful.”

The second is a statement from one of the philosophers :

“ Never let that which you *do not* understand rob you of the value of that which you *do* understand ; because the one is founded upon your knowledge, and the other upon your ignorance.”

The third is an injunction which an experienced preacher gave to a group of students :

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“ Young men, believe your beliefs and doubt your doubts. Never make the fatal mistake of believing your doubts or doubting your beliefs.”

Bearing these principles in mind we now turn to five statements from the book of God.

“ Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered ; and being made perfect He became the author of *eternal salvation* unto all them that obey Him ” (Hebrews 5. 8, 9).

“ My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me ; and I give unto them eternal life ; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all ; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father’s hand. I and My Father are one ” (John 10. 27-30).

“ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword ? As it is written, ‘ For Thy sake we are killed all the day long ; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.’ Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord ” (Romans 8. 35-39).

“ For I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day ” (2 Timothy 1. 12).

“ And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath

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the Son hath life ; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God that ye may know that ye have eternal life " (I John 5. 11-13).

With profound gratitude of heart we receive these soul-thrilling assurances of our Father's love and of our Saviour's faithfulness ; and, in the light of them, with deep humility but with perfect confidence, we say :

" Though waves and billows o'er me pass
In whelming floods of ill,
Within the haven of God's love
My soul is anchored still.
For though the strain and stress of life
My thread of faith may break,
The cable of His faithfulness
No storm can ever shake."

But, some may ask, " Is not that a dangerous doctrine to teach ? Is it not likely to lead to carelessness of life ? " Experience does not prove this to be the case. Indeed, a little reflection will show that uncertainty on a matter of such transcendent importance would leave the heart in such suspense that all effective service for Christ would be paralysed.

An American gospeller describes seeing two men upon the roof of a house shovelling off the snow. The roof, though somewhat flat, was very slippery, so that their position was rather a dangerous one.

Two ropes, however, had been provided for their use. These ropes were firmly fastened on the opposite side of the roof, and thrown over the ridge. But one man, for some reason or other, made no use of his

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rope. He evidently depended upon his own care in choosing the places whercon to step. His companion, on the contrary, had twisted the free end of his rope round his waist, making it fast with a good firm knot.

Our friend watched the two men at their work. The man with the rope round him seemed quite free from fear. It is true he worked carefully, but the height of the building, the slippery ice on the roof, and the hard brick wall below were without terror for him, as he shovelled away. The other, however, behaved in a very different manner. Once a large piece of frozen snow slipped with a scraping noise, and fell with a crash. His face blanched. It was evident that the possibility of falling made him uncomfortable and anxious.

Which of the two men was the more effective workman? Without doubt, the man who was secure, and who knew it. He did his work far more thoroughly than the other, besides being so much happier while about it.

Of similar import is the testimony of the late great and good Dr. Dale of Birmingham. In the midst of his service for God and man, a Roman Catholic priest, whom he greatly respected, asked him when he was going to cease from public work and begin to look after his soul. The doctor replied : " I have given my soul to Christ to look after, and He can do it much better than I can."

The Lord Jesus describes two marks which will be found on all His sheep :

(1) The mark on the ear—they hear the Shepherd's voice ;

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(2) The mark on the foot—they follow Him (John 10. 27).

If these marks characterize those of us who belong to Christ, we are entitled to all the wealth of comfort which the heart-establishing words of John 10. 28 are intended to convey. "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God"—then it is *not from our feelings, but from what is written*, that we get assurance on this matter; "that ye may know"—then we are not merely to hope but are to have absolute certainty; "that ye have eternal life"—then it is a present possession; and already, amid the toil, the sorrow and the heartache, we begin to experience the thrill and the throb of a life which shall never end (I John 5. 13). God is its source, Christ is its channel, the Holy Spirit is its power, heaven is its sphere, and eternity its duration.

