
A table of contents for *The Expository Times* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[Issue]_[1st page of article].pdf

distinction, success; these we may or may not obtain—certainly not as we once expected. In what sense, then, can we say that our hope is a prophecy? Well, those hopes, which we can say that our consciences permit us to regard as *demandable* for fulfilment from God, are prophecies. Some hopes you cannot demand at all. Vaguely we hope for a good time. Let us go down on our knees and try to demand that. We may hope for self-exaltation. Go down on our knees and try to demand that. Other hopes we can ask to be realized, but not demand; as, for instance, money, freedom from bereavement, health, escape from temptation. But the element of 'demand' can come in, in our hopes of holiness and love. These involve self-slaughter; they are our noblest; they justify life; we value them as God's purpose for us. In regard to them, we can demand and demand again. Yes! if God be true, ever before us there stretches the dazzling possibility of the snow-white character, that seeks loveliness from its own promptings. And not that only. We may dream also of the continual realizing of the gift that is given, which fills to overflowing the empty vessels of the heart, in the eternal and unfailing love of God in Christ.

'I have woven another year,' said God—
'And what's the good of it,' I said.

And ever the Christian makes confident answer—'to give a further chance wherein to achieve the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus.'

3. Meantime, our text indicates means whereby this hope may be kept bright:

(1) There is the means of Patience. The steady, brave doing of our daily duty does, as a matter of fact, work an experience which works hope. It is when we become fretfully impatient with life's present possibilities that we begin to doubt its future possibilities.

(2) There is the means of the comfort of the Scriptures. And it is an efficacious means; for in the Scriptures, amidst much else that sustains and inspires—there is set forth the old, rich, glad story of Jesus Christ, with its proof and its promise of what life can give.

Really, when Christ is vivid enough, we have no need of hope. We *know* then. It is significant that hope is spoken of much in the Old Testament and in the Epistles. It is never once mentioned in the Gospels. Men were too much taken up with Christ, to be doing anything but following—or opposing, Him who dwelt in the region of the certainties. Wherefore, when life's promises fail a little, let us come back to His side, and look into His eyes and see what life in Him can mean, and be filled with a new confidence. They walk securely who walk with Christ.[1]

[1] J. R. P. Sclater, *The Enterprise of Life*, 364.

The Meaning of 'Salvation.'

By Edward Grubb, M.A., Letchworth.

Few facts reveal more clearly the impression made by Christianity on human life than the *new words*, or old words carrying a new depth of meaning, with which our language has been enriched. Faith, hope, love, peace, grace, with their equivalents in other tongues, bear a meaning which to the pagan world was almost unknown, and to the Hebrews was still far short of their Christian significance. This fact is a proof, if any were needed, that Christianity brought to men new experiences; for words are the registers of experience. The study of their meanings is of great value, independent of any formal definitions at which the student may arrive; for it compels him to get behind words to the realities for which they stand.

Among such words is 'salvation'—fundamental in Christianity, but even there often imperfectly understood. We tend to interpret such words traditionally, thinking we know their meaning better than, in fact, we do. Many people undoubtedly think of salvation simply as deliverance from punishment in the world to come; but a very little careful study of the Bible will convince us of the inadequacy of such a view. In looking at the Old Testament two facts confront us: Salvation is usually regarded as something to be experienced (1) *in this world*, and (2) *by the nation* rather than by the individual. In early Hebrew days salvation was thought of as deliverance from the ills and troubles of this world, especially from enemies. It is Yahweh who 'saves,' though He often uses human instruments. The crowning instance of

salvation, with which the life of the nation was believed to have begun, was its deliverance from Egypt. Quite characteristic are these words, attributed to Yahweh through the mouth of Samuel in 1 S 10[18f.]:

'I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all the kingdoms that oppressed you; but ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saveth you out of all your calamities and your distresses.'

Yahweh was in 'a covenant relation' with His people, and as they followed Him faithfully He was bound by His agreement with them to save them from disaster. As the conception of His righteousness deepened, through the teachings of the prophets, the 'following' was more and more thought of as ethical, and salvation was conditioned by repentance. It was long taken for granted that repentance and the righteous life would always be rewarded by Yahweh with prosperity in this world; but experience undermined this naïve confidence. The problem of the suffering of the righteous became acute in Israel from days shortly before the Exile.

And so salvation was more and more projected into the future: it was associated with 'that Day' in which Yahweh would manifest His sovereign power, giving to Israel true repentance, restoring them to His favour, and ruling in righteousness over a better world. The little poem Is 12 (probably post-exilic) may be taken as an almost perfect expression of this great hope. 'Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.' The deepest note is struck by Jeremiah in his prophecy of the 'new covenant,' inscribed no longer on tables of stone but on the hearts of men. This inward conception of salvation carried with it the new note of individualism. Confronted with the long-continued non-repentance of Israel as a whole, Jeremiah and Ezekiel direct attention to the godly 'remnant' (if we may use Isaiah's word) to whom salvation will be granted. In many of the Psalms also the conception of salvation is deeply spiritual, and centres in a fresh experience of communion with God. But still it is in this world, renewed and transformed through man's submission to God's will and purpose, that salvation is to be experienced: there is as yet no definite belief in resurrection or life in a world to come.

