

# Salvation

F. B. Hole.

## Table of Contents

The Philippians were bidden by Paul, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." How do you reconcile this injunction with what we have had before us?.....3

On the day of Pentecost Peter exhorted the anxious enquirers saying, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation;" and those who received his word were baptized. In his first Epistle he again speaks of baptism as saving us. What is this salvation which baptism effects?.....4

"He that shall endure unto the end the same shall be saved." In the light of this is it not premature to speak of ourselves as saved, while we are still on our way to the end?.....4

Why is "confession with the mouth" so definitely connected with salvation in Romans 10: 10?.....5

Is that why Cornelius, God-fearing man though he was, needed Peter to come to him that he might be saved? He was told that Peter "shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved."....5

You do not wish us to understand then that salvation is a higher order of Christian blessing into which we may come subsequent to conversion? — so that, for instance, a man might be forgiven yet not saved.....5

Almost all that we have been considering is in connection with what we are saved from. What are we saved to?.....5

We now come to a word of very large meaning, so large indeed that it may be used in a sense that covers other gospel words such as justification, redemption, reconciliation. An instance of the large meaning which may be attached to it is found in Hebrews 2: 3, where the mighty intervention of God on man's behalf, which first began to be spoken by the Lord Himself, is spoken of as "so great **salvation.**" In Acts 13: 26, the Apostle Paul speaks of "the word of this **salvation,**" using the term in just the same broad sense. So also in Ephesians 1: 13, the whole deliverance which has reached us, in all its parts, is summed up in that one word. The Gospel which announces that mighty deliverance is, "the Gospel of our **salvation.**" It is with this large meaning that we use the word in the title of this book.

Salvation is largely spoken of in both Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament it is nearly always salvation from **enemies** that is before us, as Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, stated. In his prophecy he declared that the holy prophets, raised up since the world began, had said that Israel should be saved from their enemies and from the hand of all that hate them. (See Luke 1: 70, 71). The New Testament in its very first chapter speaks of Jesus saving "His people from their **sins**" (Matt. 1: 21). This at once lifts the whole matter on to a much higher platform.

But, whether in the Old or the New, the very fact that salvation is offered infers that those to whom it is offered are in **peril** of some sort: they are in danger of perishing. Indeed in 1 Corinthians 1: 18, the contrast is drawn between "them that **perish,** and "us, which are **saved;**" and the same contrast in almost exactly the same words appears again in 2 Corinthians 2: 15: Again we read, "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was **lost**" (Luke 19: 10). "Lord save us: we perish," was the cry of the disciples when in the storm on the lake of Galilee. It was only a matter of temporal deliverance, but then it was only in view of temporal danger Salvation and perishing are clearly directly opposed as to their meaning.

As guilty, we need forgiveness. As under condemnation, we need justification. As having lapsed into bondage, we need redemption. As enemies in our minds by wicked works, utterly alienated from God, we need reconciliation. As lost and perishing, it is salvation we need.

When we considered ourselves as guilty or condemned, we had a perfectly crisp and definite thought before our minds. We saw ourselves arraigned at the bar of God. We stood, as it were, in a criminal court, charged with our sins. The thought was equally definite when we thought of ourselves as being in bondage to sin and Satan or as being alienated from God. Sin now appeared to us as a taskmaster on the one hand, and as a dark cloud, shutting us out from God, on the other.

But now we have to consider ourselves as lost, as threatened by innumerable dangers both present and future, and consequently in danger of perishing. We cannot deal with this matter in quite the same crisp way. But what we have lost in definiteness we have more than made up in largeness and breadth of thought. God's salvation is a deliverance from **every peril which in the past or present or future could possibly threaten us.**

Still, though there is this comprehensiveness of meaning about the word, we must not miss the fact that it always carries the thought of deliverance from peril; and inasmuch as sin lies at the root of every peril that threatens us, the New Testament very appropriately opens with salvation from **sins**. This salvation is not merely from the penalty of sins, but from the power of sins, and even from the love of them. The Gospel does not offer an exemption from sin's penalty while leaving us free to continue under the power of sin, or in the enjoyment of sin's temporary pleasures. Were it to do so, it would be no true salvation, for it would just encourage us to continue in sin: which God forbid!

Yet again and again we find in Scripture that salvation does mean exemption or deliverance from the wrath of God. The Gospel is "the power of God unto **salvation**, to every one that believeth . . . for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven" (Rom. 1: 16-18). A little later in the same epistle we read, "We shall be **saved** from **wrath** through Him" (Rom. 5: 9). Again we read, "God hath not appointed us to **wrath**, but to obtain **salvation** by our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5: 9). And yet again in 2 Thessalonians 2: 12, 13, we find that salvation is put in direct contrast with damnation.

The fact is that the Old Testament has as its chief theme the dealings of God with Israel His people in view of the coming of the Messiah. Hence the consequences of sin as regards God's **governmental** actings are mainly in view. When Israel sinned, God in His government brought up enemies against them, and when they repented He saved them. The New Testament brings into view the **eternal** consequences of sin, and the way in which every individual soul of man is subject to God's judgment and the infliction of wrath from heaven. From that wrath we are saved.

It is in this connection that salvation may be spoken of as a past and completed thing, so that believers can speak of themselves as, "us, which **are** saved." The Lord Jesus is our Deliverer from the wrath to come, and we can never be more secure than we are to-day, before the wrath actually falls. Yet when we speak of ourselves as saved the emphasis seems mainly to lie on the fact that once we were engulfed in every kind of evil and defilement and now we are rescued out of it all. "We ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But . . . He **saved** us" (Titus 3: 3-5).

It is very evident however, that though we can speak of God as the One who "**hath** saved us," (2 Tim. 1: 9), we are still in a world that is full of seductions, with the treacherous flesh within us, and Satan the astute adversary without. Hence we need salvation daily — salvation of practically a continuous sort. Scripture speaks very plainly of this present salvation. The Lord Jesus is living in heaven as our High Priest to minister it to us. He is able to "save them to the uttermost that come unto

God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7: 25).

The present salvation, which we need and get as believers, is of course based upon the death of Christ, but it actually reaches us by His priestly activities on our behalf as He lives for us on high. We are being "saved by His life" (Rom. 5: 10); and inasmuch as He ever lives we shall be saved to the uttermost. We shall be saved completely, to the extremes" point of time; to the moment when the last foe has disappeared, and we are beyond the need of any further salvation forever.

In order that we may enjoy this practical, everyday salvation we are granted the instruction which is furnished by the Word of God. The Holy Scriptures are able to make us "wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3: 15). The next verse speaks of the Scriptures being profitable not only for teaching but also "for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." This shows the kind of salvation that was in Paul's mind when he wrote, and emphasizes the great part which the Scriptures play in our daily salvation.

When Paul wrote these words he of course alluded to the Old Testament Scriptures, which Timothy had known from his childhood. They abound with salutary warnings for us, and if we heed them we shall be saved from a thousand snares and dangers. We need hardly add that what Paul asserts of the Old Testament is equally true of the New, which some of us have been privileged to know from our youth.

We might sum up the matter as regards this daily and present salvation by saying it is ours as the result of Christ's High Priestly intercession, and of our having the Word of God, coupled with the possession of the Holy Spirit, whereby we may understand it and accept its instructions and its warnings.

There remains a further group of Scriptures that clearly speak of salvation as a future thing. It is our hope, and is to be worn "for an helmet" (1 Thess. 5: 8). Our hope of salvation will be realized at the second advent of Christ. It is true that He is coming as the Judge, but we do not look for Him in that character. For us it is written, "We look for the **Saviour** . . . who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body" (Phil. 3: 20, 21). Hence it is that we are left here to "look for Him" when He shall "appear the second time without sin, unto **salvation**" (Heb. 9: 28).

This future salvation altogether depends upon the crowning act of mercy which will reach us as the last delivering act of the Lord Jesus on our behalf. It will involve the raising of the dead saints, and the catching away of the living saints before the full storm of God's righteous wrath breaks on the earth. Then all of us — both dead and living — are to be found forever with Christ in bodies of glory like to His own. This will be the final thing. Salvation as regards ourselves will be absolutely completed.

### **The Philippians were bidden by Paul, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." How do you reconcile this injunction with what we have had before us?**

A long passage leads up to this injunction. If we want to get an idea of the context we have to go back as far as Philippians 1: 27. The Philippian believers were threatened by adversaries without and dissension within. The close of Philippians 1 alludes to the one. The opening of Philippians 2 alludes to the other. The former is easily disposed of: to meet the latter the whole weight of the matchless example of Christ has to be brought in. And then the Apostle himself was no longer present for their help, for he was in a Roman prison.

Under these circumstances they were to show their spiritual mettle and work out their salvation from the threatening dangers: but not as being cast upon their own resources, for "it is God which

worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (ver. 13). If the next three verses were fulfilled in them, they would indeed have worked out their salvation.

A present, daily salvation is in question: and our side of the matter is emphasized here. The Divine side must come first — the Priesthood of Christ, the work of God in us by His Spirit, the instruction and correction of His Word. But the human side has its importance. We have to diligently avail ourselves of the grace that God provides.

**On the day of Pentecost Peter exhorted the anxious enquirers saying, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation;" and those who received his word were baptized. In his first Epistle he again speaks of baptism as saving us. What is this salvation which baptism effects?**

It is salvation from "this untoward generation," as Peter said. Another translation puts it, "Be saved from this perverse generation." Now baptism is, in one word, **dissociation**. It is only an outward ordinance, yet it has a meaning: and that is its meaning. It is based upon the death and resurrection of Christ, for we are "baptized into His death," (Rom. 6: 3), and so we are "buried with Him" (Col. 2: 12). Nothing more effectively dissociates us from the present order of things, cutting our links with the world, than death and burial.

The particular point that Peter makes, both in his sermon and his epistle, is that baptism cut the link between the repentant and believing Jews and the unrepentant and unbelieving mass of that nation. That lies upon the surface of Acts 2, and is involved, we believe, in 1 Peter 3: 21; for his epistle was addressed to believing Jews. He tells them that baptism is a "like figure" unto the waters of the flood that of old cut the link between believing Noah with his house and the world of the ungodly. Noah and his house had been saved "by" or "through" the water from the ruin and death that came in upon the godless earth. Those to whom Peter wrote had been saved through baptism from the godless mass of their nation. They suffered much from the ungodly mass but they were saved from their fate, whether in this life, at the destruction of Jerusalem, or in the world to come.

When a big ship is sinking, it is not enough to let down small boats by ropes and then get into them. Unless the ropes are cut there will be no salvation. Baptism cuts the ropes, and in that sense saves.

**"He that shall endure unto the end the same shall be saved." In the light of this is it not premature to speak of ourselves as saved, while we are still on our way to the end?**

It certainly would be, IF these words of our Lord referred to the way in which sinful men might receive the salvation of their souls. These words however, which occur in the course of His prophetic discourse recorded in Matthew 24, and Mark 13, do not refer to that. The Lord was not addressing sinners but men who already had been brought into relationship with Himself — His **disciples**. At that moment they were representative of the chosen remnant of Israel, who will be found on earth at the time of the end.

"The end" in this passage is not the end of this or that individual life, but the end of the whole time of persecution, trial and sorrow, which end will be brought about by the second coming of Christ. Endurance is the supreme virtue which is to mark these saints, for their salvation is sure when Christ appears.

That is the primary bearing of this passage; but there are of course many profitable applications of

it which we may make for ourselves. However to apply it so as to teach that one cannot be really sure of salvation until one dies is not one of them.

### **Why is "confession with the mouth" so definitely connected with salvation in Romans 10: 10?**

Because salvation is a term of such wide meaning, and includes deliverance from the world, amongst other things. We believe on Christ as risen from the dead with our hearts, and that means our justification before God. Both these however — the faith and the justification — are not observable by men. Our salvation is observable, for it is not so much a judicial fact as a practical fact — we are really saved from the power of world, flesh, and devil. The very first step towards a salvation of such a sort must be the confession of Christ as Lord, made with the mouth so that men may hear it. A silent confession of Christ in the mind — just thinking it — obviously would not do.

The distinction made in this passage between the faith of the heart leading to righteousness and the confession of the mouth leading to salvation is very striking. It greatly helps to show the special force of salvation.

### **Is that why Cornelius, God-fearing man though he was, needed Peter to come to him that he might be saved? He was told that Peter "shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved."**

No doubt it was so. Until Peter arrived with the Gospel message concerning the risen Christ, Cornelius could not believe in his heart that God had raised Him from the dead. Again, if he had thought of Him in any sense as Lord, it would doubtless have been as Lord of the children of Israel. Peter preached Him in the house of Cornelius as "Lord of all."

Cornelius had turned from his heathenism to the fear of God very sincerely; but salvation came to him when he believed on and confessed the risen Christ as Lord.

### **You do not wish us to understand then that salvation is a higher order of Christian blessing into which we may come subsequent to conversion? — so that, for instance, a man might be forgiven yet not saved.**

Such a deduction as that from the case of Cornelius would be quite unwarranted. Yet we must not miss the instruction conveyed by the fact that though he had the fear of God, and faith in Him, and even knew certain facts about Christ's ministry on earth, he was not saved until he heard and believed the glad tidings of the risen Christ and forgiveness in His Name. Then it was that he was delivered clean out of the old world system which had held him and was brought to God.

### **Almost all that we have been considering is in connection with what we are saved from. What are we saved to?**

We are saved to every blessing that is ours in Christ. And yet, if we carefully follow Scripture phraseology, salvation is mostly, if not always, connected with what we are delivered from; and if it is a question of what we are brought to the word used is "**calling**." God has "saved us, and called us with an holy calling" (2 Tim. 1: 9).

Israel was saved out of Egypt in order that they might enjoy the land to which God called them.

We are saved from the world, the flesh, the devil, and the wrath of God which is to come, in order that we may enjoy God's call to the place of sons and share the coming glory of Christ. The salvation which is ours in Christ is a very mighty and wonderful thing; and thereby we are liberated to enjoy our calling. Yet all those things to which we are called according to the sovereign purpose of God are more wonderful still.