

WE SHOULD SAVE OURSELVES.

"Save yourselves from this untoward generation."
– Acts 2:40.

While Orthodoxy and Rome make *strong* and *plain* pleadings with mankind to save themselves from "Hell" and never-ending torture, the thinking Christian must have been struck with the fact that our Savior never made such *plain* entreaty. Jesus taught a punishment and trouble now, and in the future, for the wicked, but it was always by *parable*. The world misunderstood his teachings and continues to, but it was the blessed privilege of his disciples to understand. (Luke 8:10.) Those wholly consecrated now, and gladly following the "Lamb whithersoever he goeth," know that their Master will continue to give them "meat in due season," both in "things new and old," as they are "able to bear it." – John 14:26; Matt. 24:45; 13:52.

While the apostles followed the Lord's injunction and preached the glad tidings of a coming kingdom in which would "dwell righteousness," they made no plain statement regarding an *endless condition of conscious misery*. Yet Paul assures us that he did not shrink from making known the *whole* counsel (will) of God. (Acts 20:27.) Peter, in the text quoted at the beginning of this article, exhorts, "Be saved from this perverse generation." (Rotherham's translation.) Not one word about being saved from a future, never ending misery, though the time was wondrously propitious for such a message, if such a doom awaits those refusing to be guided by the call. The Pentecostal blessing had just been received, and the Holy Spirit was present with *gifts of power* to aid in promulgating a gospel of fear, if there were need of preaching such a gospel. Peter, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, simply pleads, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation." Will it not be wise for us to go to the Bible and ask our Master to free us from all prejudice and tradition, and

give us the "pure milk of the word" in this matter? Many earnest lovers of the Lord, whose greatest desire is to "spend and be spent" in his service, so agonize in the thoughts of the future torture of those not now reached by the "Glad Tidings," that they cannot "be anxious about nothing," but in nervous dread spend days and months in distressing labor to "save souls," and find no rest. Others grow indifferent at the continued and growing apathy with which their message is received, and become lukewarm. A true understanding of the proclamation entrusted to them would enable all true Christians to more fully and joyously fulfill their service.

Let us try to find in the Scriptures what there was "untoward" or "perverse" about the generation of Peter's day, and see if the same conditions yet prevail. In Eph. 2:2, Paul says, "Wherein in times past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the *spirit* that now worketh in the children of disobedience." Do we not find here the cause for the "perverse generation" of Peter's time, and while we now have different manifestations, does not the same *spirit* work in the present "children of disobedience?" In the same epistle (6:12), Paul further explains that the spirit is due, not only to depraved human nature, but also to the influence of the devil and his angels. The work of this spirit in the flesh is clearly set forth in Gal. 5:19-21, and in verses 22-23 is contrasted the fruits of the *new spirit* in those who have been saved from this "untoward generation." In this connection also study carefully Eph. 4:17-32 and Col. 3:1-17. These Bible teachings set forth grandly what message of salvation the Christian is to proclaim, and give us an incentive to walk humbly in *love* before our God *now*, knowing He will exalt us "in due time."

Those who have been "delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Col. 1:13), do not "commit (practice) sin, but purify themselves, even as he is pure" (1 John 3:3-8), and thus are saved from this evil generation *now*. While they may be "overtaken in a fault," or through the wiles of the devil

be led for a while to wander, their Lord will watch and discipline them, to lead them back into the fold, and if they heed his leadings, they will overcome these evil influences, because "greater is he who is in them, than he who is in the world." – 1 John 4:4.

To be "saved" is to have *all the desires of the flesh* (those proper and right, as well as the sinful ones) under subjection, and laid daily on God's altar, a willing sacrifice (Rom. 12:1), that we may make up in the flesh that which is "behind in the sufferings of Christ." – Col. 1:24.

With this Scriptural teaching showing salvation to be a present condition, which reaches into the age to come, how the mist clears, and how precious becomes our privilege to be "new creatures in Christ Jesus." Becoming associates of the Lord Jesus, and "followers of God, as dear children," we come into a perfect love which casts out all fear, for fear has torment (1 John 4:18), and we find ourselves possessed, not of a spirit of bondage again to fear, but we receive a spirit of adoption whereby we cry "Abba, Father." (Rom. 8:15.) No necessity now for going along fearfully, wondering if we are saved: we have His spirit "witnessing with ours that we *are* the children of God." We know daily that it is our meat and drink to do our Master's will. Every day's experience demonstrates that we are *saved from* the spirit that "now worketh in the children of disobedience." We long to be *perfectly obedient*, and but for our realization that Christ is our "wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:30), the sense of our shortcomings would be unbearable. Our Master gives us his peace, which the world can "neither give nor take away," and thus takes the burden of our frailty and incompetency from us, and we are able to stand *complete* in him.

We thus *rest in Him* in the present and *for the future*, knowing that He has "all power in heaven and on earth." Believing that while we were "without strength, in *due time* Christ died for the ungodly," so too do we believe that "in *due time*" his ransom will be testified

unto all men. (1 Tim. 2:6.) He is not dependent on sinful flesh and blood to perfectly carry out the divine plan of "Justification of Life" for all men. (Rom. 5:18.)

As our Lord Jesus offered himself a sacrifice first, and was then exalted, so now, during this Gospel age, he permits the "called" who fulfil their consecration and become the "chosen" (Matt. 22:14) to suffer with him, that they may reign with him, *when* he has established his kingdom on earth. (2 Tim. 2:12.) During this present evil age only those who "love righteousness and hate wickedness" (Heb. 1:9) receive the spirit of God, and only those who have this spirit can understand the things we speak, for "the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. Now, *we* have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the *princes* of this world, that come to nought; but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto *our* glory, which none of the princes of this world knew, for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? *But we have the mind of Christ.* – 1 Cor. 2:14,12,13,6,7,15,16.

W. E. P.