The writers of Jewish Apocalypses, beginning with the Book of Daniel, sought to console and hearten the people of God in times of oppression and distress, with the assurance that God would certainly intervene to set right the wrongs of this present evil world. The chief function of the Messiah ('that Son of Man' of the Book of Enoch) would be to recompense the righteous in Israel, and punish with destruction their oppressors and the unrighteous among themselves. And, with this belief, there sprang up also the conception of personal immortality, which the more devout minds among the Jews gladly welcomed. It is to this period (shortly before the Christian era) that we owe belief in the Messianic judgment by which the righteous should be rewarded with eternal happiness in heaven, and the wicked sentenced to the fires of Gehenna.

Such was, in part, the background of Jewish thought against which our Lord came forth with His preaching of the Kingdom of God. His conception of the Kingdom was vastly more inward and spiritual than that of most of His contemporaries. There was, no doubt, a circle of devout Jews, among whom He Himself had been brought up, who were 'looking for the consolation of Israel,' and thought much more of deliverance from sin, and freedom for the life of righteousness, than of a merely national deliverance from Roman oppressors. It is on this inward conception of the Kingdom that Jesus builds. The Kingdom itself *is* salvation, wrought by God, not by a mighty outward miracle, but in the hearts of men. Salvation is both present and future: to be sought for and received, but in a real sense already here, in the experience of those who by repentance and childlike trust come into the place where Jesus is—the place of sonship with the Father, the great Family where legal ideas of merit are unknown. The note of gladness and joy which marked our Lord's proclamation of the Kingdom, as contrasted with Pharisaic legalism and even with the righteousness required by the Baptist, is due to the fact that it was a message, not only of repentance and righteousness, but of salvation—salvation into a life of love to God and men in which self with its cares and fears is forgotten in happy fellowship. The thoughts of Jesus are directed more to the positive results of salvation than to the evils from which God rescues men: he says more about salvation *to* than about salvation *from*.

At the same time, no one ever had so deep a sense of the evil of sin as Jesus; and He knew that salvation from sin was no easy task, for men or even for God Himself. Sin to Him was like a terrible disease, and salvation the recovery of health or soundness.[1] Yet it was not a disease

[1] The connexion is closer in Latin and in German than in English, for *salus* and *Heil* mean both health

that concerned man alone; it was a breach of personal relations, an outrage on the Father's love. Hence the close connexion of salvation with the forgiveness of sins which Jesus offered —the healing of the breach, the restoration of fellowship. The disease of sin, He suggests, is not like diseases of the body, which may come on a man through no fault of his own, and be cured while leaving him spiritually where he was before. It is disease of the will, and can only be cured by a change in the man's inmost self. Such a change can never be brought about by force or coercion, and rarely even by fear of punishment. But it is not beyond the Divine resources. When Jesus declared that it was hard for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God, the disciples asked in amazement, 'Then who can be saved?' And Jesus replied, 'All things are possible with God.' Not, we may be sure, the forcing of a selfish will into unselfishness. It can only mean that God has in reserve a *motive* which can win the wills even of the hard and the unloving; and such a motive, He goes on to suggest, will be supplied through the giving of His own life as 'a ransom for many,' the price of their deliverance. This self-sacrifice will be 'the blood of the (new) covenant,' which is to be established with the coming of the Kingdom—assuring men of acceptance and communion with God, purifying their hearts, and giving them knowledge of Himself, as Jeremiah had foretold.

Jesus used the Apocalyptic language to which His hearers were accustomed—especially after He had received from Peter the great confession of belief in His Messiahship, and had begun to teach them that He must die; but He used it in a deeper sense than any of them, even the Synoptic Evangelists, understood. This is what creates for us the greatest difficulty in interpreting His expressions. When He says that He will 'come in the glory of the Father with the holy angels,' it is almost certain that He had in mind no spectacular return in outward triumph, but the victory over human sin and evil that He would win through death. He says nothing about a '*second* coming,' and scarcely ever hints that He will be the instrument in God's hands for executing vengeance on the wicked.[1] Yet His disciples, from the very first, seem to have assumed that, since He had not fulfilled their expectations of what the Messiah would be and do, He would come *again* to finish His Messianic task—to set up a visible Kingdom of God, rewarding the righteous and punishing the wicked. This was an integral part of 'the gospel' as received by Paul, and it forms a striking feature in his earliest Epistles, those to the Thessalonians. In 1 Th 1[10] he exhorts his readers to 'wait for God's Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivereth us from the wrath to come.'[2] The second Epistle is less certainly his own composition, but it is even more lurid in its picture of Jesus as 'coming in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God.'

