

LOST AND SAVED.

For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. – LUKE 19:10.

Nearly two thousand years ago Jesus, then present, affirmed this to be his mission; but as yet no visible evidence of its accomplishment appears. The world moves on in its downward course now, as then. Sin and misery triumph still, and century after century plunges successive generations into death. Have we failed to understand the import of the Master's words? or has he been unable to accomplish his purpose? or may it be that his purpose is so far-reaching as to be of future fulfillment? With these queries in view, let us consider the subject before us.

The words lost and saved have a common significance known to all: A thing lost is a thing once possessed, and a [R603 : page 6] thing saved is a thing once possessed and then lost and finally recovered. Jesus said the thing he came to save was the thing that men had lost; and the implication is, that since he had come to save the thing lost, men were unable to save it for themselves, which experience and many scriptures clearly prove. Now if we can determine just what man lost, we will know just what Jesus came to save. Man could not lose what he never had. Adam, who stood as the representative of our race, had a perfect human organism, and a right to everlasting continuance of life, on condition of obedience to God. He was privileged to enjoy all the delights of his Eden home, and the communion and blessings of God; in short, all the privileges that everlasting life under perfect human conditions is capable of enjoying and looking forward to.

All this Adam lost through sin, both for himself and his posterity. Home, happiness, communion with God, health, and life

itself, were lost. Consequently, mankind lies in utter wreck and ruin, dead and dying. In having lost his right to life he fell under the dominion of death, whose successive steps of misery, depravity, sickness and pain, end in total extinction of being, from which he can never recover himself.

Jesus came then to save and restore that which was lost; to restore man to his original (human) perfection, and to communion with God, to give him back his paradise restored, and all the pleasing prospects of future blessings that accumulating ages can bestow, and that the powers of perfect humanity will be capable of enjoying. What! does some one say, Is so much implied in those words of our Lord? Yes; this is one way in which our Lord foretold the restitution of all things. All this is implied in the word saved. Think of it; could the words mean less than this? Certainly not; and, from this and many other scriptures, we have learned to trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe. (1 Tim. 4:10). There is a special salvation for some, as well as a general salvation for all men, as Paul here intimates, but we are not considering the special salvation now.

In the above text Jesus was speaking of the general salvation of all men – the saving of that which was lost. For God "will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." (1 Tim. 2:4.) When men are actually saved, their restored existence will be as at first, dependent on obedience for its continuance, which obedience will be easy and productive of constant happiness when evil and temptation are fully removed, and the great deceiver and tempter is bound and finally destroyed, and when the law of God is written in their hearts. (Jer. 31:33).

But, we might inquire, when does our text indicate that Jesus would thus save the lost? However crude and indefinite the ideas of the Jews and the early disciples at first were concerning the

promised salvation, they had learned both from the prophets and from Jesus' teaching, that it would be accomplished when the kingdom of God should come. And when Jesus stated that he had now come to save the lost, they at once concluded that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.

Because they had drawn this inference, and, to correct their false impression, Jesus spoke a certain parable, the import of which was, that he must first go away and receive for himself the kingdom, and return; and that they, in the meantime, should, as faithful servants, occupy till he would come, using the talents entrusted to them according to his directions, and in the interest of his cause and of his coming kingdom, patiently waiting for their reward at his coming.

But Jesus implied that in some sense he came at that time, to save the lost – "The Son of Man is come," etc. And in one sense it was true, for he then purchased them with his own precious blood, and though not yet liberated from the prison of death, they may be truly reckoned as saved ever since their ransom was paid, for their raising out of death was from that moment made sure. Just as you might say of a pardoned criminal that he is a saved man, although even he himself may not yet know of his pardon nor have yet experienced a release.

Though no one is actually saved now, yet the Scriptures speak of believers as now saved by hope, that is, by accepting of God's promises as unquestionably sure, they may reckon themselves as already fully saved; not as merely awakened from death, but as saved from the last vestige of death and sin – as made perfect. "We are saved by hope; but hope that is seen is not hope, for what a man seeth why doth he yet hope for?" We do not see our salvation yet, except by faith. "But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with

patience wait for it." (Rom. 8:24,25.) Our hope and faith would indeed be vain unless salvation means much more than we now enjoy.

The Apostle's statements that "God is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that [now] believe," and that God "will have all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth," as well as many other scriptures, prove to us that all men are to be saved by Christ from the degradation, misery and death now upon all through Adam's disobedience. And yet they show us two classes of saved ones – all mankind and the Church. While all are saved, one class is specially saved. That is, by special arrangement, some (all believers of the gospel age) are reckoned saved in season to run for the prize offered during this age. One class is not more saved than the other; both the Church and the world are and will be completely saved from sin and its penalty: and the mass of the world will realize this in due time in their restoration to perfect human life, while those reckoned saved now, as though they had already received the perfect human life, are privileged to relinquish their new claim and title to it, presenting it as a sacrifice to God, holy and acceptable to him when offered in the acceptable time (the gospel age). And being thus sacrificed with Christ, they will be privileged to partake with him of a new nature. (2 Pet. 1:4.) These will receive glory, honor and immortality **[R604 : page 6]** – the divine nature; while the world in general will receive the glory, honor and blessedness of the perfect human nature, which is an image of the divine. (Gen. 1:27.) The former class is thus specially saved, severely disciplined and highly exalted that through them the blessings of restitution may flow to all the world when God's due time shall come.

We see, then, that while the full import of our Lord's words has not been understood by many, and while many believe that he is unable to save the lost as he promised to do, that the fact is that

his plan was so far-reaching that short-sighted, dying men could not measure or comprehend it. As now seen, the truth uttered in those few words required nearly three thousand years for its full accomplishment. At his first advent Jesus gave himself a ransom to save all (1 Tim. 2:6); during the centuries since, he has been developing the class who have in this time followed him in sacrifice, and who are to share with him in the work of saving or restoring all things, and within the coming thousand years the work of saving men will be completed. "If," then, "when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by his life." (Rom. 5:10.)

Because in God's order men could only be saved by a payment of their penalty which would be the BASIS of their reconciliation and atonement with God, therefore, as a means to an end, we see that Jesus' mission at his first advent was to save in the sense of redeeming, while his second advent will complete the work by restoring to perfection all the redeemed – all for whom Christ died, and by the grace of God he tasted death [sin's penalty] for every man. (Heb. 2:9.)

There is one other thought of special importance in this text. It is that the Son of Man came to seek that which was lost. Now we inquire, Is there any evidence of very earnest seeking of lost ones on the part of our Lord? Some would think not. All men were lost, and this text implies, while John 12:47 clearly declares his purpose to save all; but he said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matt. 15:24.) He did not seek out any of the lost Gentiles, and charged his disciples not to do so for some years. But Jesus did seek out a certain class – the meek – who were waiting for the promised salvation; and it was his purpose to begin with Jerusalem, to save such as would believe, and to give to those of the seed of Abraham who believed, the first offer of the high

calling. And during the centuries since, he has only been seeking out and saving (reckoning saved) the same class (the meek) among the Gentiles, and making to such believing ones the same offer of the divine nature – a heavenly calling.

But a grander time of seeking is yet to come, for all the millions that are completely lost in death are yet to be sought out and saved. And where shall they be found? Notwithstanding the theories of men to the contrary, the Scriptures plainly teach that in death man's being is dissolved, that he is destroyed, blotted out of existence, that he is nowhere to be found. And with this fact in mind we might inquire with the Prophet Job, "If a man die shall he live again?" With men such a thing seems quite impossible, but "Why should it be thought a thing incredible that God should raise the dead?" (Acts 26:8.) He that was able to create is also able to re-create those once completely destroyed. And through the Prophet Isaiah the Lord speaks of the restitution as a new creation, saying, "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth" – not the physical earth, for that abideth forever – but the world of mankind is to be re-created. And the Lord says: "Be ye glad and rejoice forever in that which I create." (Isa. 65:17,18.) That the restored or re-created being will recognize himself and also his neighbors of former acquaintance, is unquestionably proven by many scriptures (Ezek. 16:61,63; 20:43; 36:31; Zech. 12:10; Psa. 22:27), and illustrated in the few cases where the dead have been measurably restored, as Lazarus and others.

Job answers our question very clearly when he says (chap. 7:21), "Now shall I sleep in the dust; and thou shalt seek me in the morning, [the morning of the resurrection or restitution] BUT I SHALL NOT BE" – I shall be destroyed, blotted out of existence. But nevertheless, though thus destroyed, he says, "Thou shalt call and I will answer thee." (Job 14:15.) Like Lazarus, at the call of

Jesus, earth's dead millions shall again spring into existence. David declares the same truth when he says, "Thou turnest man to destruction and [then] sayest, return, ye children of men." And with him we must say, "Bless the Lord, O my soul; who redeemeth thy life from destruction?" (Psa. 90:3; 103:1,4.) O that all the world could now realize the glorious import of those words of our Lord, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." It was a glorious truth to realize at his first advent, that the plan of God had so far developed that the promised Messiah had actually come to save men by the sacrifice of himself. But it is still more glorious now to realize that our Lord has come the second time, to apply the benefits of that sacrifice, to claim and restore his purchased possessions, to actually and completely save that which was lost.

