

Salvation, the Objective in Evangelism

by Lewis Sperry Chafer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding the central truth of the Word of God, which is the Gospel of Christ, and the significance of the substitutionary death of Christ in salvation.

Scripture: John 3:3, Romans 8:34, 1 Corinthians 12:13, Ephesians 5:18, Colossians 1:27, 1 John 2:1

Topics: "Salvation Theology", "Evangelism Methods"

Description

Lewis Sperry Chafer preaches about the comprehensive nature of salvation, which goes beyond just forgiveness of sins to include deliverance from the power of sin and the transformation of believers into the image of Christ. He emphasizes the importance of understanding the various aspects of salvation, such as justification, sanctification, and redemption, all of which are accomplished by the Triune God for those who believe. Chafer highlights the hindrances to evangelism caused by ignorance of the central truths of the Word of God and the promotion of 'another gospel' by religious leaders. He stresses the need for believers to fully yield themselves to the saving power of God and to depend on His strength for victory over sin and holy living.

Transcript

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. 4:3, 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 today; 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 today, 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. 1:17, 18).

In 1 Cor. 1:30, 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 threefold 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 expectation 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. 1:6).

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. 1:7: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according 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. 1:5, 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. 53:5, 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" (1 John 2:2), and "that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9), 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 7:19 it is said of Israel: "And thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea"; so also, in Psa. 103:12: "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. 10:17). 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. 43:25). "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. 44:22). "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 3:19).

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. 2:13-14: "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. 64:6). "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. 61:10). "Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joy" (Psa. 132:9). The passage, "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord make coats of skins, and clothed them" (Gen. 3:21), 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. 3:21, 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. 4:1-6). "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. 10:3, 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. 3:8, 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. 19:8). "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God was made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:30, 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. 5:21).

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. 10:4). 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 3:3). "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 6:53). "Because strait is the gate, and narrow the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matt. 7:14).

(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 me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24). "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36). "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).

While eternal life is a present possession of the believer and now secure (John 5:24; 10:28), it is, like salvation, referred to a few times in its future aspect: "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee the crown of life" (Rev. 2:10). "But godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. 4:8).

(c) Eternal life is from Christ. "In him was life; and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4). "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). "But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses" (Acts 3:14, 15). "This is the record, that God hath given unto us eternal life, and the life is in his Son" (1 John 5:11).

(d) Eternal life is the indwelling Christ (also spoken of as a divine nature 2 Pet. 1:4; and the "new man," Col. 3:10). "Then Jesus said unto them, 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. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me" (John 6:53-57). "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27). "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory" (Col. 3:4). "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (2 Cor. 13:5). "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body" (2 Cor. 4:10).

(e) Eternal life is conditioned on faith in Christ as Saviour. "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:31). "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12, 13). "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).

Thus regeneration is set forth in the Scriptures as a most important part of the work of salvation; and since all its aspects are foreign to the things of this world, it is wholly omitted from other religious systems; and since it is the only gateway through which a soul can be delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son (Col. 1:13), it, too, is carefully omitted from the creeds of Satan, and from the teachings of his apostles (2 Cor. 11:13-15). Yet, if this revelation is rejected, what other interpretation can be given to this great body of truth! Or what other dynamic can be substituted that will enable the soul to rise to the present and future estate of the Christian, as that estate is described in the Word of God?

IV. -- The Gift of the Spirit. The God-honoring quality of life in the believer has suffered untold failure through the almost universal confusion and neglect of the truth in regard to the work of the Spirit in and through the believer. This misunderstanding begins even with that part of the Spirit's work in which He prepares a soul for salvation.

In the relation of the Spirit to the believer it is, perhaps, most important to recognize that the Spirit takes up His permanent abode in the believer at the moment he is saved. Receiving the Spirit is not, then, a "second blessing" bestowed upon especially consecrated Christians in answer to believing prayer; for, since the Day of Pentecost, and since the Gospel was given to the Gentiles as recorded in Acts 10, the Spirit has taken His place in the believer at the moment he has passed from death unto life.

In this connection it need only be remembered that in Rom. 5:1-11, where some immediate results of justification by faith are enumerated, it is stated in the fifth verse that "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us." Also Paul, while correcting the Corinthian Christians for unmentionable sins, based his whole appeal to them on the fact that they were the temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19). So, also, in Rom. 8:9: "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." And Gal. 4:6: "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (see also, John 7:37; 1 Cor. 2:12; 1 John 3:24; 4:13. When rightly understood, Acts 5:34; 8:15-17; 19:1-6, furnish no exception to this positive teaching of God's Word).

It is possible and necessary to be "filled with the Spirit" anew for every time of need (Eph. 5:18); but that should never be confused with receiving the Spirit, which is one of the aspects of the first tense of salvation.

By this new relation to the Spirit, the believer becomes enabled at once to meet all the demands of his new life; both as to its victory over the "old man" with the desires and habits of the flesh, and as to the new undertakings for God of the "new man" in all holy living and service which are so infinitely beyond human power and might. The fact that he comes instantly into possession of sufficient power by the Spirit to live wholly unto God is in marked contrast to the world's ideal of "character-building" which demands years of painful defeat and failure. The believer has but to learn to yield himself wholly to the power of the

indwelling Spirit to find that he is delivered from all the "works of the flesh" which are these: "Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like"; and in the place of these, the Spirit Who indwells the believer will bear in him "the fruit of the Spirit"; which is "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. 5:19-24).

Thus the believer, having received the Spirit at the moment he was saved, and being wholly yielded to Him, is enabled from that moment to realize victory over the "old nature," the flesh, and his enemy, Satan. He is able, also, to experience a holy life in fellowship with God; and to find his individual gift of the Spirit for service (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-31); and while there is much sanctifying and teaching work of the Spirit yet to be accomplished in him he may, from the first, fill to the full all the present will of God for him. (An extended discussion of the work of the Spirit in and through the believer will be found in the author's book, "He that is Spiritual.")

V. -- The Baptism of the Spirit. Any understanding of this aspect of salvation must depend, in a large measure, upon a clear conception of the various meanings of the word "church" as it is used in the Bible. While that word often refers to a local organization of professing Christians, the word is more often used to designate the whole company of regenerate people who have been, or will be saved during this age of grace. This body of people, or organism, is the true church, -- "the church which is his body." It is sometimes mentioned directly, and sometimes in types and figures, which suggest the perfect union which exists between Christ and the believers, and between believers themselves. The Shepherd and the sheep (John 10); the Vine and the branches (John 15); the Corner Stone and all the stones of the building (Eph. 2:19-22); the Bridegroom and the bride (Eph. 5:29; 2 Cor. 11:2; Rev. 6:9, with many Old Testament types); the "High Priest" and the "kingdom of priests"; the "Last Adam" and the "new generation"; the Living Head and the one body with its many members (1 Cor. 12:12-31; Eph. 1:22, 23, etc.). The gathering out of this company is the purpose of the present age (Acts 15:13-18); for they are the heavenly people whose purpose and glory will be manifest in all the ages to come.

It is into this body of glorious, heavenly people that the believer is organically placed by the baptism of the Spirit at the moment he is saved. This baptism, by which he is united to his Lord and to his fellow-members in the same body, surpasses all human understanding, and is a union that is closer than any human relationship. The husband and wife are, in the purpose of God, "one flesh"; while it is said of this mystic union of the church with its "Living Head" that they are "one spirit": "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:13). "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit" (1 Cor. 6:17).

So great a relationship must produce some personal experience in the believer, even though this doctrine is wholly unknown by him; hence the test is given for all professing Christians, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother [Christian] abideth in death" (1 John 3:14).

The believer's union in the body, as has been stated, is perfect and complete from the very beginning of his saved life; and, while it imposes no demands in personal service beyond his individual responsibility as a believer, it opens before him the blessed certainty of going with that body to meet the Lord when He comes to receive His own (1 Thes. 4:13-19); and to be of the bride, in the bosom of the Bridegroom, in the palace of the King.

VI. -- The Christian Priest. The believer is also constituted a priest unto God when he enters the saved life; he is one of the whole company of priests which is the true church; and he has access, through the blood of the cross, into the holiest place, where Christ, the High Priest, is now entered in. The believer, as a priest in the holiest place, is privileged, like the priest of old, to offer his sacrifice and praise unto God, and to intercede before God for his fellow-men (see 1 Pet. 2:5, 9).

VII. -- The Intercession and Advocacy of Christ. Three times over in the Epistles it is recorded that Jesus now lives to make intercession for believers (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25; 9:24). In addition to this, Christ said in His High Priestly prayer: "I pray for them, I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine" (John 17:9). Thus the unregenerate, when they believe, come instantly into the place of privilege wherein Jesus becomes their Intercessor. This is a vital factor in the safety and security of the one who is resting in Christ by faith; for it is in connection with their keeping that these references to the intercession of Jesus occur. Following the questions, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" and "Who is he that condemneth?" is the assuring answer: "It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Rom. 8:33, 34). And again: "Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost [evermore] that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25).

Thus Christ, as Intercessor, stands between the weakness and helplessness of the saint and the whole requirement of God.

As Advocate, He meets the transgressions and failure of the believer, on the ground of His all-sufficient sacrifice for sin. It is written: "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." (1 John 2:1, 2). So, to the believer, it is said: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). With the Advocate pleading His own sufficient atonement for the sins of the saved one, the removal of transgression is no longer of present mercy; for God is said to be "faithful and just to forgive us our sins."

Thus Christ has become both the Intercessor and Advocate for the believer; providing him with all cleansing from the defilement of sin and becoming his assurance of security, in spite of his weakness and unworthiness; and all this from the moment he comes "unto God by him." (A fuller treatment of the revealed truth concerning that which enters into the saving grace of God will be found in the author's book, "Salvation.")

Any attempt to describe this salvation must prove inadequate; for the half has never been told of the riches of grace in Christ Jesus. Yet enough has been stated to show that the first work in salvation, which is offered to the unregenerate on the grounds of the merit and sacrifice of Christ, is a stupendous and instantaneous transformation of the whole estate of man from the power of darkness and the condemnation of sin, into the glorious light, liberty and security of the sons of God. It is the unmeasured power, wisdom and love of God working, at His own infinite cost, to create a new humanity, redeemed and heavenly in being. Before such an objective the humanitarian substitutes, offered by Satan or man, become as nothing.

This salvation is in no way the product of human thought or invention: but it has rather "appeared" as a "revelation" from God to man (Tit. 3:4, and Gal. 1:11, 12). The awe-inspiring words, "scholars have agreed" is the final evidence offered in defense of other so-called "gospels" of today: but of the one true

Gospel of Grace it may be said "all Scripture has agreed," for it is the central message of the Bible from its beginning to its end.

This great salvation is offered to man as a perfect whole and therefore cannot be divided; for there are no divine provisions whereby any portion of this mighty work can be accepted apart from the whole. He who would accept the forgiveness of sin, or a place with the redeemed in glory, can do so only as he accepts the Lord Christ; and with Him, all that God in His infinite love would bestow. And when he is thus saved he will but little comprehend the extent of that redeeming work; yet his limited understanding, while it may deprive him of much joy and blessing, does not change one fact of his new and glorious estate.

Lost men are saved when they believe the offer of this salvation. Salvation is not conditioned upon prayer, repentance, reformation, profession, or "seeking the Lord." Israel sought the Lord while He might be found (Isa. 55:6); but no Gentile "seeketh after God" (Rom. 3:11). "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

It is also clear that the transcendent undertaking of salvation is wholly a work of God, since its every phase depends upon a power that surpasses the whole range of human strength. Because of this, the condition of salvation is reasonable, which demands only an attitude of expectation toward God through Christ. In preparation for this, the blinded and self-sufficient person must not only be so wrought upon that he will want to be saved; but he must see his utter helplessness apart from the power of God and the sacrifice of the cross, and this, in spite of the blinding and opposition of Satan who energizes him (Eph. 2:2).

Who is sufficient for these things? Surely not the eloquent preacher or the pleading evangelist! God alone is sufficient; and He has fully provided for the necessary preparation of mind and heart in the all-important conviction by the Spirit.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/lewis-sperry-chafer/salvation-the-objective-in-evangelism/>

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