In the earliest days of the Christian Church, then, the primary thought attached to salvation by its greatest teacher was deliverance from the coming 'wrath of God.' They who are truly united to Christ by faith, and who are 'sanctified in spirit and soul and body,' will be 'without blame at his coming.' They were 'chosen unto salvation in sanctification of the Spirit'—no mere make-believe righteousness, but the real righteousness of Christ Himself, in which they share. The form of Paul's thought was eschatological, but behind it lay the substance of his experience of salvation as a fact in his inward life. And rapidly this inner experience of salvation began to remould his expressions. In his greater Epistles the idea of the coming of Christ to judgment is far less prominent than in those to the Thessalonians. In Romans the form of his thought is still eschatological—'the wrath' (he does not here say 'of God') is still a thing to be dreaded, and salvation is a future event in time.[3] But in Galatians it is 'deliverance from this present evil world,' and a being saved into the life of Christ Himself, which is a life of freedom from law and its bondage. In 1 Co 13 nothing matters except this life of love.

While it seems that many of Paul's deepest thoughts were imperfectly apprehended by the Church at large, his experience of personal salvation, of new life in Christ, was evidently in large measure shared by Christians in general. The experience of the Church was greater and deeper than any 'doctrine' of salvation, and most of the expressions

and salvation. In the Synoptics the word of Jesus to the ailing woman who has been cured by touching His garment is 'Thy faith hath *saved* thee' (Mk 5[34] and parallels). And in Ac 4[10-12] the power of God in Christ which has made the lame man 'whole' is also the power by which men can be 'saved.'

[1] Note in Lk 4[19] His omission of 'the day of vengeance of our God' (Is 61[2]).

[2] Compare the fuller statement in 1 Th 4[13]–5[11].

[3] Ro 13[11], 'Now is salvation nearer to us than when we believed.'

about it which we find in the New Testament deal with the experience rather than with the theory. They are really summed up in the announcement by the angel to Joseph in Mt 1^{21}: 'Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for it is he that shall save his people from their sins.' The theme of the New Testament is that Jesus Christ, by His life, and above all by His death and resurrection, saves men from sin; and this is made far more prominent than salvation from wrath or punishment. In 1 Peter, for example, while salvation is 'ready to be revealed in the last time,' and will, with difficulty, be attained even by the righteous, it is from a 'vain manner of life' that we have been 'redeemed with precious blood'; and the purpose of Christ's death is 'that we, having passed away from sins, might live unto righteousness.' In the Epistle to the Hebrews the blood of Christ is that which 'shall cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.' In the First Epistle of John the words 'save,' 'salvation,' do not occur at all, and in his Gospel they are of rare occurrence. But no writings are fuller of the message of the new life which is to be experienced in Christ. In Ac 2^{47} we read that 'the Lord added to it (the 'Fellowship') day by day those that were *being* saved'—an expression difficult to fit into any eschatological framework, but admirably descriptive of their experience.

When we pass beyond the first century, we find the attempt made by Greek thinkers—like Irenæus, and the great Alexandrians, Clement and Origen—to set forth Christianity in more philosophic terms; and they do this mainly with the help of the Greek conception of 'nature' or 'substance.' For them the problem of salvation is the changing of man's corrupt and perishable nature into the pure immortal substance of God Himself. Christianity is largely Hellenized. The ethical aspect of salvation, which, in the New Testament, is fundamental, here falls into a secondary place: the Greeks on the whole had not a deep sense of sin. Forgiveness, as the restoring of right relations between persons who have become estranged, almost passes out of sight, and its place is taken by the 'deification' of man. 'Jesus Christ,' says Irenæus, 'was made what we are that He might make us completely what He is.' In the still stronger words of Athanasius, 'He was made man that we might be made God.' This process of deification came to be closely associated with the sacraments, especially Baptism; and the tendency arose to render salvation in terms of mystery, not to say of magic. Salvation was still connected with the death of Christ, but no satisfactory doctrine of Atonement was worked out—the attention of the leaders of the Church being directed elsewhere. Irenæus, followed by Origen, was content to speak of it as a 'ransom' paid by the Father to the Devil; and this theory held the mind of the Church for nearly a thousand years. It was closely connected with the idea of the overcoming in humanity of corruption and death by the infusion of a pure immortal life—because corruption and death were attributed to, and almost personified in, an evil power, the Devil.[1] Salvation was the victory of Christ over the demonic powers, and the liberation of men from their authority and control. The conditions of salvation came to be thought of as twofold: baptism and correctness of belief. The culmination of the latter idea is seen in the so-called Athanasian Creed, which quite explicitly makes salvation from hell depend upon holding a complex doctrine as to the nature of God.

