

ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS.

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF PERSONAL SALVATION.

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"THE redemption of the soul is precious : " its actual salvation is "precious" beyond conception. All that this world calls great and good, desirable, and valuable, sinks into utter insignificance in the comparison. "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" These questions of our Lord imply that *whatever* a person gains, if his soul be lost, he is an *infinite loser*, or, in other words, no earthly good can ever compensate for the loss of the immortal principle which gives dignity and importance to man. The Poet has justly ascribed to the "importance" of the soul, as a spiritual and an immortal essence, what may with equal propriety be attributed to its "value", as a redeemed and responsible spirit :—

"Know'st thou th' importance of a soul immortal?
Behold this midnight glory : worlds on worlds !
Amazing pomp ; redouble this amaze !
Ten thousand add ; add twice ten thousand more ;
Then weigh the whole ; one soul outweighs them all,
And calls th' astonishing magnificence
Of unintelligent creation poor."

The *spirituality* and *immortality* of the soul invest it with importance, but this is heightened to its utmost degree only by viewing the soul, endued with these exalted attributes, in the light in which it is placed in the Volume of Divine Inspiration. In this it is declared to be not only spiritual and immortal, but also a fallen spirit, exerting its wondrous powers against the reign and rule of God himself, its eternal peace endangered by rebellion, its immortality liable to be turned into the bitterest curse, by becoming a source of endless and unmitigated misery, inflicted as the just punishment of its crimes—redeemed, however, by the infinite sacrifice and atonement of the Son of God, an object of contest between the Deity, its Creator and Redeemer, and Evil Spirits, themselves apostates, under condemnation, and desiring to bring man to share a similar doom. These are the elevated and impressive views which the Sacred Scriptures give of the value of the human soul ; and these must guide our judgments in forming a correct opinion of the importance of man as a creature of God ; and he, who, in framing a judgment on this subject is uninfluenced by these considerations, possesses but inadequate conceptions, of the dignity and worth attaching themselves to this spiritual and deathless principle. These remarks are sufficient to show the infinite importance, and absolute necessity, of personal salvation.

There is need of personal salvation. Salvation implies guilt, misery and danger, arising from a corrupted nature and actual sin. And are not all naturally depraved? Have not all sinned, and come short of the glory of God? Are not all therefore guilty? Are not all miserable? Are not all exposed to danger? Yea, none can plead guiltless—sin and misery are inseparable—and every sinner is liable to the infliction of that sentence which decides, that "the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations which forget

God." The person, therefore, who feels not the necessity of personal salvation, is lamentably ignorant of the very first, fundamental, principles of the Bible. He has still to be taught that he is a sinner, polluted and guilty, with a heart at enmity against God, and without the renewal of which in holiness, as well as the pardon of sins, he cannot pass through the gates into the celestial city. If unsaved, may the reader now feel his need of saving mercy!

The Scriptures place peculiar emphasis on personal salvation. Addressing individuals, as individuals, they exhort them,—*"Seek Ye the Lord, while he may be found, call Ye upon him while he is near."* *"Seek Ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness."* *"Strive to enter in at the straight gate."* *"Work out Your own salvation with fear and trembling."* These passages make it incumbent on each and every person to "seek" and "strive" for a personal participation of the blessings of the Gospel of peace. In them, and through them, God speaks to each and all of Adam's race, and requires them for themselves to "flee from the wrath to come," and in sincere repentance of their sins, and a sure trust in Christ, "lay hold of eternal life." O that every unrenewed reader would receive the "word of exhortation," and immediately reduce it to practice!

Personal salvation is indispensable. Each is responsible for himself. One cannot answer for another. Salvation is not transferable : the salvation of parents cannot be handed to children ; neither can that of children be given to parents. It is strictly a personal concern, and must be experienced by every person for himself, otherwise he must for ever endure the fearful penalties of the violated law. "Behold all souls are mine ; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine : the soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son : the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."

The salvation of others will prove of no benefit to those who may be lost. What will it profit me, if the whole world were saved, and I should be a castaway? Would the conviction assuage my sorrows, mitigate my sufferings, and inspire me with fortitude to render my case the less hopeless? No ; but the assurance of the security and happiness of others might add keenness to my own anguish, and torment me with a multitude of the bitterest reflections. I should thereby be induced to think of the aggravated folly, the extreme madness, of my own conduct in wilfully and obstinately putting salvation from me, and refusing eternal life. The felicity of countless myriads of saved spirits can, therefore, diffuse no soothing comfort through the anguished and tortured minds of the finally condemned, and if thought upon at all, it will only awaken in their consciences feelings of keener remorse, and render them increasingly miserable.

The reader is requested to give the above remarks a portion of his serious attention, and pray unto the Father of Lights for grace to become *wise unto personal salvation*.

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