

CHAPTER II

SALVATION, THE OBJECTIVE IN EVANGELISM

ALL evangelism finds its consummation in one phase of the great Scriptural word, "Salvation." A word which covers more than the objective of evangelism, in that it includes, beyond the deliverance from the penalty and condemnation of sin, both the deliverance from the present power of sin and the final unfolding and development of the saved one into the image of Christ. The word includes a whole series of other great doctrines and revelations in which the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are seen working toward the transformation of the individual, body, soul, and spirit, into a celestial being and a partaker with Christ of the heavenly glory. This is the mighty working of the Triune God toward the heavenly perfection of every one who believes. Blessed indeed are they who learn to yield themselves wholly to His saving power!

Because of the universal Satanic blindness upon the minds of unregenerate people (2 Cor. iv. 3, 4) the scope of the transforming work of salvation is not always understood, even where such knowledge is boldly assumed, and many religious leaders, through this blindness, have ignorantly turned

away from the real Gospel and have sincerely espoused "another gospel" of social reform, ethical culture, humanitarianism, or morality. In turning to these good but subordinate things they have revealed, both by their careless rejection of the one Gospel of Grace and by their unbounded enthusiasm for these unworthy substitutes, that the riches of the glorious Gospel of Christ have not dawned on them.

This unconscious ignorance of the central truth of the Word of God is one of the mightiest hindrances to evangelism to-day; for not only are the blinded unable to take a part in real soul-saving work, but they have pleaded for, and to some extent secured, an attitude of tolerance toward their doctrines from many who should be resisting them in defense of the truth.

The spirit of tolerance toward the preaching of "another gospel," instead of the Gospel of Christ, is usually justified by the assuring statement that the Word of God needs no defense, and therefore any controversy with these perverters of the truth would be a needless and aimless warfare. To this it may be replied: No defense of the whole truth is ever made from a fear that man will destroy the eternal Word itself, but that defense is made from a God-given compassion for the multitude who are being beguiled away from all hope by the sophistries of these teachings; for any true burden for the lost will extend to the misguided as much as to the unguided.

With the many pious substitutes for the one

Gospel of Grace to-day, and the ecclesiastical influence and blind enthusiasm of their promoters, evangelism has new enemies to face, and her glorious work can never be accomplished by waving the white flag of tolerance before these foes.

Since much depends, in true evangelism, on a clear understanding of all that is included in "the power of God unto salvation," it is important to dwell at some length on the various aspects of salvation. This is undertaken with a deep consciousness that the heart-comprehension of the glorious riches of salvation must depend upon a divine illumination, or, as it is stated in the Scriptures: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints" (Eph. i. 17, 18).

In I Cor. i. 30, Christ is set forth as having been made unto the believer, "Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption." These three words, to some extent, suggest the three tenses—past, present, and future—of salvation; for the believer *was* saved from condemnation unto righteousness and life when he believed; he is *being* saved from the habit and power of sin through sanctification; and he *will* be saved from the presence of sin when he, with his glorious body, is wholly redeemed and complete in the presence of his Lord at His Coming.

The present and future tenses of salvation, though in no way a part of evangelism, should be carefully distinguished from the past tense, which is its true objective.

To the believer who has come into the first great tense of salvation, the body of truth mentioned above which sets forth "Sanctification," or "the second tense of salvation," is of greatest import; for it presents to him the only solution of all the problems gathering about his responsibility to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith he is called, and to show forth the virtues of Him Who hath called him from darkness into His marvellous light. The believer's high position of sonship with God, co-partnership with Christ, and communion and fellowship with the Spirit of Holiness Who indwells him, demands nothing short of a God-wrought salvation from the habit and power of sin, which is independent of all human energy and strength; for human nature, at its best, has no capacity to produce the smallest part of a true God-honoring life.

