

FOUNDATION TRUTHS OF THE GOSPEL

by John Ritchie

Ritchie's foundational theological work examining core truths of the Christian gospel including assurance, conversion, and eternal life, providing essential biblical understanding of salvation's key components for new and growing believers.

7 Chapters

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01 - Assurance

Assurance from Foundation Truths of the Gospel by John Ritchie The Scriptures bearing on Assurance may, for the sake of simplicity and clearness, be divided into sections, viz.:— The Position, Possessions, and Prospects of Believers; or, in other words, the assurance of what we are, of what we have, of what we know, and of what we shall be. Concerning all who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, the following facts are true, as recorded in the Word of God.

We Are—

Saved (1 Corinthians 1:18). For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

Forgiven (1 John 2:12).

I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

Washed, Sanctified, Justified (1 Corinthians 6:11). And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

Sons (1 John 3:1).

Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God...

Complete (Colossians 2:10). And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.

We Have—

Redemption (Ephesians 1:7). In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.

Peace (Romans 5:1).

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Eternal Life (John 3:15). That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. The Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:12).

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. The Word (John 17:14).

I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. A High Priest (Hebrews 8:1)

Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. An Advocate (1 John 2:1). My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

We Know—

We are of God (1 John 5:19). And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. Have passed from death (1 John 3:14).

We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren...

We are of the truth (1 John 3:19). And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

We are in Him (1 John 2:5). But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

He abideth in us (1 John 3:24). And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

We have eternal life (1 John 5:13).

These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

We have a Home (2 Corinthians 5:1). For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

We Shall Be—

Raised (1 Thessalonians 4:16). For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.

Changed (1 Corinthians 15:52). In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

Caught up (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Be like Him; See Him (1 John 3:2).

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. Be with Him (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Satisfied (Psalms 17:15). As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness. The Gospel Proclaims Assurance.

"For our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance" (1 Thessalonians 1:5). To have the assurance of salvation, and to rejoice therein, is the normal state of every believer in Christ. To lack this assurance is the result of unbelief of God's testimony (1 John 5:10) or of traditional teaching (Galatians 3:1; Galatians 4:9), or of backsliding (2 Peter 1:9).

How Assurance Is Obtained. The assurance of Salvation is not obtained by certain inward evidences. It is not the result of attaining to a certain degree of sanctity, or Christian attainment. It is not dependent on the experiences of God's people. The finished work of Christ is the ground of the believer's salvation; the testimony of God's Word gives the assurance of it. Both are outside of himself, and in no wise dependent on him. The perfectness of Christ's work and the immutability of God's Word are the two great pillars on which salvation and its assurance rests. God says, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (John 3:36). "All that believe are justified from all things" (Acts 13:39). To believe God because He speaks, is faith; to doubt Him is unbelief. To ask evidences or signs, either external or internal, is equivalent to saying, "I cannot take God's bare Word for it, and believe that I am saved, because He says it." Unbelief asks signs; faith trusts God without them. Unbelief wants to, "understand" all about it, to reason it out, in order to "believe." Faith accepts God's testimony. "Through faith we understand" (Hebrews 11:3). Unbelief wants to "see" in order to believe (see John 20:25). Faith "believes" to see (Psalms 27:13).

Old Testament Pictures of Assurance.

Such was the faith of Noah, he believed God about a coming flood while as yet he saw no cloud on the horizon. He had the "assurance" of the deluge one hundred and twenty years before it came. He knew it, and preached it, because he believed God. "Abraham believed God" when He promised to give him a son. "Evidences" were against it, but "he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief" (Romans 4:20), although its magnitude might well have made him stagger— "but was strong in faith ... being fully persuaded that what He had promised, He was able also to perform" (Romans 4:20-21). He had the "assurance" of receiving a son, long before Isaac was born, through faith. The Israelites were safe under the shelter of the blood on the lintel and doorposts; they had the assurance of their safety in the Word— "I will pass over you" (Exodus 12:13). Their security depended on the faithfulness of God, but their assurance of that depended on their confidence in His Word. If they believed that Word simply as He gave it, then they could say — "We are safe; God has said it." If they consulted their frames and feelings, instead of taking God at His Word, their assurance might go and come. In like manner, many now, instead of receiving God's testimony and resting on it for the assurance of their salvation, look within themselves, seeking for evidences of assurance there. Of course they are disappointed. There can be no assurance of anything, apart from faith in God. But here comes the difficulty. How can I know if I have faith, and if it be of the right kind? The same kind of faith which accepts God's testimony that there was a flood in Noah's days, and implicitly believes it, without further proof, is just the kind of faith that believes God, when He says He has given me eternal life (1 John 5:11). In each case it is taking God at His Word, without further evidence, than that He says it. This is how people get the assurance of salvation.

People want to "feel," to "realise," to "enjoy," before they believe, but this cannot be. God must be believed; His Word must be honoured. "He that hath received His testimony hath set to his seal

that God is true" (John 3:33). To have the "knowledge of salvation" (Luke 1:77) and "much assurance" (1 Thessalonians 1:5) was the common property of the Saints of early times.

How Assurance Is Lost. To encourage doubt and fear was no part of the teaching of the Lord or His Apostles. "Doubting Castle" had its foundations laid in the dark days, when God's Book was deposed from the place of authority, and when man's traditions and human creeds were put in its place. Legality, ritualism, sacramentalism, and purgatory itself were all brought in after, and found easy access among those who had been taught, that no assurance of salvation or of Heaven could be gained in this life. Blessed be God, assurance is within reach of all who believe the Gospel of God. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31) are words leaving no room for doubt. "He that hath the Son hath life" (1 John 5:12) is sufficient for a simple soul who can believe God. Such will at once assert their claim to that possession, and joyfully confess, "We know that we have passed from death unto life" (1 John 3:14). And if they be charged with "presumption" for so doing, they may call in the witnesses of earlier times who, rejoiced in the same blessedness. Of these, the following may be named:—

Job had assurance (Job 19:25), so had David (Psalms 103:12); Isaiah possessed it (Isaiah 6:7), so did Paul (2 Corinthians 5:1); John (1 John 3:22); Timothy (2 Timothy 1:9); Peter (1 Peter 5:1), all the believers at Ephesus (Ephesians 1:7); Colosse (Colossians 1:12-14), and other Churches. It was the normal condition of believers to know that they were saved and possessors of eternal life. If any lack this now, it must be the result of backsliding (2 Peter 1:9), or of bad teaching (Galatians 3:1).

There are preachers, some of them of high rank, in the professing Church, who openly avow their belief that no assurance of salvation is possible in this life; others admit that a favoured few — either those unquestionably elect, or of a high degree in Christian virtue — may attain to it, but that the ordinary rank and file of believers must "hope" and "wait" till the revelations of the great day. All this, tested in the clear light of God's open Bible, is simply nonsense, and the wonder is, that any should be misled and deceived by it. O that men would go to the Book of God, and read it there for themselves, in words so plain that the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein. While the wise and the great are blinded and stumble, the simple believer sings—

"The gospel of the grace of God, Unchangeably the same, 'Forgiveness' speaks through Jesus' blood, 'Salvation' in His name.

"'Eternal life' for ever sure, To all who do believe;

'Eternal glory' kept secure, For those who Christ receive.

"Nor height, nor dept, nor earth, nor hell, Shall ever them remove, Who in the heart of Jesus dwell, Who know and trust His love." from Foundation Truths of the Gospel by John Ritchie. 2nd ed. Kilmarnock: Office of "The Believer's Magazine," [1904].

02 - Conversion

Conversion from Foundation Truths of the Gospel by John Ritchie

Conversion, as the word is used in the Scriptures, means— "a turning to God." Regeneration is a change of nature; the implanting of a new and heavenly life within. Conversion is the outward and manifest turning of the person to God, and as a consequence, from sin and Satan. In every case of genuine conversion, there is a positive and a negative side: the man is turned round to God, to Christ, to holiness; he is turned from the world, from Satan, and from sin. The Necessity of Conversion. The words of the Lord Jesus are "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3). Apostles of the Lord preached "Repent ye therefore, and be converted" (Acts 3:19). This change is necessary then as now. Man's face is naturally turned from God. His back is toward his Creator; the path that he treads leads away from God and Heaven: it tends to death and hell. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way" (Isaiah 53:6) is a confession of the common course of men. "They have turned their back unto me, and not their face" (Jeremiah 2:27) is Jehovah's complaint concerning His ancient people, and the charge is universally true. There are no exceptions. It is to man thus living, with his face set for death and destruction, that the voice of the Lord is heard calling, "Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?"

What Conversion is Not.

It is to be feared that, in the thoughts of many, conversion is little more than a change of creed. They join a new church, or become adherents of a new theology. To pass from Romanism to Protestantism, from being a Churchman to become a Dissenter, from Calvinism to Arminianism, these and others of a similar kind are frequently spoken of as being "conversions." But they are not so in the sense in which Scripture speaks. All these may be known apart from a Divine work within, and without the man being turned to God. Nor is reformation to be confounded with conversion. A man may change his ways and leave off his sinful habits, yea, he may even assume a religious life, and do religious work, apart from true conversion to God. There may be a "new leaf turned," a "fresh start" made, a "new vow" taken, a "good resolution" formed, and all this may, for a time, give indication of a changed life. But, sooner or later, it will come to nought if the heart has not been reached, and the springs of life turned to God. Experiences, impressions, and flushes of religious feeling are often mistaken for conversion, especially during seasons of revival and Gospel work, but these being without foundation or root, through time lapse into the former, or into a worse condition. To such the word in 2 Peter 2:22, applies— "The dog is turned (the same word as converted) to his own vomit again."

What Conversion Is.

Conversion, as the word implies, is a turn to God. "Ye turned to God from idols" (1 Thessalonians 1:9). "Ye ... are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls" (1 Peter 2:24). The heart once closed against God's love is now opened to receive it, as the petals of the flower turned

toward the sun receive and absorb its rays. The ear once closed against God's Voice, is now open, in the spirit of a child, to hear His Word, and to do His will. The secret springs of life, which before were supplied with motive power from sin and Satan, are now actuated by the power of grace and the Spirit of God. The man is brought "from the power of Satan unto God" (Acts 26:18) and God henceforth becomes His joy and His trust. The time of his lawlessness, his choosing of his own way is now past: he has "return" unto the Shepherd and Bishop of his soul, to own His claim as Lord, to bow beneath His rule, to be fed, and led by Him along the right way to Heaven and home. It is to be feared that in a day of counterfeit and hypocrisy such as the present is, the standard of conversion has been sadly lowered, and anyone making a slipshod "profession" has been counted as a "convert." Sensational and pointless preaching, abounding with sentiment and senseless story, often accompanied with music and non-Gospel singing, and destitute of ploughshare and hammer to break up the fallow conscience and strike hard the stony heart, can hardly be expected to produce conviction or result in conversion according to God. Man's conversion may be manufactured by man's methods, in man's own power, but the real article — that which bears the heavenly brand — is, as of old, the Word of God alone.

How Conversion Is Produced.

It is not in man's nature to turn to God. His thoughts and his desires are all against God. Religion cannot change the current of his inner life; the most it can do is to dress up in another fashion that which is without. In order to have new fruit, there must be a new tree, for "a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit." This new nature is implanted at regeneration. There is a new creation. The regenerated man stands up in the power of a new life, and in that life he turns to God and serves Him. An illustration may help us here. There are certain creatures, such as the gad-fly, whose early existence is in the mud of stagnant pools. They are able to move from place to place in the mud, but not to rise above it. They feed on that which is on their level; they cannot reach to anything higher. Presently a new force is developed within them, and immediately then they rise to the surface of the water, above and beyond the region of mud. Then wings are given them, and soon they rise up into the air, to bask in the warm rays of the sun, to find their food, and to spend their brief life in other spheres, never more to return to the muddy pool, or to find their subsistence there. Thus it was with some at Thessalonica of ancient days. They were idolaters, absorbed and engrossed with earthly things. They had no desire for things beyond, nor had they power or will to rise to better spheres.

