Salvation by Works.

BY REV. F. B. MEYER, LONDON.

"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."—Phil. 2: 12, 13.

In building a house a man gets through the sand to the rock. In building character, and above all, Christian character, we must get down to God. This was the constant want of the apostle. In Col. 1: 29, speaking of his ministry he says: "I labor, striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily," in all Christian work, getting down to God's inworking. Eph. 3: 20: "He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." In all prayer get down to God's inworking. All true prayer is the expression of God's inwrought thought. And so, from the passage in Philippians, in Christian character work out what God works in.

God has two workshops, that of nature and that of the human heart, in each of which He is a very present worker. He works to-day in nature and in your heart. It is a pleasure to go into the workshop of a carpenter and see the shavings lying on the floor, of the artist and see the place where he is executing his masterpieces, to go into the study of a loved minister and find where he builds up his sermons. I want you to come to-day out of nature into your inner life and understand, man or woman, whosoever thou art, that God, who works in nature, yonder in the sunshine, leafage and floging river, is equally at work within thyself, and I want you to work out what God is at this moment working in.

But the remarkable thing is that in nature God never works alone. Man has to work out what God works in. Every ear of corn that rustles in the summer breeze is the result of man co-operating with God. Every piece of wood that burns in your fires is the result of man co-operating with God, and every bit of ore that glistens in the goldsmith's window is the result of the same co-operation, for God laid the ore away in the bowels of the earth, but man has drawn it out and made it fair and beautiful. In all Christian work and endeavor God calls us to help Him and to be His fellow-workers, and in a man's salvation it is true that God and man co-operate in that masterpiece of God Himself. For a moment some are staggered and say: "Is not the work of Jesus Christ for man like a lone column on the sands of Egypt which you cannot imitate or duplicate? Is it possible that we men and women can help God in a matter so sublime and stupendous as that? Yes, but wait and remember that salvation is conjugated in three tenses. There is the past, present and future, about which we need to think when we talk about it. In Titus 3: 5, we are told the kindness and love of God are suffered to appear toward men, not by works of righteousness which we have done, excluding there the man, but according to His mercy He has saved us, and that is an irrevocable past tense, a thing done and finished once for all. On that cross He bore the sins of the world, our sins included, and put them away forevermore, and accomplished and wrought out and brought in an everlasting salvation, which is free to all, without works, though producing works, on condition of receiving through faith in His name. If there is a man or woman here to-day who has never wrought a good work, and never can work one, and who will just open the hand to Jesus and take from Him a salvation, the moment faith is directed to Christ that soul puts on a white robe and stands before God that instant, absorbed and saved in the righteousness of his own beloved Son. I will not speak of the future tense of salvation, of which you have an illustration in 1 Peter 1: 9, coupling with that Hebrews 9: 28. When this body is raised in the likeness of this glorious body, when each stain, freckle and wrinkle of mortality has been wiped out, and when, perfect and like our Master, our body is re-married to the Spirit in immortal union, then will salvation be consecrated in its third and most blessed aspect.

But between these two, the finished work, by which we are set free from the guilt of sin, and the future where our bodies will be set free from the thrall of sin, there is a present tense of salvation which means deliverance from the power of sin; as that is deliverance from the penalty and as that will be a deliverance from its last consequences.

After quoting two passages, Acts 2: 47, and 1 Cor. 1: 18, he continued: There is a sense in which, when asked when I am saved or not, I can say, "Yes, certainly," or "I shall be," or "being saved." It is in this present tense that man's co-operation with God comes in. These men and women are saved from hell, but not from an ill-temper this morning when their breakfast was cold. They are not saved from money-love, they are not saved from hard, cantankerous temper, else their children and servants would have been saved long ago. It is absurd for you to say that you have drunk the last drop of God's cup of salvation till you know what it is to be saved from impurity, from the love of gold, from ill temper, and from their besetting sins. Remember that you need not despair, God is working in you. He is working against that love of money, that ambition, that thirst for applause, that pride of reputation. As I have seen the ocean fretting against the rocks and eating them out, God is working against that temper. Woman, I know that temper has been your curse for years. God is working against it. Man, you have been for long working against that lust, and tried to break from it, but it has been steadily biting you and making you do its will, but take heart, God is working for you. There are young men who know well what I mean when I speak of the habit of long years they cannot break. He who silently but mightily is working in that will is working in you to emancipate you, and I want you to work out what God works in, that you may be delivered from the power of presumptuous and known sin.

Here comes in what the apostle means by fear and trembling. Does it mean we are going to fear and tremble before the wrath of God? Not so. Suppose there should come into the studio of a young artist our great English portrait painter, and say: "Young friend, I am going to spend to-morrow with you, to help you to accomplish such and such a picture." That day that young artist would be on the tiptoe of expectancy, and, when he enters, he fears and trembles, not that he fears him, but that he dreads to miss of any of his help. He fears and trembles all the time that he may make the most of his master's presence. That is the fear and trembling. I am cast off from a ship on a barren isle. I have gathered bits of timber, they are dried, and try to light a fire. I have but two matches left me, and I stand there with the wind drawing, the storm brewing and the wood. Do I dread the blessed fire, and tremble lest I have a blaze? No, it is the very thing I have wanted, but I fear and tremble lest one of those matches should miscarry, or both, and I lose the help. You don't say here: There are but two matches left, and I am sure the Almighty Spirit is brooding over this place and over your heart. Did the emotion you felt last night, does deep silence this moment indicate that the Almighty God, who for years has been working silently, is beginning to put forth His girded strength in your character? I want you to be very fearful and to tremble in your soul lest you shall miss the opportunity. And, as a number of sailors cast out upon the ocean without water, if they see a squall coming, will put out all their waterproofs, hats and every bucket, that they may not miss one drop of the coming shower that shall keep them from dying of thirst, so men and women exert every endeavor. Take care, and when you go out of these gates go home, lest by frivolous talk you miss some holy impression. Take care, lest by noticing the speaker you concentrate on him the attention you ought to concentrate on God. Take care, you, at meals, how you talk, lest somehow a grain of gold dust be missing. Make the most of this time and work out what God is working in.

God is always initiating things. Man works out what God works in. God works in first, He is always first. Your love for God is a reflection of His love to you, your tears are the answer of your soul to the touch of the Spirit. Don't try to get in front of God. A child comes into school and, after a bit, I find her in a corner crying: "I have not got the lesson books my big sister has." "You will get the lessons she has presently. I want you just to sit on that low form and to learn this first lesson that I give, for to learn this well is the stepping stone to another. It is not for you to choose the graduations of your learning, but to learn as I teach you and to leave the responsibility on myself." So it is that many women will sigh because they have not learned this lesson or that. It is enough for you to learn what God teaches you, and if you will learn one lesson well, He will lead you to the next; but you will never go forward to any higher class till you have mastered the lesson of the lowest class. Often people say: "Twenty-five years! I don't seem to have made any advance; I say the same prayers and read the same chapters, get no more help out of them, and am just where I was." Somewhere back in your life you dropped the thread of obedience and you must go back to the point where you stopped that cord and take it up just there, for God will never let a soul slip a lesson, and if you won't do that which lies just before you, He will keep you there twenty years, but you will never start till you have learned it. Begin to obey as you used to, to forgive where you said you would not, to restore, to get back to Bethel, to bury idols, to start to obey, for God will never allow you to press forward till you have worked out that which He worked into your soul.

God works very quietly in nature. Some days the river hardly seems to move, the clouds hardly stirring in the blue sky, and all around is so still that only the bee seems awake, humming lazily amid the flowers. Yet in these quiet days of summer the corn is getting golden, and the fruit is ripening, and you could not miss one of those times when God seemed to have gone to sleep. Often in life it seems as if nothing were stirring inside, but the character is ripening, God is working—let Him work.

I have said enough to lead each man and woman to say: "I have never thought of it before. I have thought it was the minister or the Bible." And you will look in on yourself and say: "Oh how wonderful I am, that the great God wants to make me good and has come like a summer breeze or sunshine into my life and is working there," and you will begin to work out what He works in, and I want to show you how.

He works in the will, then He works to do, and we have got to work out what He works in to will and to do. Religion is in the will. You are not what you feel or what you think, but what you will. An act of murder and an act of manslaughter differ because in the one there is the will and in the other the will is absent. The will makes religion. Do you now know what it is for something to steal into your mind—couldn't be of the devil because it was too good and couldn't be of yourself because it was too unselfish? It may be that you thought you would give up some filthy habit, that you would give some thousands of dollars to God's work, that you would be a missionary or minister or evangelist. The thing came nearer and nearer, and the longer you thought about it the more sure you were it was God's will. You prayed over it, you asked the advice of friends about it, and it was God working in you. His will came in, threading yours as the light threads the air of the dark night before the dawn, and your will studied it. After awhile your will refused and God's will died away fainter and fainter in your life. Or, it may be your will acquiesced and assented, and then your will and God's are one, and all religion is when man's will says yes to God's will.

But God never works in a man to will what simultaneously He works in a man to do; that is He always gives the power when He gives the will. You don't feel the power, but that doesn't matter, you have got it. Elijah left his life-work to Elisha. Elisha wanted power for it, and so when Elijah went he said: "I would like a double portion of your power." Didn't Elisha keep a sharp look on Elijah? And when presently the chariot came and swept him up, he threw down to the feet of Elisha the old garment and Elisha picked it up and wrapped it about his heart, and went back to Jordan to his work. Probably the devil said to him: "You are a fool, you have not got anything, only a tattered old garment, hardly worth looking at." "Ah," said Elisha, "I have got the power." "But," said the devil, "you have got no power, you don't feel it." But, as Elisha went along, he said: "I don't feel it, but I saw him go, and I want it; and he would not have given me work to do if he hadn't given me strength to do it with"; and when he came to the Jordan and struck it and crossed, he found that God had not only given him the will to do a prophet's work, but the power to do a prophet's mission. You have some habit, each of you, you cannot break from; but you can, for God always works in to do when He works in to will. A man says: "I ought to give some thousands of dollars to God's work, but it sticks to me and I can't get rid of it." Yet He who worked in you to will and to make the gift has worked in you the power to devote the money to Him if you would only make use of the power. Everybody here has got the power to do what God works in Him to will. I know that the springs of God are rising, the breath of God is right over you, God is working in you people to will high and holy and blessed things, and you must not, and you shall not say that you cannot do it. You can go out and use the strength which is yours. Paralyzed people, stand up and walk, for you can walk; blind people, look around and see, for you can see; Peter, step out of the boat and walk, for you have the power.

Jacob, a sneak and a cheat, whose very name indicated his character, came out by the Jabbok, whose murmuring waters broke against the moonlit land. God wanted to set him free from his Jacob life and make an Israel of him. God began to work on him by an angel's wrestle. An angel is a sweet, gentle spirit, from whom you have nothing to fear if you yield. But Jacob refused Him, and threw himself back upon the sinew of his strength. To many a man here has God come wanting to work out in him a saintly character, and the man says no. One of two things has got to happen: Either you have got to be a sneak to the rest of your life, or God will shrivel the sinew of your strength and you will have to yield. Which is it going to be? I am talking to Christian men. We know something of the evil of our hearts. This is the watershed of your life; you are either going to be a sneak to the end of it or an Israel, a prince. If you work out what God works in, you will be a prince; if you bow to Him, you will be nobler, if not, you will be harder, for the sun that melts the wax hardens the clay. I have got you here before God; you and God have got to work it out. I have only switched you onto God, and He will talk to you. It may be you will be left with that "no," or that angel may lift his finger upon some strong sin of your pride. You are proud of your servants, your position and money. I pray you not to stand out lest God wither the secret source of your pride. Rather than suffer as Jacob did, who limped till he died, throw your arms around the neck of Him that wrestles with you, and tell Him you yield. Yield in your will, I demand of you, to the will of God, that now pleads with you. "I yield, I can hold out no more, I sink by sovereign love compelled and own Thee conqueror." Then begin right away. Claim the strength that God imparts and act it out, and you who came to Northfield a Jacob shall go away an Israel. You will not only please yourself, but will make other people pleased. I want you to be like the standing corn, every stalk of which bends the same way when the wind blows over it in summer; like the smoke in the chimneys that all waves in the same direction when the wind blows over it in the winter. Yield to God, and let God have His will with you forever.