But it was Latin thought that did most to mould the notions about salvation that have held sway in Western Christendom. The Latins were not philosophical; they thought in terms, not of 'substance' or immortal life, but of law and the administration of justice. It is to Latin theologians, beginning with 'the fierce Tertullian,' that we owe the ideas of original sin, of the curse of eternal damnation in material fire to which all men were supposed to be subject, and of salvation as the rescue from it of believers in Christ, who offers satisfaction to the 'justice' of God, and even 'placates His wrath.'[2] We are not now dealing with theories of Atonement, and it is needless to pursue the history of these melancholy doctrines, from which the Fatherhood and saving love of God seems almost to have departed.[3] Happily, behind them all was the Christian experience of salvation, which preserved to the Church whatever spiritual life it had. For the most part this life ran in inconspicuous channels, in the religious experience of individuals unknown to fame, and of groups of believers at whom the official Church often looked askance, and whom at times it cut off from the Fellowship and strove by force to suppress

[1] Compare He 2^{14}: 'that through death he might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.'

[2] Augustine, *Enchiridion*, 32, quoted by Franks, *The Work of Christ*, i. 122.

[3] The present writer has attempted to do this in popular form in a small book, *The Meaning of the Cross* (1921).

as heretics. From time to time this hidden life of the Christian community sprang into vigour, as some individual, like St. Francis or Martin Luther, George Fox or John Wesley, recovered an intense experience of personal salvation, in the power of which he burst the hard crust of authoritative forms that had well-nigh stifled in human hearts the work of the Spirit. It is these new movements of the Spirit, much more than the dogmas of the Church, that throw the clearest light on the meaning and reality of the Christian salvation. They prove that there is in Jesus Christ, for those who can lay hold, with some fresh grasp of personal apprehension, of His revelation of God and of man's true life, a perennial power to deliver men from themselves and their self-centred fears, and to launch them forth, both as individuals and as communities, on the Divine task of helping to save the world. This new consciousness of God in Christ, rescuing men from sin and selfishness into a society of men and women held together and quickened by love to one another and to all men, must indeed create its own forms, but it is greater than any form or doctrine.

Who was the Rich Young Ruler?

By the Reverend John W. Clayton, Sunderland.

The Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles are very fragmentary documents, suggesting many intriguing inquiries. Sometimes connexions are fairly clear; in other cases they are so scanty as to move us to curiosity. The question as to the identity of the Rich Young Ruler, for instance, fills us with interest. His personality, his undoubted moral virtue, the fact that Jesus loved him and proposed for him so high a task—all stir a desire to know who he was.

It seems to be generally assumed that he must have become attached to the followers of Jesus in the final issue. Many indications point in that direction. There is the strikingly intimate character of the story. Added to this is the urgency of his dissatisfaction with material goods and with a merely negative moral attainment. Such a dissatisfaction, once aroused, especially as the remedy for the condition had been so clearly set out by Jesus, would not be lightly appeased. Still further, Jesus spoke of him as not far from the Kingdom, and he himself was sad at making the great refusal. These facts suggest that the Gospel incident was by no means theend of the story.

If the assumption that he finally joined himself to the disciples of Jesus be warranted, then he is to be sought amongst those who were in the company of the Apostles in the earliest days.

Was Paul the Rich Young Ruler?

The Apostle Paul has been suggested. At a Northfield Conference, some twenty years ago, Prebendary Webb-Peploe created no small stir by setting out to prove that the Rich Young Ruler was none other than Paul. He based this contention on several points of similarity. They would be about the same age. They had the same political standing in Judaism. Paul was a member of the Sanhedrin—the Rich Young Ruler, *ex-officio* as a ruler, must also have been a member. Both of them claimed to have fulfilled the requirements of the moral law. The young man asserted, in the very presence of Jesus, that from his youth up he had kept the Commandments. Paul avers that as touching the righteousness that was of the Law he was blameless. The Rich Young Ruler had great possessions. Paul's family could not have been poor, as we may judge from many little details. That he was sent to Jerusalem for education in the Law indicates that they were not without means. That he was taught a trade is nothing against this, since every Jewish boy had such a training.

The Prebendary concluded that altogether, though the theory could not be proved, there were many points in its favour. Mr. Webb-Peploe certainly put these points well—but there are many serious objections. The similarity in age and political standing may be allowed to pass. As to wealth—it is true that Paul's people could not have been poor, though there is no indication of 'great possessions.' A more serious objection is —that there is nothing, in either the Acts or Epistles, to incline us to believe that Paul ever came into touch with Jesus in the days of His flesh. Had he done so, it is scarcely credible, with his fine open mind, that he would have failed to mention it. This is especially impressive when we recall that