While we have thus stated what we believe to be the Scripture teaching concerning the salvation of men, we would yet more particularly answer the inquiry of some –

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

Perhaps the reader already sees that he has nothing to do. All that was necessary to procure your salvation was done long ago, before you were born; and in consequence of the redemption provided, all mankind, whether they ever knew it, or believed it or not, are going to be brought to life again, are going to be saved from the Adamic death. God will have all men to be saved; and though they may never have known him before, to be then brought to a knowledge of the truth.

Well, we seem to hear some one say, that is a strange answer. I thought you would tell me to pray or to get some Christian friends to pray for me, that I must try to realize that I am the chief of sinners,

that I must kneel at a mourner's bench, or something of the kind, but you have not even told me to repent or believe. You simply say that I am saved, and that I have had, and can have nothing to do with it.

No, friend, we do not say that you are saved, but that you will be saved; and that you have had, and can have nothing to do with the means which procured your salvation. It is a free gift of God, in consequence of which you will be saved in the coming age; but you are in no sense saved now unless you have come to believe in Christ as your Redeemer. If you do believe this Bible truth, then you may through that faith reckon yourself as saved now – saved by hope; but you must wait for the actual salvation until God's due time. (2 Thes. 3:5.) Of course faith in and reliance on Christ as your Redeemer implies a realization of your need of a Redeemer, and a repentance and turning from sin. You may have been one of the very chief of sinners, or you may not have been so bad as some others; however, you were bad enough to merit the just condemnation of God's law, for he who offends in one point is guilty of all. (James 2:10.) He is a violator of the law, and as a consequence is under condemnation. If you have always lived just as morally and as carefully as you could, you have fallen short of perfection, because of the weakness of your nature, inherited through Adam's fall. (Rom. 5:12.) But though nothing that you have done or could do could save you from death, that which Christ has done procures your release from it.

Paul said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." This is the condition on which we receive the reckoned salvation now, and it will also be the condition on which the world will receive their actual full salvation in the ages to come. We must bear in mind that the awakening of men from death is only the beginning of their salvation. Not until they have, under the

discipline of the next age, reached perfection, are they fully saved. Although we might truly say men are saved when first awakened from death, they are not "saved to the uttermost" until brought to full perfection of being. But none will be thus "saved to the uttermost" who do not accept of their release from death as the direct result of the sacrifice of Christ. And realizing this, they must repent of past sins and turn to God. Otherwise they die the second death, from which there is no release.

Well, says our inquirer, this seems true and Scriptural, but what advantage is to be gained by being reckoned saved now? Would it not be as well to wait and give ourselves no concern about it, but let God's plan take its course? O no, we answer, there is an advantage, a great advantage to be gained by prompt faith and obedience as soon as we can gain sufficient knowledge on which to base our faith and obedience.

The special privilege of those justified by faith (or reckoned saved) during the gospel age, has been their right to present themselves as acceptable sacrifices to God – joint-sacrifices with Jesus Christ, and thereby to become joint-heirs with him of all things. That privilege, we believe, began with the day of Pentecost and ended in October, 1881.* While this special privilege was not offered to any before or since that time, another special privilege was granted to believers before this age, and we see no reason why a similar privilege may not be granted to believers since the gospel age ended.

*It may be proper, to guard against misunderstanding, to say that though all had sacrificed to the extent of CONSECRATION at that time, all have not yet completed the sacrifice and will not till actually dead. *It may be proper, to guard against misunderstanding, to say that though all had sacrificed to the extent of CONSECRATION at that time, all have not yet completed the sacrifice and will not till actually dead.

Those justified by faith in past ages will have no need of trial and discipline in the next age, for their judgment is past; and consequently in the instant of [R605 : page 7] their resurrection they will be raised to perfect human existence.

A similar blessing, we believe, is in store for those of the world who now repent of sin, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as their Redeemer and rightful Lord, and wholly turn to God. As heretofore frequently shown, we find that we are now living in the Day of the Lord, in the beginning of the Millennial Age – the Times of Restitution. And since our Lord is present for the very purpose of restoring life and all things, we think it possible for such to remain without ever passing into death. It is just as easy when God's due time comes to keep men from going into death as it is to raise them out of it. This is not possible in the case of those who are to change their nature and become "new creatures"; it applies only to those justified ones who never started for the high calling. Therefore we should expect that such should in answer to prayer be healed from sickness, etc., but they cannot be brought to full perfection until the saints are first glorified; for "They without us shall not be made perfect." (Heb. 11:40.)

Probably very few will come to realize their privilege now. The tendency of the world is more and more towards skepticism, and few can claim this privilege; nevertheless; we believe it to be the privilege of any such who have faith to claim it.

In answer, then, to the question, What must I do to be saved? we would say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Your salvation may begin now, and progress until you are restored to the perfection of your being – saved to the uttermost.

For he (Christ) is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him." (Heb. 7:25.)

ED. D. R.
