

CHRIST, THE ONLY HOPE

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Soon after the healing of the lame man in Jerusalem by the power of God through Simon Peter, the Apostle was summoned before the Sanhedrin and asked, "By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?" Standing before men who had his life in their hands, Peter answered: "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole."

Peter thought, "While I am accounting for the salvation of this man from lameness, I now have a fine opportunity of showing to these people, who otherwise will not listen to me, the way of the salvation of the soul." Having informed them that it was through the name of Jesus Christ that the lame man had been made whole, he announced to them that the salvation of the soul must be wrought by the very same means. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

That the name of Christ Jesus has come to occupy the most exalted position in history none can gainsay. That it is certain to conquer in wide areas yet untouched is an intelligent conclusion. More than a generation ago H. G. Wells, a noted world scholar, assigned himself the task of naming the six greatest men in the history of the world. He did not have the slightest hesitancy in naming Jesus Christ as pre-eminent the greatest man who ever lived. As Emerson so effectively expressed it, "The name of Jesus is not so much written as plowed into the civilizations of the world."

There is scarcely a department of human endeavor where His influence is not felt. The world can never abolish the truths which He implanted.

He combined love and justice, strength and humility, courage and control, fearlessness and tenderness. Whether He was in the crowd or in solitude, He retained all virtues and avoided all pitfalls. There was not a trace of sin in all His life. Pilate's verdict, "I find no fault in him," remains the verdict of the centuries.

I. The Meaning Of Salvation.

Salvation is that all-inclusive experience which involves all that happens to a man from the time that he trusts Christ as his Saviour until the time when he meets Him face to face in glory. Salvation includes deliverance from the penalty of sin, which takes place when a sinner receives Christ as his Saviour; deliverance from the power of sin, which takes place throughout the Christian life on earth as one yields himself to Christ; and deliverance from the presence of sin, which takes place when the Lord removes a Christian from the earth and takes him to his heavenly home. When one is saved, the Lord forgives his sins, takes him from the condition which He describes as lost and places him in the condition which He describes as saved, cleanses and purifies his affections, transforms his life to such an extent that he hates the things he formerly loved and loves the things he once hated, and replaces his failures with successes.

II. The Need Of Salvation.

There are vast differences between people, such as culture and ignorance, riches and poverty, morality and immorality, respectability and reprobation, but there

is this feature which is common to all -- the awareness that there is a gap between what we are and what we ought to be. The best as well as the worst are conscious of this gap, "For there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." God's Word tells us that "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." All have practiced sin. "There is no man that sinneth not." Your experiences and observations will corroborate this truth.

Through the centuries intelligent and informed people have had a deep sense of their personal need of salvation. In recent days there are those, who do not know enough about the teachings of God's Word and of Christianity to make a respectable primer, who deny that they or others need salvation. Not long ago, in an Indiana city, a high school student came through agony of soul, received Christ as his Saviour, came into possession of peace of mind and joy of heart, and on the following Sunday told the pastor of the church which he attended that he had been saved. The clergyman's brevity of reply was profound by the succinctness with which it conveyed the contemporary mood. He inquired of the young man, bluntly: "Saved! ... from what?" From the viewpoint of the Scriptures, man's need of salvation never reaches a deeper level than the moment when he denies that he needs to be saved.

To his listeners Peter proclaimed the necessity of salvation. The salvation which every sinner needs includes the regeneration of the soul, the transformation of the life, and at last the resurrection of the body and the union of soul and body in a glorified personality for eternal habitation in

"That land of pure delight,
Where saints immortal reign,
Where infinite day excludes the night
And pleasures banish pain;
Where everlasting spring abides
And never withering flowers;
And death is but the door that divides
That heavenly land from ours."

When we turn our eyes within and look at ourselves, we see weaknesses, failures, and sins. We know that we are sinners. Some may not like to be told that they are sinners. Others are not willing to admit it, but that does not change the fact that they are. We are members of a sinful race. We must be saved.

III. The Provision Of Salvation.

The tremendous blessing of salvation had its origin in the matchless grace and the marvelous love of God. As an expression of His love for lost sinners, God sent His only begotten Son into the world to redeem them. "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures" (I Corinthians 15:3).

Years ago, during the uprising in India against England, the statue of Queen Victoria was terribly defaced with a coat of tar. The authorities used every means at their command to remove the stains, but they failed. After many unsuccessful efforts on their part, a Hindu chemist offered his services and promised that

with a special preparation which he had concocted he could remove the stain. He was allowed to try his skill, with the result that the stain was entirely removed, and the monument was restored to its original beauty.

Let me tell you of another statue defaced by a hideous stain. It is that soul of yours which God has made in His own image. Sin has marred its beauty and defaced its loveliness. Men have tried many concoctions, but haven't found anything that will remove the stain of sin from the soul. God was so concerned about this matter that He sent His only begotten Son into the world to wash away the stains of sin from the souls of men and restore them to their original beauty.

"What can wash away my sins?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.
What can make me whole again?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Oh, precious is the flow
That makes me white as snow;
No other fount I know,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus."

IV. The Way Of Salvation.

The Lord Jesus Christ has provided salvation for all who will believe on Him. There is pardon at Calvary for all who will avail themselves of the matchless grace of God. The blood of Christ will cleanse from all sin those who will come unto God by Him. His precious blood has never lost its power, and it never will. The only way to be saved is to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." There is not one Saviour for one kind of sinner and a different Saviour for another kind of sinner. Nor is there one condition of salvation for one sinner and another for other sinners. Believing on the Lord Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation for any sinner, no matter where or when he may live.

There is not any salvation in church membership, in the church ordinances, in works, in sincerity, or in ourselves. There is no salvation in any other than Christ. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Nobody has ever been saved by any other. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: No man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36).

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). All who receive Christ as their Saviour receive salvation. All who reject Christ as their Saviour do without salvation. Won't you receive Him now and come into possession of salvation? The reception of Christ and His salvation should be evidenced by a confession with the mouth. He said: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32-33). If a person is genuinely saved, he should want to confess Christ with his lips, in the act of scriptural baptism, and by his life of active Christian service. Live in such a manner that your life will always portray Christ to others.

As you live the Christian life and work for the Lord, He will help you. When you pray in the name of Christ and according to the will of God, He will extend a helping hand to you. When you sin and need forgiveness, His Word reminds you: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." When we need guidance, He says: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." When sorrow comes, He bends low to comfort and says, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me."

The Lord does not save us, and then leave us to walk alone. He goes with us every step of the way. He says, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." It is wonderful to be saved. It is exceedingly wonderful to have the daily companionship of the One Who saved us. The Saviour is ready to help you in every time of need. Christ is your only hope for salvation. Won't you receive Him as your Saviour, enthrone Him as the Lord of your life, yield your will to Him, and do the things that please Him, as now we sing?