CHAPTER IV

SALVATION— ITS PRESENT TENSE

HAVING looked at the *past* tense of salvation and at some of the blessings which it brings, we pass now to examine its *present* tense and some of the blessings which that secures. In doing so we shall find that the centre of gravity passes from Calvary to Pentecost ; that, just as in the first great section of salvation everything depends upon the work of the Son of God for us, so, in the second, everything depends upon the work of the Spirit of God in us ; and, that, just as the former deals with the consequences of sin, so the latter deals with sin itself.

There is here, however, something which we must specially note, namely, that while in the first and third sections of the *Salvation of God* everything is done on our behalf, in the second section—that is, the section which we are about to consider—we are called upon to co-operate with God. And so we have the command : “ Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling ; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure ” (Philippians 2. 12, 13).

Now, that last named Scripture has been so gravely misunderstood that we must examine it at close range. The words just quoted have been adduced by some as proof that we have to work in order to obtain salvation ;

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but the words themselves, and the Epistle in which they are found, completely negative that idea.

In the first place, let us ask : " To whom is the Epistle to the Philippians addressed ? " The answer is found in chapter 1, verse 1. It is addressed " to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi with the bishops and deacons "—that is, to those who have received salvation in the sense in which we have already mentioned. Indeed, it is specifically stated that, in that sense, salvation is *not of works* lest any man should boast (Ephesians 2. 9).

In the second place we cannot separate verse 12 from verse 13. " Work out your own salvation . . . for it is God which worketh in you." Let us give a simple illustration of what is meant.

The Municipality of the lovely city of Durban, we will suppose, gives a person an acre of ground in an important part of the city, on condition that he will work it out, so that it will eventually enhance the magnificence of that which is already beautiful. The person obtaining it does not work in order to *earn* the ground—that is the Corporation's gift. But he works to *make it adorn* the landscape ; that is what the councillors expect.

Salvation is the gift of God, purchased for us at infinite cost, and presented to us without money and without price. God expects that the reception of that salvation shall have very definite and practical results even in this world ; that our lives will adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things (Titus 2. 10) ; and the exhortation which we are considering is really one to *work out* into the thousand and one

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details of our daily lives that which He *works in* our hearts by His Spirit.

He worketh in us “to will and to do”. Some are able but are not willing; others are willing but are not able; but God works in us *to will*—that is to say, He imparts the desire; and *to do*—He gives us the power (Hebrews 13. 20, 21).

The “fear and trembling” with which we are to obey this injunction are not occasioned by the possibility of final reprobation, but are born of an overmastering desire to please the One Who, at such wondrous cost, has provided salvation for us. “To will and to do of His good pleasure.” That is the final proof that the apostle is writing to Christians; for without faith it is impossible to please Him (Hebrews 11. 6).

We learn then,

(1) That while good works can never constitute salvation they ought invariably to accompany it.

(2) That Christ-like deeds are but animate faith and love, as flowers are the animate springtide.

(3) That we work, not *to* the Cross but *from* it; not in order to be saved, but because we are saved.

“I would not work my soul to save—
That work my Lord has done;
But I will work like any slave
For love to God’s dear Son.”

The supreme blessing that comes to us in connection with the present tense of salvation is *deliverance from the dominion of sin*.

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“ For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life ” (Romans 5. 10).

“ Wherefore, He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them ” (Hebrews 7. 25).

“ Sin shall not have dominion over you ; for ye are not under the law, but under grace ” (Romans 6. 14).

“ My little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not ” (1 John 2. 1).

These words do not teach sinless perfection. The *possibility* of sinning is admitted ; its *necessity* is denied. To say we need not sin is a Christian privilege ; to say we cannot sin is a delusion and a snare.