Denominational Preaching.

We ought to preach the doctrines of the Gospel; we ought to show what we believe, why we believe it, and what it leads to.

Similarly we ought to preach our denominational principles, which are a part of Christian doctrine. We have certain principles peculiar to ourselves. There are certain points in which we differ from our Christian brethren, in which we believe that they are right, and that, necessarily, in so far as they differ from us, they are wrong. If we do not believe this, we have no right to maintain a separate denominational existence.

It is true, some of these doctrines no longer distinguish us from our brethren because our brethren have, with the advance of Scriptural knowledge, come to occupy the same ground which we were once alone in holding, as *e. g.*, a regenerate church membership and the New Testament as the only rule of faith and practice, severance of church from state, and the doctrine of absolute religious liberty. With gratitude to God, we recognize the fact that on many of these points we are no longer alone, that others have come up on the same ground which we occupy.

Still, this is no reason why these doctrines should not continue to be preached. They are still far from having absolute sway. Of course, it may with truth be said that all doctrines should be preached in their proportion. Undoubtedly we should preach doctrines which are vital to the salvation of men, such as the way of salvation by Christ, the need of repentance and regeneration, with a fulness and frequency proportioned to their moment and their relation to the destiny of the soul. But it does not therefore follow that we should never preach the doctrines which relate to the honor of Christ our Lord, the order of His house, and the method in which His church can best serve Him and testify for Him.

But a doctrinal sermon or a denominational sermon that has not a practical issue, is not a sermon at all. Every sermon should have a direct bearing upon the salvation of men and upon holiness of life. The trouble with us is twofold. We do not enough proclaim our views; and, when we do, we do not show them in their practical relations. We should think a man false to his duty and to his trust who should neglect to practice Scriptural baptism as our Lord has taught us; but there are a great many who fail to set forth immersion as a type of spiritual resurrection, as a type of a new birth, as a type of cleansing of life, and who fail to impress upon men the fact that immersion pledges the believer before God and angels and men to a wholly renewed life, to a life of consecration, to a life of purity, to a life of self-denial and of holy benevolence. When we consider the doctrines which we hold and upon which we pride ourselves, in regard to the supreme lordship of Christ and our undivided allegiance to Him, in reference to a regenerate church membership, and in reference to baptism as a symbol of the believer's death to sin and his resurrection to new life, and then, on the other hand, when we consider the meagerness of our self denial, the worldliness and luxury prevalent among us, the extent to which every good cause among us is crippled by the lack of open handed benevolence on the part of our people, then we feel as though a reproach was brought upon the doctrines most dear to us as a denomination. Truly, "these ought we to have done and not leave the other undone."—*National Baptist.*

Personal Gifts in Spiritual Service.

Spiritual service is like any other form of service. It affords opportunity for the exercise of powers of all sorts, and, although it demands that each of us do his best, it does not ask us all to do the same things. It recognizes the fact that there are diversities of gifts—that one man is especially fitted to serve Christ by managing the finances of the church to which he belongs, another by superintending the Sunday-school, another by conversing with those skeptically inclined, and another by searching out and helping the poor or degraded. Of course some can do more than one thing well. But nobody can do everything equally well.

Do we take pains enough to study ourselves in order to learn for what forms of Christian service we are best adapted? To enter upon this or that department of work for God merely because accident opens our way into it may be right, because the seeming accident may be a providential occurrence and we may possess an unsuspected fitness which will soon become evident. But ordinarily we do most and best when we have deliberately taken stock of our capabilities and have devoted ourselves to those endeavors to which we have reason to believe ourselves best suited. We must not forget that sometimes others, especially our elders, understand us better than we understand ourselves. We must not refuse to undertake tasks which are merely less agreeable than others. We must not allow ourselves to be ruled by sentimentalism. Even the fact that others will not attend to necessary work is not always a sufficient reason why we should attempt it. For instance, efforts to rescue and reform the profligate ordinarily should not be taken by immature young men and women, even if their elders are too slow to do what needs to be done in this direction.

What can I do at all for Christ? This is the first question. Then comes the others. What am I qualified to do best for Him? Of the forms of service for which I seem specially fitted, which needs me most, and in which can I do the most fruitful work? Prayerful reflection will lead us to the right conclusions, although we shall do wisely to ask the advice of those more experienced than ourselves. The great point is to begin at once to do something for Christ, to do this with the whole heart, and with the mind open to any suggestions which the divine Spirit may make as to the direction or the details of our effort. Before long He guides us into that labor which we can do best if we seek also to learn for ourselves what it is.

There is spiritual work, and enough of it, for us all. Some must lead and others must follow. Some can do most with the brain and others with the hand. One can influence the cultured best, another the ignorant. The willing mind, the loving heart, the ready hand—if there be these, dedicated to Christ and ever ready to be called upon to do His work, blessed and eternal results are certain to be brought to pass.

Lacking Without Grace.

Balaam's life strikingly illustrates the sad fact that frequently great intellectual gifts and acquisitions exist in a man apart from inward, spiritual, saving faith. The mind of Baalam, how richly developed! As a student of philosophy, and, perhaps, the foremost thinker of the pagan world, he possessed a reputation of most enviable prominence; but when we look into his soul, we find its faculties weak, unstable, stunted, and dwarfed by avarice and other sins. He was like a green bay-tree flourishing before the eyes of the world, but at whose roots was something sapping the very foundations of its symmetry and glory, and destined ultimately to wither its leaves, destroy its beauty, and cause it to fall prematurely in decay and death. Genius, intellect, learning—what is it all worth, save when ennobled and sanctified by that higher culture and wisdom whose incarnation was Jesus Christ. Richard Brinsley Sheridan achieved high social, literary, and parliamentary distinction. He was ranked in eloquence with Burke and Fox and Pitt. When he died, dukes, bishops, earls, viscounts, right honorables, all seemed proud to swell the train of his funeral, and the only remaining unoccupied spot in the "poet's corner" of Westminster Abbey was reserved for his body; yet what a sad record does his life show of ungoverned appetites and passions, resulting finally in bankruptcy of purse, of character, of heart. Coleridge and DeQuincy—the one England's profound essayist, the other one of the most potent minds of the nineteenth century—were each victims of an invidious appetite. Lord Byron, endowed with brilliant genius, wearing the coronet of a peer, possessing a world-wide reputation, is so untrue to the higher relations that even in the spring-time of his life he feels the chill of fall, and shuddering at the thought of fast approaching winter, sings with a broken heart:

"My days are in the sere and yellow leaf;
The fruits and flowers of love are gone;
The pain, the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone."

God save all of us from such a career! God give to each of us rather that life at the centre of which glows the flame of Christ's love, and over the whole circumference of which beams the glory of Christ's light! Then shall ours be "the death of the righteous," and our "last end be like his."—*Rev. K. B. Tupper.*

Discoveries in Asia-Minor and in Egypt.

Two interesting articles have appeared in the *London Times* describing the progress up to date of the explorations and discoveries in Syria and Asia, which have led Professor Sayce to his now well known theory of the existence of a great dominant race, hitherto unknown to history or literature, whose power extended over the whole of these regions, and who were no other than the Hittites of the Old Testament. The study, amounting as it does to the re discovery of a lost nation, and throwing much new side light upon the Scriptures, is one of peculiar fascination, and pushed on by such enthusiasts as Prof. Sayce, Dr. Wright, Sir Charles Wilson, and Profs. Ramsay and Hirschfeldt, is every day bringing new material to light. One of the latest is the discovery of an inscription near the silver mines of Bulgar Maden in the Taurus, wonderfully well preserved, and said by Professor Sayce to be the most important Hittite record in existence. What it is hoped eventually to find is a bilingual inscription, in Hittite and some other language, by which the former may be translated with certainty. In its absence, the deciphering at present is largely guesswork. When once, in this way, a key is found, this long-buried people may be expected to yield up its secrets to the modern world. The attention of scholars is, however, at the moment being directed to Egypt rather than to Asia Minor. A discovery of first-class importance has just been made there by the ingenuity of the well-known explorer, Mr. Flinders Petrie. The value of the "find," which consists of portions of a lost play of Euripides, of passages from the Phædo of Plato, and some other literary fragments, does not appear at first sight. It is the question of their date, and the possibilities opened up of further similar discoveries which have so stirred the learned. Professors Mahaffy and Sayce, who have had the labor of deciphering the records, have produced proofs which scholars everywhere accept as valid, that these fragments go back as far as the third century B. C.—that is, that they are almost contemporary with the age of the writers themselves. A comparison of the Phædo fragment with the Alexandrine recension, on which our modern texts are based, reveals painfully the extent to which these texts have been corrupted. The manner of the "find" was remarkable. Mr. Petrie had noticed that certain mummy cases at Gurob, in the Fayoum, were not made of wood, but of layers of papyrus gummed together. Some of them bore faint traces of writing, and this writing turns out to be nothing less than these Greek texts. The world will now be on the lookout from the same source for "early copies" of all the great masters of Greek literature. Who knows but what the next treasure trove will be a Greek gospel, which for antiquity and authority will put the Codex Sinaiticus into the shade?—*Evangelist.*

— "I looked, and behold, a door was opened in heaven." A door—swinging back on musical hinges before the discouraged wanderers of earth, inviting them to hospitalities glimpsed beyond, inconceivable to the heart of man. A door? Those are not unfolding portals, they are outspread arms, and above them is the glory of a Face, and from within there floats the tenderness of a Voice—"I am the Door!" It is He, the Lord of Life Himself; and we, who were so weary of our vain efforts to conquer evil, the pettiness and unlovingness of our natures, are uplifted, upborne to His heart, and its mighty throbbings become the inspiration of our own. He does for us what we could not do for ourselves, and we are saved. Henceforth there is no life for us but His.

"I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." To every soul of man this message comes, and the soul that turns at the call of the angel who brings it, will bear witness that the message is true. Only we ourselves can shut ourselves out of heaven. The door of a Heart as human in its sympathy as it is divine in its love and power, stands always open and waiting with welcome for the repentant child who would fain return to his Father's house. "By Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture."—*Lucy Larcom, in "As It Is In Heaven."*

— Sorrow isolates you, and it seems to you as though no heart ever knew grief like your grief, for sorrow mixed with selfishness isolates, and we seem to stand alone at first. But there is no sorrow for which God has not provided a comfort; He wipes away all tears from our eyes. More than sorrow, sin isolates us; and when we have fallen into a great sin it seems to us as though no soul ever trod that path of darkness before. But God's grace is sufficient to wipe off from the record every blotted handwriting. "He healeth all our diseases, He forgiveth all our iniquities." Drop under the sod the body of a friend. It begins to turn straightway into corruption and decay, and out of that noisome corpse there springs back into sunshine again flower and grass to bear witness that out of our very corruption God brings forth grace and glory. "Though your sins are crimson and scarlet, they shall be white like wool and snow." We need not wait for the great transition, but here and now we may walk by the river of the water of life, we may walk under the shade of those trees whose leaves are for the healing of the nations, and we may pluck the fruit of that only tree that bears its fruit every month. Other trees lie bare and sere through the long winter; other trees drop their fruit only in the autumn time; but this tree of life, of which they are, after all, but a poor symbol, gives forth its fruit in every month, and every manner of fruit for every manner of need; and here now we may harvest them, fed on food more life giving and sheltered by shade more comforting than the Garden of Eden ever knew.—*Lyman Abbott, D. D.*

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