By-and-bye the Gospel reached them. They heard the word of life, in power and much assurance, from men who walked with God, and held the Gospel as a sacred trust from Him. They received the message, they believed the truth. The immediate result is recorded in the glowing words, "Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from Heaven" (1 Thessalonians 1:9-10). The power of idols was broken by the power of God. The Living Christ, believed and received, expelled the enemy. They were able to say, like one of old — "I have heard Him, and observed Him: what have I to do any more with idols?" (Hosea 14:8). The testimony is the same throughout. The Grecians who heard from the men of Cyprus and Cyrene of the Lord Jesus, "believed, and turned unto the Lord" (Acts 11:21). Believing on the Son of God gives life, (see John 3:36), and that life is at once made manifest by the possessor of it turning to, or being converted unto the Lord. Such were the conversions of early days, and such are God's conversions still. Christ received in the heart changes the whole current of the life. Old things pass

away: former habits drop off like leaves in autumn: the new man stands forth in a new character, with new aspirations and new hopes filling his mind and spirit; His feet tread in new paths, and his hands are filled with new employments. The old lose their charm and their power, and are left behind. "The explosive power of a new affection," as one named it, has accomplished this transformation: this "new affection" is the love of Christ now indwelling the heart, and nothing short of this can affect it.

Hindrances to Conversion.

We need not wonder if the craft and power of Satan are combined to hinder this Divine work of conversion from taking place. He blinds the mind, he closes the eye, he seals the ear, lest men "should be converted" (Acts 28:27). He fears the Gospel of God, and so he sends his emissaries with "another gospel" (Galatians 1:6-9) in its stead, which has no Divine power behind it, and no Divine conversion resulting from it. Let those who know the Gospel of God, and have confidence in its efficacy, sound it forth, in all its simplicity, freshness, and power, and God will own it in the conversion of souls to Himself. As Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses of old, and sought to hinder the deliverance of Israel, by imitating the work of God, so we are told shall the servants of Satan seek to turn away the ears of those who would hear the truth and be converted by it, into "fables." These "fables" now abound on every side. The world's religion is permeated by them, as leaven hid in the meal leavened the whole mass in which it worked. Need we wonder that gospels of evolution, non-atoning death of Christ, non-eternal punishment, denial of Christ's Divinity and man's ruin, produce no genuine conversions followed by holy, Christ-like lives. It would be a greater wonder if they did. God's Gospel preached in God's power, by God's servants, will bear its fruit, and that fruit will remain. from Foundation Truths of the Gospel by John Ritchie. 2nd ed. Kilmarnock: Office of "The Believer's Magazine," [1904].

03 - Eternal Life

Eternal Life from Foundation Truths of the Gospel by John Ritchie

Man's natural state is one of spiritual death. He exists, but he is without "life." "Dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1). "Alienated from the life of God" (Ephesians 4:18). "Dead while she liveth" (1 Timothy 5:6). "Ye have no life in you" (John 6:53). Such are the words used to describe the condition of the unconverted on earth. In eternity the unbeliever will still exist, but he "shall not see life" (John 3:36). "He that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:12).

Life — as used in these Scriptures — is more than mere existence. The paper of this book exists, but it has no life. The lost will exist in endless woe, yet they "shall not see life." Endless existence belongs to saved and unsaved alike; eternal life is the portion of those who are in Christ alone. Wherever we read "hath eternal [or everlasting] life," it has reference to a condition of spiritual blessedness; wherever the lack of it is recorded, it involves separation from God and conscious misery. There is a natural life and there is a spiritual life, so likewise there is a natural death and there is a spiritual death. All the time that the prodigal was away from his father's house, he was regarded by his father as "dead," yet terribly alive in sin. His return and restoration is described as being made "alive again" (Luke 15:32). Spiritual death is the state of all the unregenerate: they are "alienated from the life of God" (Ephesians 4:18). They abide in death (1 John 3:14) at enmity with God. At conversion the believer passes "from death unto life" (John 5:24), "from the power of Satan unto God" (Acts 26:18). The Source of Life.

"The living God" (1 Timothy 4:10). "With Thee is the fountain of life" (Psalms 36:9). "The Father hath life in Himself" (John 5:26). The fountain was there, but no stream had yet come forth. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John 1:18). It remained for the Son to come forth and show unto us "that eternal life which was with the Father" (1 John 1:2).

Eternal Life Manifested.

"The life was manifested, and we have seen it" (1 John 1:2). "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4). "God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Timothy 3:16). From the manger of Bethlehem to the Cross of Calvary, "the life" was manifested: in all spheres, among friends and foes, the life Divine shone forth, and at the close of that wondrous pathway the living One laid down His life for the sheep (John 10:15). "This is the true God and eternal life (1 John 5:20).

Jesus was the "Prince of life." He took flesh and blood: He "was made in the likeness of men," yet He was different from all. "In Him there was no sin." He was not in that state of death, or separation from God, in which sin had placed all Adam's posterity. "As the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself" (John 5:26). Yet He could not share that life with others apart from death. His own words are, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24). Let those who make great pretensions to be admirers of the life of Jesus of Nazareth, but who reject His

atoning death, or regard it as unnecessary, remember this: Like as the rock in the desert of old had to be smitten ere the stream could flow to quench the thirst of the needy host of Israel, so Christ must be "stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted" (Isaiah 53:4): He must die the sinner's death before He could make him a sharer of eternal life now, and eternal glory hereafter.

Eternal Life Imparted.

"I am come that they might have life" (John 10:10). "The Son quickeneth whom He will" (John 5:21). "Believing ye might have life through His name" (John 20:31). "the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23). When the sinner believes on Christ, he receives everlasting life (John 3:16). When the Gospel is "put away" by the unbeliever, he judges himself unworthy of everlasting life (Acts 13:46), and abides in death. Although the full manifestation of that life awaits a future day, its present possession is the portion of all believers. The "babe" and the "father" in Christ alike share it. There may be varied stages of growth, but the life is essentially the same in all. It is eternal life: it cannot be lost: it will not perish. It is received by faith. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (John 3:36). It is not communicated through sacraments; neither baptism nor the Lord's Supper have anything whatever to do with the communication of life. They are for the living, not for the dead. The way of life is plain and clear. The Lord Jesus says, "He that heareth My Word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life" (John 5:24). "They that hear shall live" (John 5:25). He, and He only, is the Live-giver; He does not delegate this to priest or parson. To Him, therefore, the sinner must go; there is "life" in no other. His Word to the unbeliever is, "Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life" (John 5:40). Many go, to "Church" and "Sacrament" who have never been to Christ.

Eternal Life Possessed.

"He that hath the Son hath life" (1 John 5:12). "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish" (John 10:28). "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life" (1 John 5:13). These Scriptures, and many others give definite testimony that the believer is already in possession of eternal life, and at no future period will he be without it, otherwise it would not be "eternal." "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son" (1 John 5:11). "Your life is hid with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:3). It cannot be touched by men or demons: its source is beyond their reach. The unscriptural theory that a saint may lose eternal life and finally perish can have no place where this is received as the truth of God. To make life dependent on the believer is to dishonour the Life-giver, and to make man his own preserver.

Eternal Life Exhibited. As to its manifestation, this life is in the believer. He is called to manifest the "life of Jesus" in his mortal body (2 Corinthians 4:10), and no longer the "old man." No more I that live, "but Christ liveth in me" (Galatians 2:20), ought to be practically, as it is judicially, the expression of the believer's experience. The treasure is yet in an "earthen vessel" — not as it yet shall be, in a glorified body — but this need not hinder it from being manifest. Men looking on may take knowledge that a new power dominates the man, although his place and surroundings among them remain unchanged. The body is the same. The members are as they formerly were, but a new power rules them. They are no longer the tools of sin, but, the instruments of righteousness unto God. The "spirit" that formerly energized them, when they were "children of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:2), ceases to have control. It has been superseded by the "Spirit of God" who now

indwells the bodies of saints. An illustration may help us here. There was in time past a certain house of rather questionable repute in a public part of this city. By-and-bye it changed owners. The new proprietor had the place gutted out and thoroughly cleaned, and in a few days we saw a large placard fixed in the window with the words "WILL BE OPENED UNDER ENTIRELY NEW MANAGEMENT." The old place stood outwardly as before, but a new kind of business, under a new manager, was henceforth carried on there. The body of the converted man is as it was in former days. His earthly calling, his home and surroundings may be the same, but he is now under new management. Divine life is in his mortal body, and the Spirit of God now guides and controls him.

Eternal Life in Prospect.

"The end everlasting life" (Romans 6:22). "In hope of eternal life" (Titus 1:2). "Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 1:21). These passages view eternal life in its finality. In resurrection the believer will enter upon life in a new sphere, in a body fitted for its full enjoyment. Here it dwells in mortal flesh, groaning for deliverance; there it will be at home in a "spiritual body," a vessel suited to its full and perfect manifestation, in that glory to which its possessor is even now called (1 Peter 5:10). The "life" will be the same then as now, but in the resurrection state it will be in other surroundings. There will be nothing to hinder it there as there is here. The saints will reign in life with Christ, and instead of sin and death, and the unceasing groan of a burdened creation, there will be the "all things new," "the river of the water of life" unceasingly flowing, the "tree of life" continuously bearing its fruits, and "no more death" in that "land of the living."

04 - Redemption

Redemption from Foundation Truths of the Gospel by John Ritchie

Redemption is the "act of buying back." It has also in it the thought of taking possession of that which has been thus bought. There is a redemption by purchase, and also a redemption by power, spoken of in the Scriptures. There is a redemption which the believer has now, and there is a redemption that he hopes for, by-and-bye. It is needful to distinguish between these.

Man's Need of Redemption.

Man is the slave of sin and Satan. In his fall, he surrendered himself into Satan's hand. His inheritance, was lost with him. The world is claimed by Satan, and he rules it. He is the "prince of this world" (John 12:31). Man is a subject of his power (Acts 26:18) and must remain so until delivered by the power of God. He cannot redeem or deliver himself, nor can his fellow. "None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him" (Psalms 49:7). If deliverance comes, it must be from above. This is what the Gospel reveals. "Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom" (Job 33:24) is the Word of the God of redemption. "He sent redemption unto His people" (Psalms 111:9). This redemption comes through Christ, as we read-- "Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Corinthians 1:30). He obtained "eternal redemption" (Hebrews 9:12) for His people.

Redemption by Blood, and by Power. The language of the Word concerning the believer is, "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Ephesians 1:7). Then, looking onward to the day of coming glory, when redemptive power shall be extended to his mortal body, and to creation, the word is— "In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession" (Ephesians 1:13-14). Then again, "Grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Ephesians 4:30).

Redemption by blood was effected at the Cross. There the Lord Jesus "purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28) His people. Yea, more; He bought the field — the world, in which the treasure lay (see Matthew 13:44), and will yet take possession of it, set it in order, and rule it for God. But the time for this display of His redemptive power in the world has not yet come. He is now engaged in gathering His purchased treasure out of it. This He is doing by the Gospel. When a sinner believes the Gospel, his sins are forgiven, he is sealed by the Holy Spirit, and he waits for the day of full and final redemption.

Like a farmer who goes to the market to buy a flock of sheep, He purchases them, pays for them, and sets His mark upon them as His property. By-and-bye He returns, and takes the sheep that bear His mark out from the rest, and appropriates them to Himself.

These two aspects of redemption by blood and by power had their foreshadowing in the redemption of Israel. First, they were redeemed by the blood of the lamb from judgment, next by the arm of the Lord from Pharaoh. He "redeemed them from the hand of the enemy" (Psalms 106:10) to be unto Himself a peculiar treasure above all people: a people among whom He might dwell, and rule by His Word.

Kinsman, Redeemer, Avenger.