It may further be stated in this connection that no intelligent Christian can contemplate the three-fold fact of his own high calling in Christ Jesus, his sinful nature, and the overpowering strength of his adversary, Satan, and not welcome the God-provided victory and salvation by the Spirit from the control and domination of evil. It is, however, often difficult for the child of God to abandon his own resources and tendency to self-help as a means to victory, and to rest in faith and expect-

tation toward God that He will work in him both to will and to do of His good pleasure; yet the victory over evil is never gained by any other plan than a complete dependence upon the saving power of God through Jesus Christ. "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. i. 6).

So it is revealed that the last tense of salvation, even that faultless presentation before the presence of His glory, is a work which is accomplished independent of all human energy and strength.

In each revealed purpose of God for man in the ages past, some responsibility has fallen upon the faithfulness of man; but in this age of grace, wherein God is calling out a heavenly people, it is as though He would not allow the glorious result to be marred by one human touch, so perfectly has He reserved to Himself every necessary step in the great work of man's salvation.

Returning to the first tense of salvation, or that which is the real objective in true evangelism, it will be seen that this part of the saving work of God includes the greatest issues that can come into a human life. Some of the more important aspects of the first tense of salvation will here be considered separately:

I.—The penalty of sin and the condemnation of an offended law are wholly set aside through justification, and on the grounds of the substitutionary, sacrificial death of Christ. As it is recorded in Eph. i. 7: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, accord-

ing to the riches of his grace," and so complete has been this atoning work that God, in perfect justice and righteousness, can not only forgive and cancel all sin, but He can also receive the forgiven sinner as covered with all the worthiness of Christ. The same passage records: "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved" (Eph. i. 5, 6).

This is an atonement based upon substitution. It is the only meaning given in the New Testament to the death of Christ, and it is the only value foreseen in that death in the types and prophecies of the Old Testament. In Isa. liii. 5, 6, it is written: "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." To reject this repeated and only revelation of the purpose of God in the cross is to set sail upon a shoreless sea of uncertainty, to abandon the only cure for sin which the world can ever know, and to forsake the one and only foundation, according to God's revelation to man, upon which every hope for humanity is made to rest.

This fact, namely, that the divine compassion fulfilled all the demands of righteousness in behalf of sinful and unrighteous man, stands without any

worthy comparison or illustration in the range of human experience. Nevertheless there are interpreters of the meaning of the death of Christ who claim that they find a line of analogy to this great revelation in the things of this world. They claim that such sacrifice is to be seen in the dying of one generation of flowers for the enrichment of future generations of flowers; and that the suffering of a mother for her child is, in principle, akin to the suffering of the cross. The failure of all such comparisons may be seen in the fact that the dying of one generation of flowers does not save any future generations from death; nor does the suffering of a mother substitute, or in any way relieve, the pain and sufferings of the child.

Christ did not die to show us how to die: He died that we might not die. Apart from this central distinction, there may be maintained a "form of religion"; but there can be no power in the salvation thus offered. There may be a carefully selected use of Scripture; but there can be no reasonable interpretation of the whole testimony of God.

The sin question was met and perfectly dealt with by God, He Himself being the sole mediator, and the result is a perfect lifting of all penalty and condemnation for sin. All humanity was included in this mediation; for it is written, "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (I John ii. 2), and "that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. ii. 9),

and again, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." Hence it is revealed that the condemnation of the unsaved is not now the sins which Christ bore in His body on the tree; but the condemnation rests in the fact of the rejection of the Sin-bearer. Thus it is written: "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." Even so, the Spirit convinces a world that rejects its propitiation, of but one great sin: "Of sin, because they believe not on me."

The believer, in contrast to the unsaved, has consented to the atonement as the basis of his salvation, and has thus appropriated by faith the propitiation made for him.

The exact position of the believer in relation to the condemnation justly due him for his sins may be illustrated by the relation which an executed criminal bears to the law which has already condemned and put him to death. He has been drawn into court, judged and sentenced to death for his sins, and the death penalty has been perfectly executed. His execution has, however, been borne for him, in substitution, by the very Judge Whose righteousness condemned him. For it must ever be remembered that it was the Judge Who pronounced the death sentence—"The soul that sinneth, it shall die," and "The wages of sin is death"—Who also in His great love bowed the heavens and came down from that throne, making bare

His own bosom and receiving into His own breast the very death blow He had in righteousness imposed. It was God that "was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."