Now let us ask, “ Do these great statements from God’s Word describe what is habitually our experience ? Are we being led in daily triumph in Christ ? ” Alas, the experience of very many is like that of Lazarus as he emerged from the opened tomb. “ He that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes, and his face was bound about with a napkin ” (John 11. 44). That is to say he had life but not liberty. The fettered hand indicates that there was no liberty in service ; the captive foot, that there was no freedom in walk ; while the napkin-encircled face tells of the utter absence of joy. But the Lord Jesus came to give not only life to the dead, but also liberty to the captive ; and so the ringing command goes forth—“ Loose him, and let him go ” (verse 44). The process of spiritual emancipation which corres-

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ponds to that is described by three words in the sixth chapter of Romans.

The first is "KNOW".

"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Romans 6. 6).

The illustration here is taken from a degrading custom which obtained in those ancient days whereby, after a battle, the victor chained the bodies of living prisoners to the bodies of dead men. One of the poets expresses it thus :

"The living and the dead at his command
Were coupled, face to face, and hand to hand ;
Till choked with stench in loathed embraces tied,
The lingering wretches pined away and died."

Now just as physical death was the method by which the unhappy captive was set free from the physical bondage in which he was held, so our judicial death with Christ is the method by which we are delivered from the spiritual bondage in which we are held. For, in God's reckoning, we have been "crucified with Christ" (Galatians 2. 20).

The second word is "RECKON".

"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (verse 11).

That is one of the really great words of the Bible ; obedience to it is the secret of perpetual victory and power. It should be very carefully noted that we are not asked to reckon this thing to be true in order to

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make it true ; but to reckon it true because it *is* true.

The third word is “ YIELD ”.

“ As ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness ” (verse 19).

We may perhaps best explain these words by quoting a verse from the Epistle to the Galatians, and by using an Old Testament incident to illustrate it. The verse is Galatians 2. 19—“ I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God ” ; the incident is that described in the sixth chapter of Daniel.

Through the craftiness of the jealous presidents and princes, and because of his loyalty to principle and to God, Daniel was condemned by the law of the Medes and Persians to be cast into a den of lions, which ordinarily would mean instant death. But God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so that instead of receiving any hurt, this faithful-hearted man found the shaggy mane of one of the lions to be the softest pillow on which his head had ever lain. He enjoyed in rich degree, during that memorable night, God's peace, God's presence, and God's power.

As he came forth the following morning, one can imagine an over zealous court official seeking to lay hold of him and to thrust him back to the den from which he had just emerged. But Daniel would have something to say before that could be done. Confronting the official he would say : “ Hands off ; I, through the law of the Medes and Persians, am dead to the law of the Medes and Persians, that I might live unto God. To Him Who has so marvellously saved

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me from the jaws of death I now yield myself as one alive from the dead."

What was literally true of Daniel, is spiritually true of us. The Lord Jesus took our place, bore our judgment, met our doom. The law can pursue us to Calvary, but no further. In God's reckoning we died with Him and are alive with Him in the power of an endless life. For this reason it is our bounden duty and our glorious privilege to yield ourselves unreservedly to Him, urged thereto by the sweet compelling of love divine. "The love of Christ constraineth us ; because we thus judge ; that if one died for all, then were all dead. And that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again " (2 Corinthians 5. 14, 15). This is indeed the victory of surrender.

But now suppose a believer gets tripped up and falls into sin ; what happens then ? Very serious things happen. But, before we speak of them, let us be reminded that the Christian in the enjoyment of full fellowship with God is linked to Him by two great chains—the chain of union, and the chain of communion. There is nothing so powerful as the chain of union ; there is nothing so fragile as the link of communion. All the combined power of earth and hell cannot break the former ; a single wayward thought can snap the latter.

When, through unwatchfulness or sin, the link of communion is severed, a Christian becomes a miserable man ; and his misery in such circumstances is one of the evidences that he is a child of God. Three sad things then happen :

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- (1) Fellowship with God is rendered impossible.
- (2) Joy in the Lord instantly ceases.
- (3) All power for effective service is destroyed.

But while all this is sadly and solemnly true, one basic fact remains—it is described in I John 2. 1. Writing to Christians the apostle says :

“ My little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

Well has it been said of this Advocate, that He has never lost a case.