Under the law, a kinsman had a right to redeem (Leviticus 25:25; Ruth 4:6-7). He might also avenge his brother's blood (Joshua 20:5). The Hebrew word for Redeemer is also translated—"Kinsman" and "Avenger"; it has in it the threefold significance of Kinsman, Redeemer, Avenger. We have in the Lord Jesus all these three characters sustained. He is at once our Kinsman, Redeemer, and Avenger. He became our Kinsman by His incarnation. So we read, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same" (Hebrews 2:14). Being "made in the likeness of men" (Php 2:7), His humanity was sinless, He had no share in man's fallen nature, He was not at a distance from God as others were by nature. We must jealously guard against the thought that such things were associated with His manhood. But in all respects — sin excepted — He was a man. Thus He became our kinsman. But this of itself did not deliver. It is a fundamental error to say — as some have said — that in becoming man Christ linked Himself with our race, and thus elevated and dignified man as such. The Scriptures teach the reverse. Man's nature has not been elevated since the day of his fall, nor will it ever be. He murdered Christ. He can only enter God's Kingdom by being born again. The Lord became Kinsman in order that He might become Redeemer. He took flesh and blood in order that He might enter into man's responsibilities, and discharge them by death. By death redemption was secured. The redemption of His people and the redemption of His inheritance were both secured by the Cross. By death He also became the Avenger. He destroyed the power of Satan, He bruised the serpent's head, and, in virtue of His triumph over the enemy there, His people shall yet, in a day to come, see Satan bruised beneath their feet also (Romans 16:20).

These three aspects of the work of Christ are all given in Hebrews 2:14-15. Redemption by blood is past at the Cross: it never will be repeated; but redemption by power will go on until all that Christ has purchased shall be possessed and restored to God.

Redemption from the Curse.

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us" (Galatians 3:13). The curse is the penalty of sin: it must have come upon us; but One was found who willingly died in our stead. Now all who believe are free. As we sing—

"Believing, we rejoice To see the curse removed;

We bless the Lamb with cheerful voice, And sing redeeming love."

Redeemed From All Iniquity.

"Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14). This is redemption from sin's power. The people of the Lord are a purchased and a purified people. They are redeemed from lawlessness and set apart to God, to be of service to Him and for Him among men. Not long ago, a Christian

farmer was showing me over his fields waving with yellow grain. Not many years before, that same ground was over-run with whin, and yielded nothing. It passed into other hands, and the new owner began at once to reclaim his possession. Skill and labour were brought to bear, on the wild, uncared-for soil; it was first "purified," then sown, and now it yields a good return to its owner. The redeemed on earth "are God's husbandry" (1 Corinthians 3:9). On them He is bestowing His grace, His discipline, and His care, with the object of having them a people zealous of good works, such as He has ordained for them to walk in (Ephesians 2:10).

Redemption of the Body.

There is a redemption yet to come. "Waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (Romans 8:23). The body has not yet been delivered from that condition into which the fall has brought it. It has changed owners (see 1 Corinthians 6:20), its members are no longer the weapons of sin, but now instruments of righteousness unto God (Romans 6:13). It is still "our vile body" (Php 3:21), and must either be "dissolved" — as it is in those who have fallen asleep — or "changed" — as it will be in those who are "alive and remain" unto the coming of the Lord. In both, the body shall be fashioned anew, "like unto His glorious body" (Php 3:21), in that day when redemptive power shall be put forth on the bodies of the saints. For this we wait.

Creation Redeemed.

There is also the "redemption of the purchased possession" (Ephesians 1:14). Creation has long been subject to the bondage of corruption. The ground has been under the curse for man's sake. It has long groaned and travailed in pain under its burden, but a day will come when it too shall be delivered and become a sharer of "glorious liberty of the children of God" (Romans 8:21). Then a new Heaven and a new earth, wherein righteousness dwells, shall shine forth, and all trace of sin and its fruit shall be done away. Everything in that new creation shall stand in the power of redemption, and not like the first creation, in the goodness of the creature. Thus God shall receive back unto Himself, through Christ and His redemption, the glory lost by sin, and fill His Heaven with a ransomed throng, who, looking on the Redeeming Lamb "in the midst of the throne," shall ascribe to Him the honour and the praise. "Thou art worthy ... for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood" (Revelation 5:9).

05 - Regeneration

Regeneration from Foundation Truths of the Gospel by John Ritchie

Regeneration, or the new birth, is the initial act of true Christian life. Apart from this, there is no Christianity according to God. Yet this vital and fundamental truth is sadly obscured in popular theology, and frittered away alike by rationalism and ritualism. Nevertheless, it abides as that great operation of Divine power by which fallen man is created anew "in the image of God," and brought from death in sin to life in Christ. There is in the Word of God the fullest, clearest testimony given to this great foundation truth. The doctrine was spoken of first by the Master Himself to Nicodemus, the Jewish ruler, in that midnight interview recorded in the third chapter of John's Gospel. Nicodemus was a religious as well as an educated man. He came to the Lord acknowledging Him as a Teacher sent from God, but in His reply the Lord would not acknowledge him as a subject of God's Kingdom. It was not education, but regeneration that Nicodemus needed. It was not reformation, but a new birth. Had the Lord acknowledged this teacher of Israel as a subject of the Kingdom, and proceeded to instruct him, he would have been flattered, but when the Lord struck at the root of the tree by saying "Ye must be born again," he was perplexed, and had to take his place as a sinner in the presence of the Saviour. The Necessity of Regeneration.

"Ye must be born again" (John 3:7). "Neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature" (Galatians 6:15). "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" (John 3:6), and can neither be improved nor got rid of. "The flesh profiteth nothing" (John 6:63); it is corrupt, unclean, and [not] subject to God (Romans 8:7). Man's nature -- not only his acts -- is contrary to God. He is part of a fallen race (Romans 5:12). "Born like a wild ass's colt" (Job 11:12). "As an unclean thing" (Isaiah 64:6). By nature a child of wrath (Ephesians 2:3). "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one" (Job 14:4). Not reformation, not religiousness, not morality. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). This is the great necessity.

Nothing short of a birth from Heaven meets man's need. Apart from this, man remains outside God's family and Kingdom, no matter what his knowledge or creed may be. The religion of unregenerate men is dead works. A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit; its production must be according to its nature. We do not expect to gather grapes from thistles, or to find roses on a nettle. No more can good works or holiness or the fruits of the Spirit be found on one whose nature is enmity against God. Man's religion may reform, but it cannot regenerate. Philanthropy may cleanse from outward vice, but it cannot renew. Reformation may change the current of the stream, but it cannot cleanse the source. The Nature of Regeneration.

What is this new birth? It is a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17); the workmanship of God (Ephesians 2:10). It is the germ of a new existence; the dawn of a new life. At regeneration a new nature is implanted (2 Peter 1:4); a new man is formed in the image of God (Ephesians 4:24, with Colossians 3:10). It is not the old improved, but the new begotten, leaving the born-again one a complex being, possessed of two natures, perfectly distinct, and entirely different in origin and

character. The result of this is incessant conflict (Galatians 5:17).

It is of the utmost importance to understand what regeneration really is. By some it is understood to mean a change of creed, with others a change of conduct, but in Scripture it means a re-creation, a heavenly birth, the beginning of a new life. In nature the sinner is "alienated from the life of God" (Ephesians 4:18); he is "dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1). At regeneration the believer becomes a possessor of Divine life, a partaker of the Divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). The old is still there, but sin is no longer the law of his being. He is able to say, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Galatians 2:20). Christ becomes the object of his soul; he is able henceforth to say, "For to me to live is Christ." The flesh is not eradicated, it is not changed, but it no longer reigns. Like Nebuchadnezzar, who was deposed from his throne and driven from his palace, but was yet permitted to live within the borders of that land over which he once held sway, so the flesh is in the believer, but not in dominion over him.

How Regeneration is Effected.

"Born of the Spirit" (John 3:8). "It is the spirit that quickeneth" (John 6:63). "The Spirit giveth life" (2 Corinthians 3:6). The "renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:5). The SPIRIT is the operator; the WORD is the instrument. "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth" (James 1:18). "Born again ... by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Peter 1:23).

"Not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man," that is, not by natural descent: such as baptismal regeneration would have it, "but of God" (John 1:13). Born of God, born of the Spirit, born by the Word of God. The believer is created anew, regenerated. He is not merely re-formed without, but, a new nature is implanted within. This is effected instrumentally through the Word. It is not by "Sacraments," or prayers, or what men may call the "means of grace." There is no value or virtue in these to regenerate a sinner. "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth," is the testimony of the Spirit. "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life," (John 5:24) are the words of the Lord Jesus. As of old, in the first creation, "He spake, and it was done," (Psalms 33:9) so it is in the new creation. "Thy word hath quickened me" (Psalms 119:50).

How the New Life is Received.

"Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:26). "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" (1 John 5:1). "Whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:15). It is not by prayer, or repentance, or penance, but by faith.

Faith receives God's testimony; faith believes God. The object of faith is Christ. It does not look within for evidences, it does not look without for signs: it looks to Christ and, looking, lives. As the serpent-bitten Israelite looked from himself and his wounds to the Divine remedy, the uplifted serpent on the pole, so the sinner looks from himself, from his sins and his religiousness alike, right away from sinful or righteous self, to Christ. He commits himself to Another, he casts himself on Christ. He receives God's testimony concerning His Son. He believes what the Word says about Christ, and then, instead of examining himself for evidences whether he has become God's child or not, he again receives the testimony of the Word, which says, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" (1 John 5:1). To seek assurance of this new birth by examining one's frame and feelings is no wiser than for a sailor to cast his anchor into the hold of his ship.

Good anchorage is to be found without. The foothold of faith is the eternal Word of the eternal God. This abideth for ever. The Fruits of Regeneration.

"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit [practice] sin" (1 John 3:9). "Ye have your fruit unto holiness (Romans 6:22). "In this the children of God are manifest" (1 John 3:10). The new life implanted at regeneration has for its present vessel "the mortal body" of the believer (2 Corinthians 4:10), and through the deeds of the body it is made manifest. The members, once the servants of sin, are henceforth to be controlled by the new life, and used as instruments of righteousness unto God.

"Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God" (1 John 3:10), no matter what he may profess. Of the believer, as of his Lord, the word will be fulfilled, "the life was manifested, and we have seen it." The Counterfeits of Regeneration.

Here then we have the testimony of God regarding this great foundation truth of the Gospel and of Christianity. "Baptismal regeneration" virtually denies all this. It says that regeneration takes place by passing an unconscious infant through a form for which there is neither Scripture command nor example, but which was first instituted by an apostate Church when it had given up the very fundamental doctrines of the Gospel and supplanted, God's Word by its own traditions. How any man can practise this deception of the devil and believe the Bible is a mystery. No less, how one, said to be regenerated by water in infancy and become "an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven," needs to be told in later years, "Ye must be born again." Is it any wonder that honest, thoughtful men, seeing the inconsistency of this prevailing sham, turn from it with disgust and abhorrence. Would to God that they would turn to the Word of Truth to seek their light and guidance in all things spiritual and eternal there, but, alas! infidelity receives its largest contribution of admirers from the ranks of those who were at one time camp followers in the ranks of traditional religion.

06 - Separation

Separation from Foundation Truths of the Gospel by John Ritchie

Separation is pre-eminently the work of God. To separate from sin and sinners is part of the purpose of God in sending forth His Gospel and His Word among men. In the ways of God, separation comes before unity. There must be a severance from what is opposed to God and His Word before there can be a unity according to the mind of God. God's way is to sever from Satan, from sin, from the world; then to unite to Christ and to Christ's. Faith reckons with God. The first great act of separation known by the sinner who believes the Gospel of God is Separation from Sins.

It was said concerning the promised Saviour, "thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). In keeping with this is the great Gospel charter as given in the words of inspiration in 1 Corinthians 15:3, "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." When the sinner believes the Gospel, he is able to take up the words of the song, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood" (Revelation 1:5). The penalty of sin is gone, but this is not all: the power of sin is broken. He is "loosed" from his sins. They no longer hold him captive. He is severed, cut off, separated from them, in the blood of the Lamb.

Separation from the World. The believer is also separated from the world. The world is the empire of Satan. He is the "prince of this world" (John 14:30); "the god of this world" (2 Corinthians 4:4). He is the ruler of the darkness of this world. Since the day that he goaded it on to Calvary, there to reject and crucify the Son of God, the world has been at variance with God. It has made its choice; it has cast off its allegiance to Heaven, and for this it is under judgment. For a time grace delays the execution of the sentence, until a people has been gathered out of it for Christ, but its doom is sure. Meanwhile it "lieth in wickedness" (1 John 5:19). All that is in it is "not of the Father" (1 John 2:16). This makes separation from it a necessity. As of old, when the Lord said— "Let there be light," and light was, He next "divided the light from the darkness" (Genesis 1:3,4); so, when God creates anew, when He speaks the life-giving Word which brings the sinner out of death into life, He next delivers the saved one — His own workmanship, as the light was of old — from that which is opposed to it. Saints are "children of the light"; they are "light in the Lord." Sinners are "darkness," and they abide under the power of darkness, in the kingdom of Satan (see Ephesians 5:8; Colossians 1:13).

Therefore, there must be a separation, for "what communion hath light with darkness?" This separation is the will and work of God. In His intercessory prayer, the Lord Jesus speaks to the Father of "the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world" (John 17:6). By the Cross of Christ, the believer is crucified to the world (Galatians 6:14) and all its belongings. He is "not of the world," even as Christ is not of the world. The measure of the Lord's separation is the measure of ours, for "as He is, so are we in this world" (1 John 4:17). As the Red Sea rolled between the people of Israel and Egypt, separating them from their old associations, their old occupations, and their old

religion, so the Cross of Christ stands between the believer and the world. His separation from it, so far as the purpose of God and the work of Christ are concerned, is complete. But there is to be a practical response to all this; a manifest separation of the "born again" one from the unconverted. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Corinthians 6:14); "Be not conformed to this world"; "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness" (Ephesians 5:11), are the plain commandments of the Lord to His people today. They are not to be frittered away; they mean exactly what they say. To go "hand and glove" with the world is to go against God. "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God. Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4). This is plain enough. There need be no mistake about it. Yet, strange to say, God's people are to be found in almost every circle of worldliness, social, political, commercial, and religious, unequally yoked with the ungodly, sharing their amusements, enjoyments, and pursuits, virtually saying, as Jehosaphat did to Ahab, the ungodly king of old, "I am as thou art." What a stumbling-block such people are to the world! What a dishonour to God, and what a disgrace to Christ and Christianity! The devil hates separation; he seeks by force and guile to oppose it at every step, as Pharaoh sought first by persecution, and next by concessions, to hinder the complete separation of Israel from Egypt, and thus blight their testimony as the people of Jehovah. Moses, with the claims of Jehovah in his heart and in his hand, yielding nothing, claiming everything for God, and demanding that every "hoof" shall cross the Red Sea into the wilderness, the place of separation, is here the type of the believer who has learned God's claims, and will allow nothing to hinder full obedience to all that He has commanded.

Separation from False Professors. Not only does the Lord command His people to be separate from the world, but from all who bear the Christian name, whose words and ways and works too plainly tell that they are professors but not possessors of Christ. "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." (2 Timothy 3:5). Under the name of Christianity darker deeds are done than in heathendom. Under the shelter of a Christian profession almost every form of vice and scandal has been perpetrated. It is no guarantee that a man is born of God that he says, "Our Father which art in Heaven," and speaks of Jesus as his Saviour and Lord. "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" was the word of Christ during His ministry to mere professors, and since then their numbers have enormously increased. It is respectable now to be called a Christian. There is no cross in being a member of the world's churches. The people who go to worship go to dance, and it would be easy to find those who had been at what they call "the Lord's Table" on Sunday around the drunkard's cup or in the gambler's den on Monday. The Christian, the truly born again one, is called to be separate from all this abominable iniquity, on which the judgment of God must shortly fall. His place is to go forth "without the camp" to Christ, "bearing His reproach" (Hebrews 13:12-13), and have no fellowship, no companionship, no intercourse, with those who are the "enemies of the Cross of Christ."

Separation from Holders of Evil Doctrine. The commandments of the Lord concerning the entire separation of His people from such as hold and teach erroneous doctrine, subversive of the truth of God, are often neglected or lightly esteemed. Evil practice is often an open shame, and for their own sakes believers are not apt to associate with the drunkard or the unclean, even if they once bore the Christian name. But among those who hold and teach erroneous doctrine, overthrowing the faith of God's people (2 Timothy 2:18), many are personally very amiable and lovable persons.

That is just where their power for evil lies, and God, who knows them and the leavening character of their words and devices, commands His people to be separate from them (see 1 Timothy 6:5; 2 Timothy 2:16-17). If such a person comes to their house, they are not to receive him or bid him "God speed," because to "greet him" would be, in the reckoning of God, to become "partaker in his evil deeds" (2 John 1:10-11). Hence the need of separation. In a day of increasing corruptness and departure from the faith, it becomes the people of God to ponder this solemn message of the Lord, and not allow their fleshly love of acquaintance, or kindred, to hinder them from yielding to God that full obedience which He seeks in His people, in their absolute separation from men, whatever their gifts or graces, who preach and teach that which is subversive of the faith and opposed to the truth of God.

Separation from Ecclesiastical Evil. Not the least in importance — yet, alas! one of the last to be regarded — is the Lord's call to His people who are found in unholy associations, and alliances to "come out from among them, and be ye separate" (2 Corinthians 6:17). This applies very specially to religious associations and church fellowships, where the ungodly are admitted, and where doctrines and practices are tolerated and defended which are opposed to God and His Word (see 2 Timothy 2:18-21). Any circle in which the Word of God is disregarded, its authority set aside, and its power to deal with evils and evil doers rendered inoperative, is clearly no place for one who fears God and desires to obey Christ as Lord. At whatever cost, he must be separate from all that would hinder him from yielding himself up to God as His servant, and from obeying all that the Lord has commanded.

Practical Separation unto God.

Like any other truth of Holy Scripture, this truth of separation may be held and spoken of in theory, apart from the living manifestation of it in the life and ways. To make much of separation from evil doctrine and ecclesiastical evil, and yet to live in other forms of worldliness, is virtually to deny in the life what is taught by the lips. The truly separated one will live as becometh a "saint" at all times and in all circles. His person, his dress, his walk, his home, his business, will all bear the stamp of practical holiness or separation to God.

07 - Salvation

Salvation from Foundation Truths of the Gospel by John Ritchie The salvation of God is threefold — past, present, and future. The following Scriptures give the testimony of God on this great subject in various aspects:

Salvation: Past

Romans 1:16. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Acts 28:28. Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.

Acts 16:31. And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

Romans 10:10. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Mark 16:16. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

John 10:9. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

Isaiah 45:22. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.

Luke 7:50. And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.

1 Corinthians 1:18. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

1 Corinthians 15:2. By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

2 Timothy 1:9. 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.

Titus 3:5. Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.

Salvation: Present

Hebrews 7:25. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

Romans 5:9. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

James 1:21. Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

1 Timothy 4:6. If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.

Proverbs 20:22. Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the LORD, and he shall save thee.

Psalms 119:94. I am thine, save me; for I have sought thy precepts.

Psalms 37:39. But the salvation of the righteous is of the LORD: he is their strength in the time of trouble.

Php 2:12. Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

1 Peter 2:2. As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.

Salvation: Future

Romans 13:11. And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

Hebrews 9:28. So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

Php 3:20. For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Thessalonians 5:8. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

"He that is our God is the God of salvation" (Psalms 68:20). "The salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles" (Acts 28:28) in this day of Gospel grace.

"Salvation is of the LORD" (Jonah 2:9). The work of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Originated by God the Father, wrought out through Christ the Son, applied by the Holy Spirit. To Jesus, and to Him alone, has the name of "Saviour" been given. "Neither is there salvation in any other" (Acts 4:12).

Man in Need of a Saviour.

Man by nature is lost to God. He is "without strength" (Romans 5:6); he cannot save himself. Neither religion nor philanthropy can save him. The Church has no power to save; neither priest nor parson can bring the sinner nigh to God. It cannot be done by works, or prayers, or penance. "Salvation belongeth unto the LORD" (Psalms 3:8). "Beside Me there is no Saviour" (Isaiah 43:11).

Man as a sinner has no claim upon God: he is under condemnation, ready to perish. Righteousness can only seal his sentence: if salvation comes to him, it must be by grace.

Salvation by Grace Alone.

"The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (Titus 2:11). "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Yet that grace flows through righteousness (Romans 5:21). God has not ignored His own justice, or set aside His own righteousness, in saving lost and guilty sinners. The Cross of Christ is the witness of God's justice as well as the expression of His love. Love gave the Son; righteousness demanded that He should die. That death has opened a way whereby grace can go forth to the sinner and deal with him. Hence the death of Jesus Christ is always mentioned as the procuring cause of man's salvation: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Timothy 1:15). "The Son of Man is come to save that which was lost" (Matthew 18:11). The Gospel of Salvation. The "glad tidings" sent from God among "all nations" (Romans 16:26) and to "every creature" (Mark 16:15) is the Gospel of a present salvation (Ephesians 1:13) and "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Romans 1:16). There is no restriction. God has provided salvation for all men, yet only such as welcome the message will be saved. The alternative is damnation. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). The Way of Salvation. The damsel at Philippi said concerning Paul and Silas, "These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation" (Acts 16:17). There are no diverse ways: God has one way, and that way is so plain that he may run that readeth. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31), was the Divine reply to the anxious sinner's question, "What must I do to be saved?" It remains the same. To look to Christ is to be saved (Isaiah 45:22). To enter in by Him, the only door, is to be a possessor of salvation (John 10:9). There is no other way to God: all other ways lead to hell. The Salvation which is Past. The believer can look back to the day and hour when by faith he laid hold of Jesus as his personal Saviour, as the time of his salvation. "Who hath saved us" (2 Timothy 1:8-9), "Which are saved" (1 Corinthians 1:18) are God's words concerning believers. They are not hoping, or waiting, or praying to be saved. They have the "knowledge of salvation" (Luke 1:77) by believing the Word of God: assurance comes by believing God, the joy of salvation follows (Isaiah 12:2-3). The Salvation which is Present.

"He is able also to save them to the uttermost" (or to the very end) "that come unto God by Him" (Hebrews 7:25). "Much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Romans 5:10). This salvation goes on from day to day. It is carried on by the Lord Jesus in resurrection, as our Advocate (1 John 2:2) and High Priest (Hebrews 4:15-16) at God's right hand. He saveth those who trust in Him (Psalms 37:40), who wait on Him (Proverbs 20:22). There are snares and sins and temptations which the believer has to meet as he passes along the heavenward way from which he needs a daily Saviour, and that Saviour he has in the Risen Christ at God's right hand. Instrumentally, it comes to him through the Word as at first. Hence we read, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Peter 2:2). By receiving and abiding in the Word of God the believer is saved from evil doctrine and backsliding (1 Timothy 4:6; James 1:21). Many of the prayers of Scripture, notably in the Psalms, refer to this present aspect

of salvation, and not, as they are often applied, to the salvation of the sinner. For example, "I am Thine, save me" (Psalms 119:94). "Save us, O God of our salvation" (1 Chronicles 16:35). In this connection believers are exhorted. "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you" (Php 2:12-13). The Salvation which is Future.

"Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" (Romans 13:11). "We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus" (Php 3:20). "He shall appear the second time without sin, unto salvation" (Hebrews 9:28). Salvation is here viewed in its future aspect, when, at the coming of the Lord from Heaven, believers on earth who are "alive and remain," together with those that sleep in Jesus, shall be glorified together with Christ, and thus in spirit, soul, and body, shall become sharers of the salvation of the Lord. Looking forward to that day we are "saved by hope" (Romans 8:24), and the helmet worn upon our heads, enabling us to look the enemy and accuser full in the face, is "the hope of salvation" (1 Thessalonians 5:8). Not that vague, uncertain hope cherished by the formalist and the hypocrite, that one day somehow hell will be escaped and Heaven gained, but the abounding hope (Romans 15:4) of those who already rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, and who are able triumphantly to sing, "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid" (Isaiah 12:2). "The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?" (Psalms 27:1).

Believers are therefore able to say — we are saved: we are being saved: we shall be saved. Their salvation from sin's penalty is PAST. Salvation from sin's power is PRESENT. Salvation from sin's presence is FUTURE. By the death of Jesus on the Cross sin's penalty has been borne; by His life upon the throne its power has been broken; and soon by His return its presence, so far as the believer is concerned, will be gone.

Glorious salvation of the Lord, purchased at infinite cost! Well may he sing with heart and voice, "I will joy in the God of my salvation" (Habakkuk 3:18). To the unbeliever the solemn question comes, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" (Hebrews 2:3).

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