The believer, thus standing beyond his own perfect execution, is in a position which is not under law; for the last demand of the law has been satisfied. He is in a position, therefore, wherein God is free to work out every desire of His own love without a possible challenge of His perfect righteousness and true holiness. Since all the demands of righteousness have been so fully satisfied, it is written that God can remain just, and still be the justifier of him that believeth. When God is thus free to act He will accomplish by His own power His eternal purpose, and the believer will finally be presented faultless before the presence of His glory, and will be conformed to the image of His Son.

Wonderful indeed are the figures used in the Bible to set forth the complete removal of sin and condemnation from the one who receives the God-provided cure for sin. In Micah vii. 19 it is said of Israel: "And thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea"; so also, in Psa. ciii. 12: "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us," "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. x. 17). And again, the strong figure of "blotting out" is frequently used: "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake,

and will not remember thy sins" (Isa. xliii. 25). "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee" (Isa. xlv. 22). "But those things which God hath before showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts iii. 19).

So again, this forgiveness of sin, as in the passage just quoted, is said to be made possible only in the blood of the cross. In Col. ii. 13-14: "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross."

II.—Not only is sin and condemnation removed in the first tense of salvation, but the saint, whether of the Old Testament or the New, is said to be "clothed with the righteousness of God" in place of the "filthy rags" of self-righteousness, as the following Scriptures describe: "But we are as an unclean thing, and our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isa. lxiv. 6). "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of his salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness" (Isa. lxi. 10). "Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joy" (Psa. cxxxii. 9). The passage, "Unto

Adam also and to his wife did the Lord make coats of skins, and clothed them" (Gen. iii. 21), is a suggestion of Christ made our righteousness through the shedding of blood.

So, also, many other passages reveal that this imputed righteousness is possible only on the ground of faith in Christ as personal Saviour through His sacrificial death: "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifest, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe" (Rom. iii. 21, 22). "What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works" (Rom. iv. 1-6). "For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. x. 3, 4). "That I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having my

own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Phil. iii. 8, 9). "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints" (Rev. xix. 8). "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God was made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption" (I Cor. i. 30, R.V.). "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. v. 21).

Space has been given to these many passages that imputed righteousness may be seen to be, as it is, an important theme in both the Old and New Testaments, and a necessary thing as well, if sinful man is ever to appear before Jehovah God. So also, in these Scriptures of the New Testament, this "imputed" righteousness is said to be Christ Himself "made * * * our righteousness" by an act of God; for according to the last passage quoted, the believer is *made* the righteousness of God in Christ as perfectly as Christ was *made* sin for him. His position is said to be "in Christ" and he is "accepted in the beloved."

There is also a position of perfect justification through the work of the Sin-bearer. "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. x. 4). Under these "riches of grace" righteousness is not required; but is rather bestowed as the basis of acceptance

before God, and righteousness is fulfilled *in*, rather than *by* the believer.

The revelation that the righteousness of God is "unto all and upon all that believe" has always seemed an impossible and unreasonable thing from the view-point of the "wisdom of this world"; but it is not impossible or unreasonable in the light of the cross.

III.—Also there is in salvation an impartation of a new life; and that which alone can bring relief to one who is "dead in trespasses and sins." It is a new creation and regeneration by the power of God on the grounds of the blood of the cross. It, too, is bestowed at the beginning of salvation.

The following passages, selected from over eighty New Testament references on this theme, will give some conception of the whole doctrine and revelation:

(a) *It is in no way the present possession of the unsaved.* "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again [from above], he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John iii. 3). "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you" (John vi. 53). "Because strait is the gate, and narrow the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matt. vii. 14).

(b) *Eternal life is the present possession of the believer.* "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent