

A FOURFOLD SALVATION



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Contents

Introduction.....	2
I. Salvation from the Pleasure of Sin	5
II. Salvation from the Penalty of Sin	11
III. Salvation from the Power of Sin.....	13
IV. Salvation from the Presence of Sin	21
V. Conclusion	23

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A FOUR-FOLD SALVATION

Introduction

In 1929 we wrote a booklet entitled “A Threefold Salvation” based upon the instruction we had received during our spiritual infancy. Like most of that early teaching, it was defective because inadequate. As we continued our study of God’s Word further light has been granted us on this subject—yet, alas, how ignorant we still are—and this has enabled us to see that, in the past, we had started at the wrong point, for instead of beginning at the beginning, we commenced almost in the middle. Instead of salvation from sin being threefold, as we once supposed, we now perceive it to be fourfold. How good is the Lord in vouchsafing us additional light; yet it is now our duty to walk therein, and as Providence affords us opportunity, to give it out. May the Holy Spirit so graciously guide us that God may be glorified and His people edified.

The subject of God’s “so-great-salvation” (Heb 2:3), as it is revealed to us in the Scriptures and made known in Christian experience, is worthy of a life’s study. Anyone who supposes that there is now no longer any need for him to prayerfully search for a fuller understanding of the same needs to ponder: “If any man think he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know” (1Co 8:2). The fact is that the moment any of us really takes it for granted that he already knows all that there is to be known on *any* subject treated of in Holy Writ, he at once cuts himself off from any further light thereon. That which is most needed by all of us in order to a better understanding of Divine things is not a brilliant intellect, but a truly humble heart and a teachable spirit, and for *that* we would daily and fervently pray, for we possess it not by nature.

The subject of divine salvation has, sad to say, provoked age-long controversy and bitter contentions even among professing Christians. There is comparatively little agreement even upon this elementary yet vital truth. Some have insisted that salvation is Divine grace, others have argued that it is by human endeavor. A number have sought to defend the middle position, and while allowing that the salvation of a lost sinner must be by Divine grace *alone*, alleging that God’s grace must be plussed by something from the creature, and very varied have been the opinions of what that “something” must be—baptism, church-membership, the performing of good works, holding out faithful to the end, etc. On the other hand, there are those who not only grant that salvation is by grace alone, but who *deny* that God uses any *means* whatever in the accomplishment of His eternal purpose to save His elect—overlooking the fact that the sacrifice of Christ is the grand “means”!

It is true that the Church of God was blessed with super-creation blessings, being chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world and predestinated unto the adoption of children, and nothing could or can alter that grand fact. It is equally true that if sin had never entered the world, none had been in need of salvation from it. But sin *has* entered, and the Church fell in Adam and came under the curse and condemnation of God's Law. Consequently, the elect, equally with the reprobate, shared in the capital offence of their federal head, and partake of its fearful entail: "in Adam *all* die" (1Co 15:22): "by the offence of one judgement came upon *all* men to condemnation" (Rom 5:18). The result of this is, that all are "alienated from the life God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart" (Eph 4:18), so that the members of the mystical Body of Christ are "by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph 2:3), and hence they are alike in dire need of God's salvation.

Even where there is fundamental soundness in their views upon Divine salvation many have such inadequate and one-sided conceptions that other aspects of this truth, equally important and essential, are often overlooked and tacitly denied. How many, for example, would be capable of giving a simple exposition of the following texts: "Who *hath* saved us" (2Ti 1:9), "*work out* your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phi 2:12), "now is our salvation *nearer* than when we believed" (Rom 13:11). Now those verses do not refer to three different salvations, but to three separate aspects of one, and unless we learn to distinguish sharply among them, there can be naught but confusion and cloudiness in our thinking. Those passages present three distinct phases and stages of salvation: salvation as an accomplished fact, as a present process, and as future prospect.

So many today ignore these distinctions, jumbling them together. Some contend for one and some argue against the other two; and vice versa. Some insist they are already saved, and deny that they are now being saved. Some declare that salvation is entirely future, and deny that it is in any sense already accomplished. Both are wrong. The fact is, that the great majority of professing Christians fail to see that "salvation" is one of the most comprehensive terms in all the Scriptures, including predestination, regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. They have far too cramped an idea of the meaning and scope of the word "salvation" (as it is used in the Scriptures), narrowing its range too much, generally confining their thoughts to but a single phase. They suppose "salvation" means no more than the new birth or the forgiveness of sins. Were one to tell them that salvation is a protracted process, they would view him with suspicion; and if he affirmed that salvation is something awaiting us in the future, they would at once dub him a heretic. Yet *they* would be the ones to err.

Ask the average Christian, "Are you saved?" and he answers, "Yes, I was saved in such and such a year;" and that is as far as his thoughts on the subject go. Ask him, "To what do you owe your salvation?" and "the finished work of Christ" is the sum of

his reply. Tell him that each of those answers is seriously defective, and he strongly resents your aspersion. As an example of the confusion which now prevails, we quote the following from a tract on Philippians 2:12: "To whom are those instructions addressed? The opening words of the epistle tell us: 'To the saints in Christ Jesus'...Thus they were all believers! and could not be required to work for their salvation, for they already possessed it." Alas, that so very few people today perceive anything wrong in such a statement. Another "Bible teacher" tells us that "save thyself (1Ti 4:16) must refer to deliverance from *physical* ills, as Timothy was already saved spiritually." True, yet it is equally true that he was then in the process of being saved, and also a fact that his salvation was then future.

Let us now supplement the first three verses quoted and show that there are other passages in the New Testament which definitely refer to each distinct *tense* of salvation. First, salvation as an *accomplished fact*: "Thy faith hath saved thee" (Luk 7:50); "by grace ye have been saved" (Greek, and so translated in the R.V.—Eph 2:8); "according to His mercy he saved us" (Ti 3:5). Second, salvation as a *present process*, in course of accomplishment, not yet completed: "Unto us which are being saved" (1Co 1:18—R.V. and Bagster Interlinear); "Them that believe to the saving [not the 'salvation'] of the soul" (Heb 10:39). Third, salvation as a *future process*: "Sent forth to minister for them who *shall be* heirs of salvation" (Heb 1:14); "receive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able *to save* your souls" (Jam 1:21); "kept by the power of God through faith *unto* salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time" (1Pe 1:5). Thus, by putting together these different passages we are clearly warranted in formulating the following statement: every genuine Christian has been saved, is now being saved, and will yet be saved—how and from what we shall endeavor to show.

As further proof of how many-sided is the subject of God's great salvation, and how that in Scripture it is viewed from various angles, take the following: by *grace* are ye saved" (Eph 2:8); "saved by His [Christ's] *life* " i.e., by His resurrection life (Rom 5:10); "thy *faith* hath saved thee" (Luk 7:50); "the engrafted *word* which is able to save your souls" (Jam 1:21); "saved by *hope* " (Rom 8:24); "saved; yet so as by fire" (1Co 3:15); "the like figure whereunto *baptism* doth also now save us" (1Pe 3:21). Ah, my reader, the Bible is not a lazy man's book, nor can it be soundly expounded by those who do not devote the whole of their time, and that for years, to its prayerful study. It is not that God would bewilder us, but that He would *humble* us, drive us to our knees, make us dependent upon His Spirit. Not to the proud—those who are wise in their own esteem—are its heavenly secrets opened.

In like manner it may be shown from Scripture that the *cause* of salvation is not a single one, as so many suppose—the blood of Christ. Here, too, it is necessary to distinguish between things which differ. First, the *originating* cause of salvation is the eternal purpose of God, or in other words, the predestinating grace of the Father. Second, the *meritorious* cause of salvation is the mediation of Christ, this having particular respect to the legal side of things, or, in other words, His fully meeting the

demands of the Law on the behalf of and in the stead of those He redeems. Third, the *efficient* cause of salvation is the regenerating and sanctifying operations of the Holy Spirit, which respect the experimental side of it; or, in other words, the Spirit works *in* us what Christ purchased *for* us. Thus, we owe our personal salvation equally to each Person in the Trinity, and not to one (the Son) more than to the others. Fourth, the *instrumental* cause is our faith, obedience, and perseverance: though we are not saved because of them, equally true is it that we cannot be saved (according to God's appointment) without them.

In the opening paragraph we have stated that in our earlier effort we erred as to the starting point. In writing upon a threefold salvation we began with salvation from the penalty of sin, which is our justification. But our salvation does not begin there, as we knew well enough even then: alas, that we so blindly followed our erring preceptors. Our salvation originates, of course, in the eternal purpose of God, in His predestinating of us to everlasting glory. "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2Ti 1:9). That has reference to God's *decree* of election: His chosen people were then saved completely, in the Divine purpose, and all that we shall now say has to do with the performing of that purpose, the accomplishing of that decree, the actualization of that salvation.

I. Salvation from the Pleasure of Sin

A. Salvation from the Pleasures of Sin Described

It is here that God begins in His actual application of salvation unto His elect. God saves us from the pleasure or love of sin before He delivers us from the penalty or punishment of sin. Necessarily so, for it would be neither an act of holiness nor of righteousness were He to grant full pardon to one who was still a rebel against Him, loving that which He hates. God is a God of order throughout, and nothing ever more evidences the perfections of His works than the orderliness of them. And *how* does God save His people from the pleasure of sin? The answer is, "By imparting to them a nature which hates evil and loves holiness." This takes place when they are born again, so that actual salvation begins with regeneration. Of course it does: where else could it commence? Fallen man can never perceive his desperate need of salvation nor come to Christ for it, till he has been renewed by the Holy Spirit.

"He hath made everything beautiful in his time" (Ecc 3:11), and much of the beauty of God's spiritual handiwork is lost upon us unless we duly observe their "time." Has not the Spirit Himself emphasized this in the express enumeration He has given us in, "For whom he did foreknow, he did also predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that he might be the Firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified" (Rom 8:29-30).

Verse 29 announces the Divine foreordination; verse 30 states the manner of its actualization. It seems passing strange that with this Divinely defined method before them, so many preachers begin with our justification, instead of with that effectual call (from death unto life, our regeneration) which precedes it. Surely it is most obvious that regeneration must first take place in order to lay a foundation for our justification. Justification is by faith (Act 13:39; Rom 5:1; Gal 3:8), and the sinner must be divinely quickened before he is capable of believing savingly.

Does not the last statement made throw light upon and explain what we have said is so “passing strange”? Preachers today are so thoroughly imbued with free-willism that they have departed almost wholly from that sound evangelism which marked our forefathers. The radical difference between Arminianism and Calvinism is that the system of the former revolves about the creature, whereas the system of the latter has the Creator for its centre of orbit. The Arminian allots to man the first place, the Calvinist gives God that position of honor. Thus the Arminian begins his discussion of salvation with justification, for the sinner must *believe* before he can be forgiven; further back he will not go, for he is unwilling that man should be made *nothing of*. But the instructed Calvinist begins with election, descends to regeneration, and then shows that by being born again (by the sovereign act of God, in which the creature has no part) the sinner is made capable of savingly believing the Gospel.

Saved from the pleasure or love of sin. What multitudes of people would strongly resent being told that they delighted in evil! They would indignantly ask if we supposed them to be moral perverts. No indeed: a person may be thoroughly chaste and yet delight in evil. It may be that some of our own readers repudiate the charge that they have ever taken *pleasure* in sin, and would claim on the contrary, that from earliest recollection they have detested wickedness in all its forms. Nor would we dare to call into question their sincerity; instead we point out that it only affords another exemplification of the solemn fact that “the heart is *deceitful* above all things” (Jer 17:9). But this is a matter that is not open to argument: the plain teaching of God’s Word decides the point once and for all, and beyond its verdict there is no appeal. What, then, say the Scriptures?

So far from God’s Word denying that there is any delight to be found therein, it expressly speaks of “the *pleasures* of sin”; it immediately warns that those pleasures are but “for a season” (Heb 11:25), for the aftermath is painful and not pleasant; yea, unless God intervenes in His sovereign grace, they entail eternal torment. So too, the Word refers to those who are “*lovers of pleasure* more than lovers of God” (2Ti 3:4). It is indeed striking to observe how often this discordant note is struck in Scripture. It mentions those who “*love* vanity” (Psa 4:2); “him that *loveth* violence” (Psa 11:5); “thou *lovest* evil more than good” (Psa 52:3); “he *loved* lies” (Psa 119:17); “scorners *delight* in their scorning” (Pro 1:22); “they which *delight* in their abominations” (Isa 66:3); “their abominations were according as they *loved*” (Hos 9:10); “who hated the good and *loved* the evil” (Mic 3:2); “if any man *love* the world, the love of the Father

is not in him” (1Jo 2:15). To love sin is far worse than to commit it, for a man may be suddenly tripped up or commit it through frailty.

The fact is, my reader, that we are not only born into this world with an evil nature, but with hearts that are thoroughly in love with sin. Sin is our native element. We are wedded to our lusts, and of ourselves are no more able to alter the bent of our corrupt nature than the Ethiopian can change his skin or the leopard his spots. But what is impossible with man, is possible to God, and when He takes us in hand, this is where He begins—by saving us from the pleasure or love of sin. This is the great miracle of grace, for the Almighty stoops down and picks up a loathsome leper from the dunghill and makes him a new creature in Christ, so that the things he once loved he now hates, and the things he once hated he now loves. God commences by saving us from ourselves. He does not save us from the penalty until He has delivered us from the love of sin.

And how is this miracle of grace accomplished, or rather, exactly *what does it consist of?* Negatively, not by eradicating the evil nature, nor even by refining it. Positively, by communicating a new nature, a holy nature, which loathes that which is evil, and delights in all that is truly good. To be more specific. *First*, God saves His people from the pleasure or love of sin by putting His holy awe in their hearts, for “the fear of the Lord is to *hate evil*” (Pro 8:13), and again, “the fear of the Lord is to depart from evil” (Pro 16:6). *Second*, God saves His people from the pleasure of sin by communicating to them a new and vital principle: “the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit” (Rom 5:5), and where the love of God rules the heart, the love of sin is dethroned. *Third*, God saves His people from the love of sin by the Holy Spirit’s drawing their affections unto things above, thereby taking them off the things which formerly enthralled them. If on the one hand the unbeliever hotly denies that he is in love with sin, many a believer is often hard put to persuade himself that he *has been* saved from the love thereof. With an understanding that has in part been enlightened by the Holy Spirit, he is the better able to discern things in their true colors. With a heart that has been made honest by grace, he refuses to call sweet bitter. With a conscience that has been sensitized by the new birth, he the more quickly feels the workings of sin and the hankering of his affections for that which is forbidden. Moreover, the flesh remains in him, unchanged, and as the raven constantly craves carrion, so this corrupt principle in which our mothers conceived us, lusts after and delights in that which is the opposite of holiness. It is these things which occasion and give rise to the disturbing questions that clamour for answer within the genuine believer.

The sincere Christian is often made to seriously doubt if he *has been* delivered from the love of sin. Such questions as these plainly agitate his mind: “Why do I so readily yield to temptation? Why do some of the vanities and pleasures of the world still possess so much attraction for me? Why do I chafe so much against any restraints being placed upon my lusts? Why do I find the work of mortification so diffi-

cult and distasteful? Could such things as these be if I were a new creature in Christ? Could such horrible experiences as these happen if God had saved me from taking pleasure in sin?" Well do we know that we are here giving expression to the very doubts which exercise the minds of many of our readers, and those who are strangers thereto are to be pitied. But what shall we say in reply? How is this distressing problem to be resolved?

How may one be assured that he has been saved from the love of sin? Let us point out first that the presence of that within us which still lusts after and takes delight in some evil things, is *not incompatible* with our having been saved from the love of sin, paradoxical as that may sound. It is part of the mystery of the Gospel that those who be saved are yet *sinners* in themselves. The point we are here dealing with is similar to and parallel with faith. The Divine principle of faith in the heart does not cast out unbelief. Faith and doubts exist side by side with a quickened soul, which is evident from those words, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief" (Mar 9:24). In like manner the Christian may exclaim and pray, "Lord, I long after holiness, help Thou my lustings after sin." And why is this? Because of the existence of two separate natures, the one at complete variance with the other within the Christian.

How, then, is the presence of faith to be ascertained? Not by the ceasings of unbelief, but by discovering its *own* fruit and works. Fruit may grow amid thorns as flowers among weeds, and yet it *is* fruit nevertheless. Faith exists amid many doubts and fears. Notwithstanding opposing forces within as well as from without us, faith still reaches out after God. Notwithstanding innumerable discouragements and defeats, faith continues to fight. Notwithstanding many refusals from God, it yet clings to Him and says, "Except Thou bless me I will not let Thee go." Faith may be fearfully weak and fitful, often eclipsed by the clouds of unbelief, nevertheless the Devil himself cannot persuade its possessor to repudiate God's Word, despite His Son, or abandon all hope. The presence of faith, then may be ascertained in that it causes its possessor to come before God as an empty-handed beggar beseeching Him for mercy and blessing.

Now just as the presence of faith may be known amid all the workings of unbelief, so our salvation from the love of sin may be ascertained notwithstanding all the lustings of the flesh after that which is evil. But in what way? How is this initial aspect of salvation to be identified? We have already anticipated this question in an earlier paragraph, wherein we stated that God saved us from delighting in sin by imparting a nature that hates evil and loves holiness, which takes place at the new birth. Consequently, the real question to be settled is, "How may the Christian positively determine whether that new and holy nature has been imparted to him?" The answer is, "By observing its activities, particularly the opposition it makes [under the energizings of the Holy Spirit] unto indwelling sin." Not only does the flesh (the principle of sin) lust against the spirit, but the spirit (the principle of holiness) lusts and wars against the flesh.

B. How to Know the New Nature Has Been Imparted

1. Sin becomes a burden to us.

First, our salvation from the pleasure or love of sin may be recognized by sin's becoming a *burden* to us. This is truly a spiritual experience. Many souls are loaded down with worldly anxieties, who know nothing of what it means to be bowed down with a sense of guilt. But when God takes us in hand, the iniquities and transgressions of our past life are made to lie as an intolerable load upon the conscience. When we are given a sight of ourselves as we appear before the eyes of the thrice holy God, we will exclaim with the Psalmist, "For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me" (Psa 40:12). So far from sin being pleasant, it is now felt as a cruel incubus, a crushing weight, an unendurable load. The soul is "heavy laden" (Mat 11:28) and bowed down. A sense of guilt oppresses and the conscience cannot bear the weight of it. Nor is this experience restricted to our first conviction: it continues with more or less acuteness throughout the Christian's life.

2. Sin becomes bitter to us.

Second, our salvation from the pleasure of sin may be recognized by sin's becoming *bitter* to us. True, there are millions of unregenerate who are filled with remorse over the harvest reaped from their sowing of wild oats. Yet that is not hatred of sin, but dislike of its consequences—ruined health, squandered opportunities, financial straitness, or social disgrace. No, what we have reference to is that *anguish of heart* which ever marks the one the Spirit takes in hand. When the veil of delusion is removed and we see sin in the light of God's countenance; when we are given a discovery of the depravity of our very nature, then we perceive that we are sunk in carnality and death. When sin is opened to us in all its secret workings, we are made to feel the vileness of our hypocrisy, self-righteousness, unbelief, impatience, and the utter filthiness of our hearts. And when the penitent soul views the sufferings of Christ, he can say with Job, "God maketh my heart soft" (23:16).

Ah, my reader, it is *this* experience which prepares the heart to go out after Christ: those that are whole need not a physician, but they that are quickened and convicted by the Spirit are anxious to be relieved by the great Physician. "The Lord killeth, and maketh alive; he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich; he bringeth low, and lifteth up" (1Sa 2:6-7). It is in this way that God slayeth our self-righteousness, maketh poor and bringeth low—by making sin to be an intolerable burden and as bitter wormwood to us. There can be no saving faith till the soul is filled with evangelical repentance, and repentance is a godly sorrow for sin, a holy detestation of sin, a sincere purpose to forsake it. The Gospel calls upon men to repent of their sins, forsake their idols, and mortify their lusts, and thus it is utterly impossible for the Gospel to be a message of good tidings

to those who are in love with sin and madly determined to perish rather than part with their idols.

Nor is this experience of sin's becoming bitter to us limited unto our first awakening—it continues in varying degrees, to the end of our earthly pilgrimage. The Christian suffers under temptations, is pained by Satan's fiery assaults, and bleeds from the wounds inflicted by the evil he commits. It grieves him deeply that he makes such a wretched return unto God for His goodness, that he requites Christ so evilly for His dying love, that he responds so fitfully to the promptings of the Spirit. The wanderings of his mind when he desires to meditate upon the Word, the dullness of his heart when he seeks to pray, the worldly thoughts which invade his mind on the Holy Sabbath, the coldness of his affections towards the Redeemer, cause him to groan daily; all of which goes to evidence that sin has been made bitter to him. He no longer welcomes those intruding thoughts which take his mind off God: rather does he sorrow over them. But, "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted" (Mat 5:4).

3. *Sin produces bondage.*

Third, our salvation from the pleasure of sin may be recognized by the felt *bondage* which sin produces. As it is not until a Divine faith is planted in the heart that we become aware of our native and inveterate unbelief, so it is not until God saves us from the love of sin that we are conscious of the fetters it has placed around us. Then it is we discover that we are "without strength," unable to do anything pleasing to God, incapable of running the race set before us. A Divinely drawn picture of the saved soul's felt bondage is to be found in Romans 7, "For I know that in me [that is, in my flesh] dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do...For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin" (vv. 18-19, 22-23). And what is the sequel? This, the agonizing cry, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death." If *that* be the *sincere* lamentation of your heart, then God has saved *you* from the pleasure of sin.

Let it be pointed out though, salvation from the love of sin is felt and evidenced in varying degrees by different Christians, and in different periods in the life of the same Christian, according to the measure of grace which God bestows, and according as that grace is active and operative. Some seem to have a more intense hatred of sin in all its forms than do others, yet the principle of hating sin is found in all real Christians. Some Christians, rarely if ever, commit any deliberate and premeditated sins: more often they are tripped up, suddenly tempted (to be angry or tell a lie) and are overcome. But with others the case is quite otherwise: they—fearful to say—actually plan evil acts. If anyone indignantly denies that such a thing is possible in a saint,

and insists that such a character is a stranger to saving grace, we would remind him of David: was not the murder of Uriah definitely planned? This second class of Christians find it doubly hard to believe they have been saved from the love of sin.

II. Salvation from the Penalty of Sin

This follows upon our regeneration which is evidenced by evangelical repentance and unfeigned faith. Every soul that truly puts his trust in the Lord Jesus Christ is then and there saved from the penalty—the guilt, the wages, the punishment—of sin. When the apostle said to the penitent jailor, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved,” he signified that all his sins would be remitted by God; just as when the Lord said to the poor woman, “thy faith hath saved thee: go in peace” (Luk 7:50). He meant that all her sins were now forgiven her, for forgiveness has to do with the criminality and punishment of sin. To the same effect when we read “by grace are ye saved through faith” (Eph 2:8), it is to be understood the Lord has actually “delivered us from the wrath to come” (1Th 1:10).

This aspect of our salvation is to be contemplated from two separate viewpoints: the Divine and the human. The Divine side of it is found in the mediatorial office and work of Christ, who as the Sponsor and Surety of His people met the requirements of the law on their behalf, working out for them a perfect righteousness and enduring Himself the curse and condemnation which are due them, consummated at the Cross. It was there that He was “wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities” (Isa 53:5). It was there that He, judicially, “His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree” (1Pe 2:24). It was there that He was “smitten of God and afflicted” while He was making atonement for the offenses of His people. Because Christ suffered in my stead, I go free; because He died, I live; because He was forsaken of God, I am reconciled to Him. This is the great marvel of grace, which will evoke ceaseless praise from the redeemed throughout eternity.

The human side of our salvation from the penalty of sin respects our repentance and faith. Though these possess no merits whatever, and though they in no sense purchase our pardon, yet according to the order which God has appointed, they are (instrumentally) essential, for salvation does not become ours experimentally until they are exercised. Repentance is the hand releasing those filthy objects it had previously clung to so tenaciously; faith is extending an empty hand to God to receive His gift of grace. Repentance is a godly sorrow for sin; faith is receiving a sinner’s Saviour. Repentance is a revulsion of the filth and pollution of sin; faith is a seeking of cleansing therefrom. Repentance is the sinner covering his mouth and crying “Unclean, unclean!” Faith is the leper coming to Christ and saying, “Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.”

So far from repentance and faith being meritorious graces, they are self-emptying ones. The one who truly repents takes his place as a lost sinner before God, confess-

ing himself to be a guilty wretch deserving naught but unsparing judgment at the hands of Divine justice. Faith looks away from corrupt and ruined self, and views the amazing provision which God has made for such a Hell-deserving creature. Faith lays hold of the Son of God's love, as a drowning man clutches at a passing spar. Faith surrenders to the Lordship of Christ and gladly owns His rights to reign over him. Faith rests upon the promises of God, setting to its seal that He is true. The moment the soul surrenders itself to the Lordship of Christ, rests upon the merits and efficacy of His sacrifice, his sins are removed from God's sight "as far as the east is from the west"—he is now eternally saved from the wrath to come.

We cannot do better here than quote these sublime lines of Augustus Toplady:

"From whence this fear and unbelief? Has Thou, O Father, put to grief Thy spotless Son for me? And will the righteous Judge of men Condemn me for that debt of sin Which, Lord, was laid on Thee?"

"If Thou hast my discharge procured, And freely in my place endured The whole of wrath Divine; Payment God cannot twice demand, First at my bleeding Surety's hand, And then again at mine.

"Complete atonement Thou hast made, And to the utmost farthing paid, Whate'er Thy people owed; How then can wrath on me take place, If sheltered in Thy righteousness, And sprinkled with Thy blood?"

"Turn, then, my soul, unto thy rest, The merits of thy great High Priest Speak peace and liberty. Trust in His efficacious blood, Nor fear thy banishment from God, Since Jesus died for thee."

While deliverance from the love of sin has to do entirely with the experimental side of our salvation, remission of the penalty of sin concerns the legal aspect only, or in other words, the believer's *justification*. Justification is a forensic term and has to do with the law-courts, for it is the decision or verdict of the judge. Justification is the opposite of condemnation. Condemnation means that a man has been charged with a crime, his guilt is established, and accordingly the law pronounces upon him sentence of punishment. On the contrary, justification means that the accused is found to be guiltless, the law has nothing against him, and therefore he is acquitted and exonerated, leaving the court without a stain upon his character. When we read in Scripture that believers are "justified from all things" (Act 13:39), it signifies that their case has been tried in the high court of Heaven and that God, the Judge of all the earth, has acquitted them: "There is therefore now *no* condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Rom 8:1).

But to be without condemnation is only the negative side: justification means to declare or pronounce righteous, up to the Law's requirements. Justification implies that the Law has been fulfilled, obeyed, magnified, for nothing short of this would meet the just demands of God. Hence, as His people, fallen in Adam, were unable to measure up to the Divine standard, God appointed that His own Son should become incarnate, be the Surety of His people, and answer the demands of the Law in their

stead. Here, then, is the sufficient answer which may be made to the two objections which unbelief is ready to raise: how can God acquit the guilty? How can He declare righteous one who is devoid of righteousness? Bring in the Lord Jesus Christ and all difficulty disappears. The guilt of our sins was imputed or legally transferred to Him, so that He suffered the full penalty of what was due them; the merits of His obedience are imputed or legally transferred to us, so that we stand before God in all the acceptableness of our Sponsor: Romans 5:18-19; 2 Corinthians 5:21, etc. Not only has the Law nothing against us, but we are entitled to its reward.

III. Salvation from the Power of Sin

A. Salvation from the Power of Sin Described

This is a present and protracted process, and is as yet incomplete. It is the most difficult part of our subject, and upon it the greatest confusion of thought prevails, especially among young Christians. Many there are who, having learned that the Lord Jesus is the Saviour of sinners, have jumped to the erroneous conclusion that if they but exercise faith in Him, surrender to His Lordship, commit their souls into His keeping, He will remove their corrupt nature and destroy their evil propensities. But after they have really trusted in Him, they discover that evil is still present with them, that their hearts are still deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, and that no matter how they strive to resist temptation, pray for overcoming grace, and use the means of God's appointing, they seem to grow worse and worse instead of better, until they seriously doubt if they are saved at all. They are now *being saved*.

Even when a person has been regenerated and justified, the flesh or corrupt nature remains within him and ceaselessly harasses him. Yet this ought not to perplex him. To the saints at Rome Paul said, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body" (6:12), which would be entirely meaningless had sin been eradicated from them. Writing to the Corinthian saints he said, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2Co 7:1): obviously such an exhortation is needless if sin has been purged from our beings. "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time" (I Pet. 5:6): what need have Christians for such a word as this, except pride lurks and works within them. But all room for controversy on this point is excluded if we bow to that inspired declaration, "If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1Jo 1:8).

The old carnal nature remains in the believer: he is still a sinner, though a saved one. What, then is the young Christian to do? Is he powerless? Must he resort to stoicism, and make up his mind there is naught but a life of defeat before him? Certainly not! The first thing for him to do is to learn the humiliating truth that in himself he is "without strength." It was here that Israel failed: when Moses made known to them the Law they boastfully declared "all that the Lord has said we will do and be obedi-

ent” (Exo 24:7). Ah! how little did they realize that “in the flesh there dwelleth no good thing.” It was here, too, that Peter failed: he was self-confident and boasted that “though all men be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended...though I should die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee”—how little he knew his own heart. This complacent spirit lurks within each of us. While we cherish the belief we can “do better next time” it is evident that we still have confidence in our own powers. Not until we heed the Saviour’s words “without Me ye can do nothing” do we take the first step toward victory. Only when we are weak (in ourselves) are we strong.

The believer still has the carnal nature within him, and he has no strength in himself to check its evil propensities, nor to overcome its sinful solicitation. But the believer in Christ also has another nature within him which is received at the new birth: “that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (Joh 3:6). The believer, then, has two natures within him: one which is sinful, the other which is spiritual. These two natures being totally different in character, are antagonistic to each other. To this antagonism or conflict the apostle referred when he said, “The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh” (Gal 5:17). Now which of these two natures is to regulate the believer’s life. It is manifest that both cannot, for they are contrary to each other. It is equally evident that the stronger of the two will exert the more controlling power. It is also clear that in the young Christian the carnal nature is the stronger, because he was born with it, and hence it has many years start of the spiritual nature, which he did not receive until he was born again.

Further, it is unnecessary to argue at length that the only way by which we can strengthen and develop the new nature, is by *feeding* it. In every realm growth is dependent upon food, suitable food, daily food. The nourishment which God has provided for our spiritual nature is found in His own Word, for “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Mat 4:4). It is to this that Peter has reference when he says, “As newborn babes desire the sincere (pure) milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby” (1Pe 2:2). In proportion as we feed upon the heavenly Manna, such will be our spiritual growth. Of course there are other things besides food needful to growth: we must breathe, and in a pure atmosphere. This, translated into spiritual terms, signifies *prayer*. It is when we approach the throne of grace and meet our Lord face to face that our spiritual lungs are filled with the ozone of Heaven. *Exercise* is another essential to growth, and this finds its accomplishment in walking with the Lord. If, then we heed these primary laws of spiritual health, the new nature will flourish.

But not only must the new nature be fed, it is equally necessary for our spiritual well-being that the old nature should be starved. This is what the apostle had in mind when he said, “Make no provision for the flesh, unto the lusts thereof” (Rom 13:14). To starve the old nature, to make not provision for the flesh, means that we abstain from everything that would stimulate our carnality; that we avoid, as we would a plague, all that is calculated to prove injurious to our spiritual welfare. Not only

must we deny ourselves the pleasures of sin, shun such things as the saloon, theatre, dance, card-table, etc., but we must separate ourselves from the worldly companions, cease to read worldly literature, abstain from everything upon which we cannot ask God's blessing. Our affections are to be set upon things above, and not upon things upon the earth (Col 3:2). Does this seem a high standard, and sound impracticable? Holiness in all things is that at which we are to aim, and failure to do so explains the *leanness* of so many Christians. Let the young believer realize that whatever does not help his spiritual life hinders it.

Here, then, in brief is the answer to our question, "What is the young Christian to do in order for deliverance from indwelling sin." It is true that we are still in this world, but we are not *of* it (Joh 17:14). It is true that we are forced to associate with godless people, but this is ordained of God in order that we may "let our light so shine before men that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven" (Mat 5:16). There is a wide difference between associating with sinners as we go about our daily tasks, and making them our intimate companions and friends. Only as we feed upon the word can we "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2Pe 3:18). Only as we starve the old nature can we expect deliverance from its power and pollution. Then let us earnestly heed that exhortation "put ye off concerning the former conversation (behaviour) the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that ye put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph 4:22-24).

Above, we have dealt only with the *human* side of the problem as to how to obtain deliverance from the dominion of sin. Necessarily there is a *Divine* side too. It is only by God's grace that we are enabled to use the means which He has provided us, as it is only by the power of His Spirit who dwells within us that we can truly "lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us" (Heb 12:1). These two aspects (the Divine and the human) are brought together in a number of scriptures. We are bidden to "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling" but the apostle immediately added, "for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phi 2:12-13). Thus, we are to work out that which God has wrought within us; in other words, if we walk in the Spirit we shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh (Gal 5:16). It has now been shown that salvation from the power of sin is a *process* which goes on throughout the believer's life. It is to this Solomon referred when he said, "The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth *more and more* unto the perfect day" (Pro 4:18). As our salvation from the pleasure of sin is the consequence of our regeneration, and as salvation from the penalty of sin respects our justification, so salvation from the power of sin has to do with the practical side of our *sanctification*. The word sanctification signifies "separation"—separation from sin. We need hardly say that the word holiness is strictly synonymous with "sanctification," being an alternative rendering of the same Greek word. As the practical side

of sanctification has to do with our separation from sin, we are told, “Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2Co 7:1). That practical sanctification or holiness is a process, a progressive experience, is clear from this: “Follow...holiness without which no man shall see the Lord” (Heb 12:14). The fact that we are to “follow” holiness clearly intimates that we have not yet attained unto the Divine standard which God requires of us. This is further seen in the passage just quoted: “perfecting holiness” or completing it.

B. The Divine Side of Our Salvation from the Power of Sin

We must now enter into a little fuller detail of *the Divine side* of our salvation from the power and pollution of sin. When a sinner truly receives Christ as his Lord and Saviour, God does not then and there take him to Heaven; on the contrary, he is likely to be left down here many years, and this world is a place of *danger* for it lieth in the wicked one (1Jo 5:19) and all pertaining to it is opposed to the Father (1Jo 2:16). Therefore the believer needs salvation from this hostile system. Accordingly we read that Christ “gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father” (Gal 1:4). Not only is the sinner not taken to Heaven when he first savingly believes; but, as we have seen, the evil nature is not taken out of him; nevertheless God does not leave him completely under its dominion, but graciously delivers him from its regal power. He uses a great variety of means in accomplishing this.

1. A clearer view of inward depravity

[God delivers us from sin’s power] by granting us a clearer view of our inward depravity, so that we are made to abhor ourselves. By nature we are thoroughly in love with ourselves, but as the Divine work of grace is carried forward in our souls we come to loathe ourselves; and that, my reader, is a very distressing experience—one that is conveniently shelved by most of our modern preachers. The concept which many young Christians form from preachers is, that the experience of a genuine believer is a smooth, peaceful, and joyful one; but he soon discovers that this is not verified in his personal history, but rather is it completely falsified. And this staggers him: supposing the preacher to know much more about such matters than himself, he is now filled with disturbing doubts about his very salvation, and the Devil promptly tells him he is only a hypocrite, and never was saved at all.

Only those who have actually passed through or are passing through this painful experience have any real conception thereof: there is as much difference between an actual acquaintance with it, and the mere reading of a description of it as there is between personally visiting a country and examining it at first hand, and simply studying a map of it. But how are we to account for one who has been saved from the pleasure and penalty of sin, now being made increasingly conscious not only of its polluting presence but of its tyrannizing power? How explain the fact that the Christian now finds himself growing worse and worse, and the more closely he endeavors

to walk with God, the more he finds the flesh bringing forth its horrible works in ways it had not done previously? The answer is, because of increased light from God, by which he now discovers filth of which he was previously unawares: the sun shining into a neglected room does not create the dust and cobwebs, but simply reveals them.

Thus it is with the Christian. The more the light of the Spirit is turned upon him inwardly, the more he discovers the horrible plague of his heart (1Ki 8:38), and the more he realizes what a wretched failure he is. The fact is, dear discovered soul, that the more you are growing out of love with yourself, the more you are being saved from the power of sin. Wherein lies its fearful potency? Why, in its power to *deceive* us. It lies to us. It did so to Adam and Eve. It gives us false estimates of value so that we mistake the tinsel for real gold. To be saved from the power of sin, is to have our eyes opened so that we see things in God's light: it is to know the *truth* about things all around us, and the truth about ourselves. Satan has blinded the minds of them that believe not, but the Holy Spirit hath shined in our hearts "unto the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2Co 4:4,6).

But further: sin not only deceives, it *puffs up*, causing its infatuated victims to think highly of themselves. As 1 Timothy 3:6 tells us, to be "lifted up with pride" is to "fall into the condemnation of the devil." It was insane egotism which caused him to say, "I will ascend into heaven; I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds: I will be like the Most High" (Isa 14:13-14). Is there any wonder, then that those in whom he works are filled with pride and complacency. Sin ever produces self-love and self-righteousness: the most abandoned of characters will tell you, "I know that I am weak, yet I have a good heart." But when God takes us in hand, it is the very opposite: the working of the Spirit subdues our pride. How? By giving increased discoveries of self and of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, so that each one cries with Job, "Behold! I am vile" (40:4): such an one is being saved from the power of sin—its power to deceive and inflate.

2. *Sore chastening*

Sore chastening is another means which God uses in delivering His people from sin's dominion: "We have had fathers of our flesh which have corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness" (Heb 12:9-10). Those chastenings assume varied forms; sometimes they are external, sometimes internal, but whatever be their nature they are painful to flesh and blood. Sometimes these Divine chastisements are of long duration, and then the soul is apt to ask "Why standest thou afar off, O Lord? Why dost thou hide Thyself in times of trouble?" (Psa 10:1), for it seems as though God has deserted us. Earnest prayer is made for a miti-

gation of suffering, but no relief is granted; grace is earnestly sought for meekly bowing to the rod, but unbelief, impatience, rebellion, seem to wax stronger and stronger, and the soul is hard put to it to believe in God's love; but as Hebrews 12:11 tells us, "Now no chastening for the present seemeth joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

This life is a schooling, and chastenings are one of the chief methods God employs in the training of His children. Sometimes they are sent for the *correcting* of our faults, and therefore we must pray, "Cause me to understand wherein I have erred" (Job 6:24). Let us steadily bear in mind that it is the "rod" and not the sword which is smiting us, held in the hand of our loving Father, not an avenging Judge. Sometimes they are sent for the *prevention* of sin, as Paul was given a thorn in the flesh "lest he should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of the revelations" given him. Sometimes they are sent for our spiritual *education*, that by them we may be brought to a deeper experimental acquaintance with God: "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn Thy statutes" (Psa 119:71). Sometimes they are sent for the testing and strengthening of our *graces*: "We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope" (Rom 5:3-4); "count it all joy when ye fall into various trials: knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience" (Jam 1:2-3).

Chastening is God's *sin-purging* medicine, sent to wither our fleshly aspirations, to detach our hearts from carnal objects, to deliver us from our idols, to wean us more thoroughly from the world. God has bidden us, "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers...come out from among them, and be ye separate" (2Co 6:14,17); and we are slow to respond, and therefore does He take measures to *drive us out*. He has bidden us "love not the world," and if we disobey we must not be surprised if He causes some of our worldly friends to hate and persecute us. God has bidden us "mortify ye therefore your members which are upon the earth" (Col. 3:5); if we refuse to comply with this unpleasant task, then we may expect God Himself to use the pruning-knife upon us. God has bidden us: "Cease ye from man" (Isa 2:22), and if we will trust our fellows we are made to suffer for it.

"Despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him" (Heb 12:5). This is a salutary warning. So far from despising it, we should be grateful for the same; grateful that God cares so much and takes such trouble with us, and that His bitter physic produces such healthful effects. "In their affliction they will seek me early" (Hos 5:15); while everything is running smoothly for us, we are apt to be self-sufficient; but when trouble comes we promptly turn unto the Lord. Own, then, with the Psalmist—"In faithfulness thou hast afflicted me" (119:75). Not only do God's chastisements, when sanctified to us, subdue the workings of pride and wean us more from the world, but they make the Divine promise more precious to the heart: such an one as this takes on a new meaning, "When thou passest through

the waters I will be with thee...when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned” (Isa 43:2). Moreover, they break down selfishness and make us more sympathetic to our fellow-sufferers: “Who comfortest us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble” (2Co 1:4).

3. *Bitter disappointments*

By bitter disappointments, God has plainly warned us that “all is vanity and vexation of spirit, and there is no profit under the sun” (Ecc 2:11), and that by one who was permitted to gratify the physical senses as none other ever has been. Yet we do not take his warning to heart, for we do not really believe it. On the contrary, we persuade ourselves that satisfaction *is to be found* in things under the sun, that the creature *can* give contentment to our hearts. As well attempt to fill a circle with a square! The heart was made for *God*, and He alone can meet its needs. But by nature we are idolaters, putting things into His place. Those things we invest with qualities they possess not, and sooner or later our delusions are rudely exposed to us, and we discover that the images in our minds are only dreams, that our golden idol is but clay after all.

God so orders His providences that our earthly nest is destroyed. The winds of adversity compel us to leave the downy bed of carnal ease and luxuriation. Grievous losses are experienced in some form or other. Trusted friends prove fickle, and in the hour of need they fail us. The family circle which had so long sheltered us and where peace and happiness were found, is broken up by the grim hand of death. Health fails and weary nights are our portion. These trying experiences, these bitter disappointments, are another of the means which our gracious God employs to save us from the pleasure and pollution of sin. By them He discovers to us the vanity and vexation of the creature. By them He weans us more completely from the world. By them He teaches us the objects in which we sought refreshment are but “broken cisterns,” and that we may turn to *Christ* and draw from Him who is the Well of living water, the One who can alone supply true satisfaction of soul.

It is in this way we are experimentally taught to look off from the present to the future, for our rest is not here. “For we are *saved by hope* but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why does he yet hope for?” (Rom 8:24). Let it be duly noted that this comes immediately after “we ourselves groan within ourselves.” Thus to be “saved by hope” respects our present salvation from the power of sin. Complete salvation is now the Christian’s only in *title* and *expectation*. It is not here said that we “*shall be* saved by hope,” but that we *are* saved by hope—that hope which looks for the fulfilling of God’s promises. Hope has to do with a future good, with something which as yet “is seen not.” We hope not for something which is already enjoyed. Herein hope differs from faith. Faith, as it is an assent, is in the mind; but hope is seated in the affections, stirred by the desirability of the things promised.

And, my reader, the bitter disappointments of life are naught but the dark background upon which hope may shine forth the more brightly. Christ does not immediately take to Heaven the one who puts his trust in Him. No, He keeps him here upon earth for a while to be exercised and tried. While he is awaiting his complete blessedness there is such a difference between him and it, and he encounters many difficulties and trials. Not having yet received his inheritance, there is need and occasion of hope, for only by its exercise can things future be sought after. The stronger our hope, the more earnestly shall we be engaged in the pursuit of it. We have to be weaned from present things in order for the heart to be fixed upon a future good.

4. *A gift of the Spirit*

It is a gift of the Spirit; His operations are within us. God's great gift of Christ for us is matched by the gift of the Spirit in us, for we owe as much to the One as we do to the Other. The new nature in the Christian is powerless apart from the Spirit's daily renewing. It is by His gracious operations that we have discovered to us the nature and extent of sin, are made to strive against it, are brought to grieve over it. It is by the Spirit that faith, hope, and prayer are kept alive within the soul. It is by the Spirit we are moved to use the means of grace which God has appointed for our spiritual preservation and growth. It is by the Spirit that sin is prevented from having complete dominion over us, for as the result of His indwelling in us, there is something else besides sin in the believer's heart and life, namely, the fruits of holiness and righteousness.

To sum up this aspect of our subject. Salvation from the power of indwelling sin is not the taking of the evil nature out of the believer in this life, nor by effecting any improvement in it: "that which is born of the flesh is flesh" (Joh 3:6) and it remains so, unchanged to the end. Nor is it by the Spirit so subduing indwelling sin that it is rendered less active, for the flesh not merely lusts, but "lusteth [ceaselessly] against the spirit;" it never sleeps, not even when our bodies do, as our dreams evidence. No, and in some form or other, the flesh is constantly producing its evil works. It may not be in external acts, seen by the eyes of our fellows, but certainly so internally, in things seen by God—such as covetousness, discontent, pride, unbelief, self-will toward others, and a hundred other evils. No, none is saved from *sinning* in this life.

Present salvation from the power of sin consists in, first, delivering us from the *love* of it, which though begun at our regeneration is continued throughout our practical sanctification. Second, from its *blinding delusiveness*, so that it can no more deceive as it once did. Third, from our *excusing* it: "that which I do, I allow not" (Rom 7:15). This is one of the surest marks of regeneration. In the fullest sense of the word the believer "allows" it not *before* he sins, for every real Christian when in his right mind desires to be wholly kept from sinning. He "allows" it not fully *when doing it*, for in the actual committing thereof there is an inward reserve—the

new nature consents not. He “allows” it not *afterwards*, as Psalm 51 evidences so plainly in the case of David.

The force of this word “allow” in Romans 7:15 may be seen from “truly ye bear witness that *ye allow* the deeds of your fathers; for they killed them (the prophets) and ye build their sepulchres” (Luk 11:48). So far from those Jews being ashamed of their fathers and abhorring their wicked conduct, they erected a monument to their honour. Thus, to “allow” is the opposite of to be ashamed of and sorrow over it: it is to condone and vindicate. Therefore, when it is said that the believer “allows not” the evil of which he is guilty, it means that he seeks not to justify himself or throw the blame on someone else, as both Adam and Eve did. That the Christian allows not sin is evident by his shame over it, his sorrow for it, his confession of it, his loathing himself because of it, his renewed resolution to forsake it.

IV. Salvation from the Presence of Sin

We now turn to that aspect of our subject which has to do solely with the future. Sin is yet to be completely eradicated from the believer’s being, so that he shall appear before God without any spot or blemish. True, this is his legal status even now, yet it has not become so in his state or experience. As God views the believer in Christ, he appears before Him in all the excellency of his Sponsor, but as God views him as he yet is in himself (and that He *does* so is proved by His chastenings), He beholds all the ruin which the Fall has wrought in him. But this will not always be the case: no, blessed be His name, the Lord is reserving the best wine for the last. And even now we have tasted that He is gracious, but the fulness of His grace will only be entered into and enjoyed by us after this world is left behind.

Those scriptures which present our salvation as a *future prospect* are all concerned with our final deliverance from the very inbeing of sin. To this Paul referred when he said, “Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed” (Rom 13:11)—not our salvation from the pleasure, the penalty, or the power of sin, but from its very presence. “For our citizenship is in heaven: from whence we also look for *the Saviour*, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Phi 3:20). Yes, it is the “Saviour” we await, for it is at His return the whole election of grace shall enter into their full salvation; as it is written, “Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto *salvation*” (Heb 9:28). In like manner, when another apostle declares, we “are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time” (1Pe 1:5), he had reference to this grand summation of the believer’s salvation, when he shall be forever rid of the very presence of sin.

Our salvation from the pleasure of sin is effected by Christ’s taking up His abode in our hearts: “Christ liveth in me” (Gal 2:20). Our salvation from the penalty of sin was secured by Christ’s sufferings on the Cross where He endured the punishment due our iniquities. Our salvation from the power of sin is obtained by the gracious

operations of the Spirit which Christ sends to His people—therefore He is designated “the Spirit of Christ” (Rom 8:9; and cf. Gal 4:6; Rev 3:1). Our salvation from the presence of sin will be accomplished at Christ’s second advent: “for our citizenship is in heaven, from whence we also look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto himself” (Phi 3:20-21). And again we are told, “We know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is” (1Jo 3:2). It is all of Christ from beginning to end.

Man was originally created in the image and likeness of God, reflecting the moral perfections of his Maker. But sin came in and he fell from his pristine glory, and by that fall God’s image in him was broken and His likeness marred. But in the redeemed that image is to be restored, yea, they are to be granted a far higher honour than what was bestowed upon the first Adam: they are to be made like the last Adam. It is written, “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that he might be the Firstborn among many brethren” (Rom 8:29). This blessed purpose of God in our predestination will not be fully realized until the second coming of our Lord: then it shall be that His people shall be completely emancipated from the thralldom and corruption of sin. Then shall Christ present it to Himself “a *glorious* Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Eph 5:27).

Salvation from the pleasure or love of sin takes place at our *regeneration*; salvation from the penalty or punishment of sin occurs at our *justification*; salvation from the power or dominion of sin is accomplished during our practical *sanctification*; salvation from the presence or inbeing of sin is consummated at *glorification*: “whom he justified, them he also glorified” (Rom 8:30). Not so much is revealed in Scripture on this fourth aspect of our subject, for God’s Word is not given to gratify curiosity. Yet sufficient *is* made known to feed faith, strengthen hope, draw out love, and make us “run with patience the race that is set before us.” In our present state we are incapable of forming any real conception of the bliss awaiting us; yet as Israel’s spies brought back the bunch of “the grapes of Eschol” as a sample of the good things to be found in the land of Canaan, so the Christian is granted a foretaste of his inheritance on High.

“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Eph 4:13). It is to the image of the *glorified* Christ that we are predestinated to be conformed. Behold Him on the mount of transfiguration, when a foreview of His glory was granted the favoured disciples. Such is the dazzling splendour of His person that Saul of Tarsus was temporarily blinded by a glimpse of it, and the beloved John in the Isle of Patmos “fell at His feet as dead” (Rev 1:17) when he beheld Him. That which awaits us can best be estimated as it is contemplated in the light of God’s *love*. The portion which Christ Himself has received, is the expression of God’s love for Him;

and, as the Saviour has assured His people concerning His Father's love unto them "and hast loved them as thou hast loved me" (Joh 17:23), and therefore, as He promised "where I am, there ye may be also" (Joh 14:3).

But is not the believer forever done with sin *at death* ? Yes, thank God, such is the case; yet that is not his *glorification*, for his body goes to corruption, and that is the effect of sin. But it is written of the believer's body, "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body" (1Co 15:42-44). Nevertheless, at death itself the Christian's soul is entirely freed from the presence of sin. This is clear from "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth, yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (Rev 14:13). What is signified by "that they may rest from their labours"? Why, something more blessed than ceasing from earning their daily bread by the sweat of their brows, for that will be true of the unsaved also. Those who die in the Lord rest from their "labours" *with sin*: their painful conflicts with indwelling corruption, Satan, and the world. The fight which faith now wages is then ended, and full relief from sin is theirs forever.

V. Conclusion

A. God's Dealings with Israel

The fourfold salvation from sin of the Christian was strikingly typified in God's dealings with the nation of Israel of old.

1. Deliverance from the love of sin

First, we have a vivid portrayal of their deliverance from the *pleasure* or love of sin: "And the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groaning" (Exo 2:23-24). What a contrast does that present from what we read of in the closing chapters of Genesis! There we hear the king of Egypt saying to Joseph, "The land of Egypt is before thee: in *the best* of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell: in the land of Goshen" (47:6). Accordingly we are told, "And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions therein, and grew and multiplied exceedingly" (47:27). Now Egypt is the O.T. symbol of the world, as a system opposed to God. And it was there, in the "*best part*" of it, the descendants of Abraham had settled. But the Lord had designs of mercy and something far better for them; yet before they could appreciate Canaan they had to be weaned from Egypt. Hence we find them in cruel bondage there, smarting under the lash of the taskmasters. In this way they were made to loathe Egypt and long for deliverance therefrom. The theme of Exodus is *redemption* : how striking, then to see that God *begins* His work of redemption by making His people to groan and cry out under their bondage! The portion which Christ bestows is not welcome till we are made sick of this world.

2. Deliverance from the penalty of sin

Second, in Exodus 12, we have a picture of God's people being delivered from the *penalty* of sin. On the Passover night the angel of death came and slew all the firstborn of the Egyptians. But why spare the firstborn of the Israelites? Not because they were guiltless before God, for all had sinned and come short of His glory. The Israelites, equally with the Egyptians, were guilty in His sight, and deserving of unsparing judgment. It was at this very point that the grace of God came in and met their need. Another was slain in their room, and died in their stead. An innocent victim was killed and its bloodshed, pointing to the coming of "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." The head of each Israelitish household sprinkled the lamb's blood on the lintel and posts of his door, and hence the firstborn in it was spared from the avenging angel: God promised: "When I see the blood I will pass over you" (Exo 12:13). Thus, Israel was saved from the penalty of sin by means of the lamb dying in their stead.

3. Deliverance from the power of sin

Third, Israel's wilderness journey adumbrated the believer's salvation from the *power* of sin. Israel did not enter Canaan immediately upon their exodus from Egypt; they had to face the temptations and trials of the desert where they spent not less than forty years. But what a gracious and full provision did God make for His people. Manna was given them daily from Heaven—figure of that food which God's Word now supplies for our spiritual nourishment. Water was given from the smitten rock—emblem of the Holy Spirit sent by the smitten Christ to dwell within us: John 7:38-39. A cloud and a pillar of fire guided them by day and guarded them by night, reminding us of how He directs our steps and shields us from our foes. Best of all, Moses, their great leader, was with them, counselling, admonishing, and interceding for them—figure of the Captain of our salvation: "Lo I am with you always."

4. Deliverance from the presence of sin

Fourth, the actual entrance of Israel into the promised land foreshadowed the believer's *glorification*, when he enters into the full enjoyment of that possession which Christ has purchased for him. The experiences Israel met with in Canaan have a double typical significance. From one viewpoint they presaged the conflict which faith encounters while the believer is left upon earth, for as the Hebrews had overcome the original inhabitants of Canaan before they could enjoy their portion, so faith has to surmount many obstacles if it is to "possess its possessions." Nevertheless, that land of milk and honey into which Israel entered after the bondage of Egypt and the hardships of the wilderness were left behind, was manifestly a figure of the Christian's portion in Heaven after he is forever done with sin in this world.

B. Summary

"Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for he shall save His people from their sins" (Mat 1:21). *First*, save them from the pleasure or love of sin by bestowing a nature which

hates it: this is the great *miracle* of grace. *Second*, save them from the penalty or punishment of sin, by remitting all its guilt; this is the grand *marvel* of grace. *Third*, save them from the power or dominion of sin, by the workings of His Spirit: this reveals the wondrous *might* of grace. *Fourth*, save them from the presence or inbeing of sin: this will demonstrate the glorious *magnitude* of grace. May it please the Lord to bless these elementary but most important truths to many of His little ones, and make their “big” brothers and sisters smaller in their own esteem. ❧