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“RESTORE UNTO ME THE JOY OF THY SALVATION.”

Sermon preached by Mr. H. Patterson, at “Providence” Chapel,
West Norwood, on Lord’s Day Evening, March 13th, 1932.

“Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation.”—Psalm 51. v. 12.

THIS morning we had the case of a brother of David, the publican. His language was very similar to that we have to take up to-night. His cry was, “God be merciful to me a sinner” (Luke xviii. 13). The cry of David was, “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions” (Psa. li. 1).

As God may help me, first of all, I would look at this great word here—Salvation. It is the greatest work of God. It is that, that will bring everlasting honour and glory to the Triune God—the salvation of a number of human beings that no man can number. Oh! my soul, think of this word—salvation. Only *sinner*s need it, only *sinner*s will ever know it—that is, to rejoice in it—only *sinner*s will ever apply for it, only *sinner*s will know the reality, the worth, the value, the preciousness of this great, this matchless word, salvation. It will take all eternity to understand it fully. There is creation; that is wonderful. Oh! the child of God sees so much of the power and goodness of his God in creation as he reads through the first chapter of the Book of Genesis in particular. God’s providences—they are wonderful. His management of the whole of creation from the beginning until now, that is very wonderful. They reflect glory upon the Triune God in every detail, but *salvation*, what a different word! It has a bright side and a dark side connected with it. Joined to it is sin. There would be no need of salvation were it not for sin. *Sin* belongs to us; *salvation* belongs to God. There is no *salvation* in us; there is no *sin* in God. Salvation is wholly from God. There is nothing man can do which can bring about anything in connection with his salvation. Salvation is seen in God’s thoughts concerning His people before the world began, in His sovereign choice of that people, in His adopting that people into His family, calling them His own dear children, and this was before sin entered. Salvation is seen when we look at the Lord Jesus Christ, yea, when we only mention His Name. That *great* Name: “Thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save.”—He shall be a Saviour, salvation shall be His, He shall be the Author and Finisher of it—“Thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins” (Matt. i. 21). Oh! *what* a Saviour, an all-sufficient Saviour!

"A mighty Saviour suits me well,
A helpless wretch am I."

Salvation. Why! it was His delight before the world began. He declared in Proverbs viii. 31 that His "delights were with the sons of men," "before the day star knew its place, or the planets went their round." In eternity it was in the mind of Jehovah that there should be a number that no man can number that should be saved in the Lord Jesus Christ with an everlasting salvation. Oh! how it shines! how it was seen when the heavens opened and the shout of the angels was heard, "Glory to God in the highest!" (Luke ii. 14.) On what ground? Because salvation was now to be fully known: "Glory to God in the highest;" and, because of salvation that shall be experienced, "on earth peace, goodwill toward men." Salvation. Simeon declares he saw it. What a peculiar remark the man makes. He does not say, "Mine eyes have seen the Author of salvation;" but, "Mine eyes have seen *Thy Salvation*"—Salvation *itself* (Luke ii. 30). I believe the dear man not only believed that the Babe he then looked upon was the Saviour, but, in Him, he saw by faith the water and blood that flowed from His wounded, pierced side. I believe he beheld in that blessed Person that righteousness that would cover and adorn the naked soul of all the election of grace, and could see Him as the Bread of life and the Water of life; yea, he would be ready to say, "Christ is *All and in all.*" What a wonderful thing—salvation. How it was seen again when the Lord Jesus had that load, that *intolerable* load, laid upon Him. It must have been something that angels gazed upon—to behold their Maker prostrate in the Garden about this wonderful business of salvation for His Bride; hear Him groan; behold His sweat of blood; look at the cup He had to drink to procure salvation for His dear people. It is not often I get a sight of this, but I did get a view of it only a fortnight ago in reading those two hymns of Hart's, one on the sufferings of Christ in Gethsemane, and the other on His sufferings on Calvary's tree, and, if I am not deceived, there was a love went out of my heart toward that blessed "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," which I cannot describe. These times are very rare with us, but they leave a mark behind them that seems to last, and such seasons comfort and strengthen our heart even for days and days together. Salvation is seen there. Take the Word and humbly pray to be taken into Gethsemane and to Calvary, to view the Lord Jesus scourged, with a crown of thorns upon His head, a robe upon Him, a reed in His hand, the filthy Jew spitting upon Him, and shouting and crying for His blood, giving Him a cross, nailing Him to it, and, as Dr. Watts says, standing round Him like "savage beasts." He says:

"The glorious Saviour they deride
And mock the pangs in which He died."

My soul, what was this for? *Was it for crimes that thou hast done?* Was it for *thy* sins? Was this *thy* Substitute, bearing the weight of *thy* sins? Oh! *everything* hinges upon this. If He is *thy* Saviour, *all* will be well. If thou art not numbered with that people, thou wilt have to bear thine own sins to all eternity. *We must* have a Substitute. *Salvation.* Ah! He said, "It is finished!" (John xix. 30.) Oh! I rejoice in a finished salvation. "What wilt Thou have me *to do?*" This is one of the first cries of a sinner who is mixed and muddled in his judgment, and scarcely knows where he is. Ask a better question; ask, What has *He done?* *He* says, "It is finished." *Salvation* is finished. "Everything is now provided; everything that shall make the salvation of all My dear people complete—*all is finished.*" There is a robe to adorn their naked soul; there is precious blood to wash out the stain of all their guilt. "*It is finished.*" "It is finished; and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost" (John xix. 30). And now He is in heaven, and is still the salvation of His people. Oh! what a sight to behold the wounds in hands and feet and side. That was a sacred privilege granted those disciples. "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord" (John xx. 20). Thomas was not present at the first, but was the second time, and was brought to believe that He was the risen Christ, as the Lord said, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side" (John xx. 27). "It is I, Thomas; you should have believed it. Now you have fully proved that I am this same Jesus who was dead and am alive again, and who will live for evermore." This is salvation.

Now, there is a people that shall know something about it. Are you among that people? *Am I one of them?* There are millions that die ignorant of God's great salvation. You and I were ignorant of it at one time. If it had been said, "You need salvation," we should have replied, "What is it?" or perhaps some of us thought we had it. We mixed with God's people, and imagined we were right, and they probably took us to be one of them, until God sent an arrow into our soul. What a solemn thing! That caused us to examine our own religion. Blessed be God, He undeceived us. Have you had such a time, when God caused you to feel,

"I'm a wretch undone
Without His sovereign grace?"

"I deserve hell. I have broken all Thy commands; I have no excuse to make for my sins. If you deal with me according to them, you must open the earth's mouth and cause me to drop into hell." I can remember one very dry summer in particular, and I had to cross several meadows in which there were large gaps in the earth, and I walked round more than one rather than stretch across them, for fear they should open wider and I should fall into the pit. That is the day of "Jacob's trouble."

That is the time when a man is stopped in his sins, when God is preparing him for His great and glorious salvation. Now this man will be found crying for it, begging for it, beginning, as we found this morning, as the publican began, with a different religion altogether from that of the Pharisee, who told some dreadful lies to God. But the publican stood afar off, not being able to look up to heaven, smiting upon his breast, and crying from the depth of his heart, "God"—*the great God before whom I have sinned, the God that has power to cast body and soul into hell*—"have mercy upon me! 'Be merciful to me a sinner' (Luke xviii. 13), a condemned sinner, a totally depraved sinner, a hell-deserving sinner." Have you been there? There is hope for you if you have. The Holy Ghost shows this poor thing that there is salvation suitable, in every particular, to meet God's requirements. And we remember the dawn of day, the first ray of hope, the first word, which caused us to cry, "Is it possible that I shall escape hell? Will God have mercy upon me? Why, *there* is a man upon whom He had mercy—I seem to feel a little love to *that* man; there is another poor woman, and she tells the same tale—well, there seems to be a slight hope. Perhaps He *may* come *my* way." The poor blind man heard that Jesus of Nazareth was to pass by, and they could not stop him crying out, "Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me!" (Mark x. 47.) "Be quiet," said they; but he cried the more. Can you stop a poor sinner that feels his need of mercy? *Nay*, you might as well try to do away with salvation itself. *God* has opened his mouth, *God* has made him feel his need of mercy.

"Mercy through blood is *all* my plea,
O God be merciful to me"—

and he will get it. He cannot die without it. God does not make a favourite of one more than another of His family. He told Simeon that he should not die until he had seen the Lord's Christ; neither did he. Immediately he had seen Him, he was ready to die, and said, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word: for mine eyes have seen Thy Salvation" (Luke ii. 29, 30). Oh! it's a wonderful thing to have a faith's view of the Lord Jesus Christ. Poor, trembling, doubting soul, pray that thou mightest have a faith's view of the Lord Jesus Christ; for it is in this way that, as you look upon Him, there is virtue in Him that is conveyed into thy soul. I know that is true. There is comfort. There is a sweet, blessed feeling conveyed to your heart whilst you gaze upon the dear Son of God. Why, this was what John meant when he preached Him in this way: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John i. 29), and the Holy Ghost enabled men to gaze upon that blessed Person, and salvation, I believe, was conveyed into their soul as they looked. Dost thou know anything of this part of vital godliness? Then, what about salvation received? Dost thou know what that

means? The day when you first believed. The day that the burden of sin fell from thy heart. I like to go through my old Bible, and it is marked, "Sealed with the love of God" at such and such a time, and that was real. Some 32 years ago, *it was real*. I was in despair, and God came and whispered these precious words into my heart with a power that can only be conveyed by the Holy Ghost into the heart of a broken sinner, "Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine" (Isa. xliii. 1). This is salvation received. The love, the joy, the peace, the ease, one cannot describe. Communion with God follows, a walking with God in the blessed doctrines of grace, a greater understanding of the Trinity in Unity, a knowledge of the power and faithfulness of God to His promises, a walking with Him, anticipating that

"When this lisping, stammering tongue
Lies silent in the grave"

then you will be in heaven. This is a little of the joy of our first love. Some of you have had it. Bless God for it. David had it. You may read so from the Psalms: "We will rejoice in Thy salvation, and in the Name of our God we will set up our banners" (Psa. xx. 5). But now he had lost it—not salvation; he had not lost that, because God had not given it into his hands to be able to lose, but he had lost the *joy* of salvation. That *can* be lost. Salvation cannot be lost, but the joy of it can. Some of you know, as well as I do, that this is solemnly true. We might well ask, how can a sinner lose the joy of God's salvation? And some would say, "It is sin that is the cause." Yes, chiefly, but not always. For instance, take the case of Job. It was not his sin that brought him into such a dreadful state, as it was God trying his faith. God has set his case in the Word as one of a remarkable nature—that there should be found a man, so high in His esteem, who feared God and eschewed evil, and God should listen—we say it with all reverence—that He should be pleased to listen to the words of Satan, who charged God's servant with hypocrisy, and for God to say, "Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life" (chap. ii. 6), and Satan goes from the presence of God, doubtless, to do his worst. It was as if he said, "I will do all I possibly can; I will take all his temporal favours away; I will touch his flesh, and I will make that man curse the God which he blesses now;" but Job does not. No child of God can possibly curse God, but this is what Satan does: he is the cause of the joy of the salvation of poor Job being taken away; and God hides His face, and darkness comes into his soul, and he, the tempter, begins with all the rage and malice of hell, to assault him. His wife even says, "Curse God, and die" (chap. ii. 9); and his false friends accuse him, as much as to say, "God is dealing with you after your sins; you deserve to be where you are;" and Job cries out, "Oh that I knew where I might find Him!" (chap. xxiii. 3). "If I could

only find Him whom I love, whom I serve, with whom I walked, whose presence I enjoyed, 'when His candle shined upon my head, and when by His light I walked through darkness' (chap. xxix. 3), but now I fail to find Him." "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation." But we will readily grant that the general cause of the sinner losing the joy is sin. It was so in David's case. God has given us a large account of his life, of his ups and downs, of his sad fall, and He has placed these things in His Word as a warning: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. x. 12). You may read the solemn account of David's double sin, and, doubtless, after having covered it over, he wiped his mouth and said he had done no wrong. He most likely imagined that things would go on comfortably, but what had he lost? *Sinner*, dost thou know what thou hast lost? The joy. The joy of communion with God; the joy that a child of God has in prayer to his God at times; the joy of worshipping Him in His house of prayer; the joy of communing with other of God's people. I do not believe that any of these things were then enjoyed by David, and, what was more, the joy of the presence and blessing of his God was gone. No guiding eye, no helping hand, no arms felt under him, no kiss from His mouth, no banqueting with his God. