

## A CONSTANT SALVATION

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A clipper ship crossing the Banks of Newfoundland in heavy weather strikes an iceberg. She settles rapidly at the bow, and her captain and crew have barely time to leap into the life-boat. The question, "What must we do to be saved?" is answered by their prompt leap into the life-boat, which is an act of faith. They trust their lives to it for salvation. From immediate death they are saved.

But, after the ship has sunk, the crew are still out in the deep and dangerous sea. There is a second process necessary. In order to keep out of the trough of the sea and to reach the distant shore, they must stick to the boat and pull lustily at the oars. They must "work out their salvation" now by hard rowing. But this is a continued process of salvation day after day until they reach the shores of Nova Scotia. Never for a moment, however, are they independent of the life-boat. That must keep them afloat, or they go to the bottom. At last, after hard rowing, they reach the welcome shore. This is their third, final, and complete salvation, for they are entirely beyond any perils of the treacherous sea. Now they are at rest, for they have reached the desired haven.

This homely parable will illustrate with sufficient clearness the three ways in which the word salvation is employed in God's Word and in human experience. The first leap into the life-boat illustrates that decisive act of the soul in quitting all other worthless reliances and throwing itself on Christ Jesus in simple, believing trust. This is conversion. By it the soul is delivered from the guilt and condemnation of sin.

The Holy Spirit is active in this step, cleansing and renewing the heart. By this act of surrender to Christ the sinner escapes from death into life. He may joyfully cry out, "By the grace of God I am saved!"

Yet this converted believer is no more independent of Christ as a Saviour than those sailors were of that life-boat; for until he reaches the consummated deliverance of heaven (which is what the word "salvation" signifies in Psalm xci. 16) he must be clinging to Christ Jesus every day. And it is this daily and hourly salvation that we wish to emphasize at present. Too many people limit the word to the initial step of converting faith, and falsely conclude that nothing more is to be done. A certain school of rather mystical Christians so magnify this act of receiving the "gift of eternal life" in Christ that they quite forget the fact that a vast deal of head winds, hard rowing, conflict with the devil and remaining lusts must be encountered.

There is a very important sense in which every true servant of Christ is obliged to "work out his salvation" every day of his life, if he lives a century. It was not to impenitent sinners or to anxious inquirers that Paul addressed the famous injunction, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;" he was addressing the blood-bought church at Philippi. And if he were alive today he might well ring these solemn words into the ears of every Christian in the land. For if our original deliverance from the condemnation of sin and from the desert of hell depended on our surrender to Christ, so our constant salvation from the assaults of sin depends upon our constant clinging to the Saviour and our constant obedi-

ence to His commandments. Faith without works is dead. Brethren, we may be in the life-boat, but the life-boat is not heaven. There is many a hard tug at the oar, many a night of tempest, many a danger from false lights, and many a scud under bare poles (with pride's "top-hammer" all gone), before we reach the shining shore. To the last moment on earth our salvation depends on complete submission to Jesus. Without Him, nothing; with Him, all things.

Please bear in mind that salvation signifies simply the process of saving. Our Blessed Master means to save us and our lives for Himself, if we will let Him do it and will honestly co-operate with Him. Yonder is an acre of weeds which its owner wishes to save from barrenness to fruitfulness; so he subjugates it with plough and harrow and all the processes of cultivation. If the soil should cry out against the ploughshare and the harrow and the hoe, the farmer's answer would be, "Only by submission to this discipline can I rear the golden crop which shall be to your credit and to my glory." In like manner, by absolute submission to Christ's will, by constant obedience to His pure commandments, by the readiness to be used by Him entirely for His own purposes can you or I be saved to life's highest end. The instant that I realize entirely that I am Christ's, I must also realize that my time must be saved from waste for Him and my influence must be consecrated to Him. All accumulation is by wise saving. Sin means waste, and ends in ruin and remorse. The honest, devoted Christian is literally "working out his salvation" when he is daily striving to redeem his time, and employ his utmost capacity, and use his every opportunity to make his life a beautiful offering and possession for his Lord. If we were not worth saving, our Lord would never have tasted the bitter agonies of Golgotha to redeem us. If every saved follower is by and by to be presented by Christ "faultless, with exceeding joy," then is a Christian life a jewel worthy of His diadem. Of my soul, let Him work in me to will and to do according to His good pleasure, if I can be made to yield this revenue of honor to my beloved Lord!

There is another sense in which Christ furnishes us a constant salvation. His presence saves me in the hour of strong temptation. He keeps me from falling in a thousand cases where I do not directly recognize His hand. When I wake up in the morning, after a night ride in a Pullman car, I do not know how many human hands have been busy in order that I might ride safely through the pitch darkness; and when I get to heaven, perhaps I may find out how often Jesus interposed to save me from threatened ruin and from unsuspected dangers. He was saving me in a hundred ways that I did not dream of, and the visible acknowledged deliverances were all due to Him. Daily grace means a daily salvation. Paul lived thus in constant dependence, realizing that if Christ withdrew His arm he must sink in an instant. Not for one moment can I dispense with the life-boat until my foot stands where "there is no more sea."

If these things be true, then we ought ever to be praying: "O Lord, what must I do now to be saved? To be saved from waste of time; to be saved from dishonoring Thee; to be saved from secret sin; and to be saved up to the fullest, richest, holiest service of Thyself?" He can help us to accomplish all this, for His

grace can bring us a full salvation. When we reach heaven, we shall no longer need to be saved. The voyage will be over, the dangers ended; the multitudes who have been saved will then walk in the light of the New Jerusalem, and cast their crowns at the feet of Him who purchased for us so ineffably glorious and transcendent a SALVATION.

## OF JUDGMENT, AND OF MIGHT

Micah 3:8.

"Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" We stand before Jordan today and wave our wands but the waters do not divide. The reason is not hard to find. Few there be of Elisha's sort who will not be stopped at Gilgal or Jericho but who press on for the double portion.

The men whom God has blessed with His Spirit in unusual power through the ages have been men in such dead earnest that they would not let the good keep them from the best. They craved a deeper fellowship with God, and found it through prevailing prayer, while the rest, like the sons of the prophets at Bethel and Jericho, stood by the roadside and watched them go by.

Call it what you will, there is a waiting before God that we hurried, modern mortals do not know, that sends a man back to his task with the hand of God upon him in such a fashion that the waters of Jordan part before him.

It is not that God puts a premium on fasting, and night-long prayers and tears, and austerities of the flesh. But He does reward burning desire for His very best that leaves no stone unturned and follows Elijah across Jordan while others merely watch him go by.

Our Lord Himself lived perfectly in the will of God yet He found it necessary to spend nights in prayer. And shall we poor failing mortals casually snatch from heaven the power that others gained only by fervent and importunate intercession? It is true that our Father in heaven giveth and upbraideth not, but He keeps His choicest blessings for those who really press through, and who will not stop at the Gilgal of a mild, average experience.—Vance Havner.

## THE ETERNAL WEIGHT OF GLORY

The attar of rose comes only from  
The crushing of the flower.  
The broken wing brings forth the  
sweetest song  
Heard from the garden bower.

The metal on the anvil bends to shape  
From heat and hammer blow.  
The gold reflects the great Refiner's face  
From lengthened furnace glow.

The crushing of a hope, a bruised wing,  
A beaten pride, a fiery trial bring  
"The perfecting of saints" who now can  
sing,  
"In God alone is strength; to him I cling."  
—Sadie Louise Miller

## OH LORD

Drop thy still dews of quietness, till all our strivings cease; take from our souls the strain and stress, and let our ordered lives confess the beauty of thy peace.—Whittier.