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Doctrine and Duty.

[FOR THE CHRISTIAN OBSERVER.]

THE SALVATION OF THE GOSPEL.

What thoughts and associations crowd around that one word, SALVATION. To a race "sold under sin," and exposed to the fearful penalty of God's law, it is like life from the dead. It opens up new avenues of hope to the guilty, and dispenses the dark cloud that sin had thrown between man and the light of his Maker's countenance. The salvation which is in Christ, is comprehensive and complete; it extends to soul and body; to time and to eternity. It is deliverance from sin and sin's consequences.

It is an erroneous and dangerous view of the salvation of Christ, which regards it as mere salvation from the penalty of God's broken law. There is no such salvation provided. The salvation of the gospel is not intended to shield the corruptions of the depraved heart, and to confer on a given class the right of sinning with impunity; but on the contrary is designed to bring men out from sin; to save them from its dominion, its cruel tyranny, and consequently from its ultimate sequents. It cancels past sin; makes the soul loathe and hate its every impulse and manifestation; and purifying it in all its powers, prepares it for endless happiness in the presence of the Redeemer. Not only are the claims of the law met, and justice satisfied on the behalf of the believer, but by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, he becomes conformed to the image of him who "was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification."

The glory of this salvation is seen and felt by the soul in time, or never. The eyes of the understanding being opened, the true moral condition of the spirit is rendered apparent. All its corruption and hatred of holiness, and want of love to God, detected; all its essential weakness exposed, and its utter inadequacy to atone for one of its numerous sins, fully appreciated. Formerly the sinner deemed himself alive, but now he is slain: the law which was once his boasted guide and sheet anchor, has arisen in its awful purity, and uncompromising demands, and become his execu-

tioner. He once regarded every faithful portrait of an unrenewed heart as an overstrained picture, a mere oratorical creation: the legitimate offspring of an enthusiastic or fanatical mind. Or if true in relation to any of the human family, it could only apply to the openly degraded, and the notoriously vile. But the sinner's own heart, was, in his own estimation, far removed from the deep and prevailing degradation, which the Bible affirms to be the invariable condition of every unrenewed son of Adam. He might indeed disregard the commands of God, and treat divine councils and cautions, as he treated the idle wind; he might reject Christ, and in his pride of heart feel no need of his cleansing blood; his home might be in the world, and not in the church; his companions those that loved not the Lord, nor thought upon his name; and instead of living for Christ he might live for self; yet in all this array of evidence, he discovered nothing that did not fully harmonize with his views of moral soundness. He was just towards his fellow men; he was willing, nay anxious, to see Christianity spread, and even perhaps attended to some of the external forms of devotion which the gospel enjoins; and he could not believe that his whole head was sick, and his whole heart faint; that *he* was a child of wrath even as others. On the contrary, he needed but a slight change to render him fit for heaven, and for the holiest society in the universe. But O how changed is such an one when everlasting truth breaks in upon the natural darkness of the heart, and exhibits his astonished gaze, his sad, helpless, and hopeless condition. He sees now his need of just such a salvation as the gospel offers.

One of the first results of the gospel when it is cordially embraced, is the disabusing of the mind of the fearful delusion so common amongst unrenewed souls, that there yet remains some moral soundness in man. The believer clearly perceives that all his past sinfulness, all his indifference to everlasting things, all his love to the world, and all his rejection of offered mercy through Christ, grew out of the total corruption of his nature. And with what wonder does the renewed soul look back upon all its past course; how hazardous, how unholy, how worse than mad does it now appear. Whereas once he was blind, now he sees, and he joys to think that Jesus has saved

him from his sins. And forgetting frequently the inveterate character of that blindness in which he so long existed, he is amazed that others do not perceive the beauty that there is in Christ, as clearly as he now does. Ah! this is a work of grace; it is the beginning of that salvation to which God has appointed his people. The believers' deadness to the world; their love of holiness, their hatred of sin, their joy in the service of God, and their peace in believing, constitute only the beginning of this glorious salvation, but who can imagine its full fruition? If surrounded by the manifestations of sin, and in a world of perplexities and cares, the people of God are carried above their race, and made to rejoice, what must be their condition in eternity? If the sweet calm peace of the gospel transports the soul above the buffetings of earth, what will be its effect when those buffetings cease. If salvation is so elevating to the soul now, what will it be in heaven? If looking to Christ by an eye of faith the whole spirit of the believer is stirred by an unworldly emotion of joy, what will be its rapture when it sees him as he is, in all his august loveliness and glory, and is permitted to dwell in his presence for ever and ever.

But the salvation of the gospel reaches to the entire man, the body as well as the soul. Had not Christ died to magnify the law and make it honourable, the whole human race would have met the entire penalty of the law; and had that penalty been literally carried out, the soul and body would have remained eternally under the dominion of sin. But Christ came to save his people from their sins; he exhausted the penalty of the law; and were he to leave the body still under the power of sin, it would prove that he merely redeemed the soul from the curse of the law; that he removed a *part*, but not the *whole* of the curse. But we are assured that the mortal body, sown in corruption, weakness and decay, shall be raised in incorruption, strength, and immortality, fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body. This will constitute the crowning event in the salvation of the gospel; hence God's people in all ages have looked and longed for the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

"Able to save to the uttermost."