That is what takes place in heaven. Now look at what takes place on earth—

“ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness ” (I John 1. 9). When, in brokenhearted penitence, the erring one confesses his sin, and takes God at His word, the consciousness of pardon is restored, the link of communion is re-established, and the clouds disappear.

In the light of these solemn facts how urgent becomes the command to hold, not only faith, but also “ a good conscience ” (I Timothy 1. 5). For the experience of the centuries teaches that

“ Faults in the life breed errors in the brain,
And these reciprocally, those again ”.

“ Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine ; continue in them ; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee ” (I Timothy 4. 16).

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The two sections of salvation which we have considered are summed up in a couplet from Cowper. He tells us that the evangel of the New Testament gives

“ A clear escape from tyrannizing lust,
And complete immunity from penal woe.”

CHAPTER V

SALVATION—ITS FUTURE TENSE

WE have seen that the *Salvation of God* is in three great sections. The first of these is immediate and is secured by the death of Christ (I Corinthians 15. 1-4); the second is continuous and is secured by the life of Christ—that is, His intercessory life in the Holiest of all (Romans 5. 10; Hebrews 7. 25; 9. 24); the third is prospective and will be secured at the coming of the Lord. It is to this last-named aspect of salvation that the following Scriptures refer :

“ Our citizenship is in heaven ; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ ; Who shall change the body of our humiliation, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body ” (Philippians 3. 20, 21 R.V.).

“ Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many ; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation ” (Hebrews 9. 28).

“ Blessed be God Who . . . hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time ” (1 Peter 1. 3-5).

“ We ourselves . . . wait for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body ” (Romans 8. 23).

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“ Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed ” (Romans 13. 11).

Thus the whole man—spirit, soul and body—is to be redeemed ; and when the salvation of our body takes place the last link will be added to the golden chain of the great and wonderful Salvation of God.

It is interesting to find that in each of these three aspects, salvation is spoken of as our own. Thus, referring back to the glad hour when we first received Christ as Saviour, the apostle says :

“ In Whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of *your* salvation ” (Ephesians 1. 12, 13).

The salvation which, empowered by the Spirit of God, we work out day by day is *your own* salvation (Philippians 2. 12, 13).

While, of that aspect of it, for the fulfilment of which we wait, he says, “ Now is *our* salvation nearer than when we believed ” (Romans 13. 11).

Dr. Andrew Bonar once said that everything before the true believer is glorious ; and Mr. Moody, who heard the remark, began to search the Scriptures in order to ascertain what lies ahead of us. He goes on to say : “ I found that the kingdom we are going to inherit is glorious ; our crown is to be a ‘ crown of glory ’ ; the city we are going to inhabit is the city of the glorified ; the songs we are going to sing are the songs of the glorified ; we are to wear garments of ‘ glory and beauty ’ ; our society will be the society of the glorified ; our rest is to be ‘ glorious ’ ; the country to which we are going is to be full of the glory of God and of the Lamb.”

We would now point out seven wonderful blessings

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which will shortly be ours ; and it should be carefully noted that we are to enter into possession of them, not by any merit of our own, but by the sovereign grace of God. These blessings, as we shall see, involve not only the complete reversal of the consequences of the Fall, but will also ensure our entrance into a place of indescribable glory, in which we shall experience in ever-expanding measure the unutterable joy of shadowless communion with God.

(1) We shall have reached Home (John 14. 1-3).

Speaking on the words—" If it were not so I would have told you," an eminent preacher entitled his address : " No news is good news ". A most suggestive title, verily ; for it is the answer to much that we would like to know about the Home to which we are travelling. The Lord Jesus has told us everything that is necessary for us to know ; and if you are wise you will not seek to supplement that by communications from demons through what is commonly called " Spiritualism ".

The words of John 14. 1-3 make two things very clear, namely, that we shall have :

(a) A place in our Father's house. " In My Father's house are many mansions . . . I go to prepare a place for you."

" My Father's house—no strange or foreign land,
No wonderful new world, too coldly grand ;
But *home*—a Father's outstretched welcoming hand ;
My Father's home."

(b) The companionship of Christ through all eternity. " I will come again, and receive you unto

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Myself ; that where I am, there ye may be also " (verse 3). " So shall we ever be with the Lord " (I Thessalonians 4. 17). The place without the Person would never satisfy our longing hearts. " What the concord of sweet sounds is to the musician, what the beauty of nature and of the human face is to the artist, what home is to the exile, what water is to the traveller faint with thirst, that God is to me. I cannot be content without His presence "—so said the saintly Dr. Smellie.

Beloved of God, there is your assured hope ; there your glorious destiny. You may have to encounter rough seas and swelling tides before you get there ; but although a smooth passage is not promised you, a safe arrival is.

" My barque is wafted to the strand
By breath divine,
And on the helm there rests a hand
Other than mine.
One Who has known in storms to sail
I have on board ;
Above the raging of the gale
I hear my Lord.
He holds me when the billows smite,
I shall not fall ;
If sharp 'tis short ; if long 'tis light ;
He tempers all.
Safe to the land ! Safe to the land !
The end is this—
And then with Him go hand in hand
Far into bliss."

(2) We shall have perfect bodies (Philippians 3. 20, 21).

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They are variously described as incorruptible (I Corinthians 15. 52), immortal (verse 53), spiritual (verse 44), glorious (Philippians 3. 21). They will differ from our present bodies as the solid structure of a house differs from the frail canvas of a tent (2 Corinthians 5. 1). They will resemble our Saviour's body (Philippians 3. 21); and there is a significant hint in Luke 24. 39 where it is said that His resurrection body was composed of "flesh and bones"—not flesh and blood; the blood had previously been shed (see I Corinthians 15. 50).

It is stated in Romans 8. 23 that for this sublime event we have to wait. This part of our salvation is ours only potentially now; when our Lord comes we shall be in actual possession of it. Then that which has been purchased will be fully and finally redeemed (Ephesians 1. 14). Meanwhile, although the rest and joy and peace which we experience as we walk with the Lord are sources of health, and will obviate many a nervous breakdown, the body is the one link that binds us to the old creation. It is subject to decay (2 Corinthians 4. 16); it may be overstrained even in the noblest of services (Philippians 2. 30); if our Lord delays His return it will crumble into dust (Genesis 3. 19).

It should be noted that 1 Corinthians 15. 53 has in view the two great sections of the children of God—those who are in their graves, and those who will be alive when the Lord comes. The former will put on incorruption; the latter, immortality.

(3) We shall have a perfect environment (Revelation 21. 27).

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“ There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth.” There will be no sin to allure us, no unbelief to assail us, no sorrow to distress us, no pain to afflict us, no death to lacerate our hearts. In confining ourselves to what will not be there we are following the precedents of Revelation 21 and 22. As to what actually *will* be there we have neither the means of knowing nor the capacity for understanding. Of one thing only we are assured—and perhaps we need no other—namely, that

“ God the Lamb shall there
The light and temple be,
And radiant hosts for ever share
The unveiled mystery.”

(4) We shall have unbroken fellowship with God (Revelation 22. 4).

Uninterruptedly to behold the face of our Father which is in heaven has hitherto been the privilege only of the guardian angels of the little ones (Matthew 18. 10) ; but by and by it will be ours. “ They shall see His face.” Down here we need light and shade to make up the picture ; up there the shadows shall have for ever passed away.

“ How shall our eyes to see His face delight,
Whose love has cheered us through the darksome night ;
How shall our ears drink in His well-known voice,
Whose faintest whispers make our souls rejoice.
No stain within; no foes or snares around ;
No jarring notes shall there discordant sound ;
All pure without, all pure within the breast,
No thorns to wound, no toil to mar our rest.

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If here on earth the thoughts of Jesus' love,
Lift our poor hearts this weary world above ;
If even here the taste of heavenly springs
So cheers the spirit, that the pilgrim sings ;
What will the sunshine of His glory prove ;
What, the unmingled fulness of His love ;
What hallelujahs will His presence raise ?
What but one loud eternal burst of praise ! ”

(5) We shall be like Him (1 John 3. 2).

“ It doth not yet appear what we shall be.” “ Look at that babe on her mother's knee ; perfect in every faculty, the emblem of innocence and beauty. But it doth not yet appear what she shall be when she shall have reached the glory of young womanhood, charming the eyes and gladdening the hearts of all who know her. Look at that great building in the course of construction. So far as it has gone it is neither attractive nor beautiful. But it doth not yet appear what it shall be when the top stone shall be laid, when the scaffolding shall be removed, and when shall be seen the completed structure of perfectly proportioned architecture.”

“ But we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” Dr. Andrew Bonar once sent Mr. Spurgeon a copy of his “ Studies in Leviticus ”, and in acknowledging receipt of it the great preacher asked the Doctor for a copy of his photograph which could be placed in the front page of the volume. In reply Dr. Bonar said something to this effect : “ Dear Mr. Spurgeon, Herewith photograph as requested, but I am sorry you could not wait a little while when I shall have a much better one ; for by and by I shall be like Him.”

What shall we be like then ? One of our poets has

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asked the question ; and, reasoning as philosophers do, from the known to the unknown, endeavours to find the answer in the analogy of nature. He says :

“ What shall we be like when
We cast this earthly body and attain to immortality ?
What shall we be like then ? Ah, who shall say
What vast expansions shall be ours that day,
What transformations of this house of clay
To fit the heavenly mansions and the light of day ;
Ah, who shall say ?
It doth not yet appear what we shall be ;
But this we know—
We drop a seed into the ground—
A tiny, shapeless thing, shrivelled and dry—
And in the fulness of its time, is seen
A form of peerless beauty, robed and crowned
Beyond the pride of any earthly queen,
Instinct with loveliness and sweet and rare—
The perfect emblem of its Maker's care.
This from a shrivelled seed,
Then, we may hope indeed,
For we are but the seeds of what we shall be,
When in the fulness of His perfecting
We drop the flesh and cleave our upward way
From earth's retarding and the clinging clay.
No fetters then, no bonds of time and space,
But powers as ample as His boundless grace
That died for man, and hath, in wondrous tenderness,
Set wide the door, and passed Himself before,
As He had promised, to prepare a place.
We know not what we shall be ; only this—
That we shall be made like Him as He is.”

(6) We shall be perfectly and finally satisfied (Psalm 17. 15).

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“ I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness.”
In this connection Florence L. Bond interprets the feelings of every true believer when she says :

“ Not with my life-work—finished, past—
Shall I be satisfied at last ;
Not with the gifts I brought my Lord,
Nor with the knowledge of His Word ;
Not with the witness these lips gave
Unto the One Who died to save ;
Not with my service or my love
Shall I be satisfied above ;
Faulty and weak is my poor best,
Needing cleansing with all the rest ;
Only from Christ come grace and power,
Sure sufficiency every hour ;
He is my glory and my song,
He, Who has led me all along,
And, in the light no cloud can dim,
I shall be satisfied with Him.”

(7) Finally : we shall reign for ever and ever
(Revelation 22. 5).

This is something which lies beyond the Millennial reign. Of *that* it is said that they lived and reigned with Christ “ a thousand years ” ; of *this* it is stated that we shall reign “ for ever and ever ”. Here we have the *ultimate* of the Salvation of God. Those, from whose hands the sceptre of dominion had been taken by sin, are here re-invested with regal powers and far-reaching sovereignties. Verily He has raised up the poor out of the dust, and the beggar from the dust-heap, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of His glory (1 Samuel 2. 8).

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“ Then we shall be where we would be,
Then we shall be what we should be,
Things which are not now, nor could be,
Then shall be our own.”

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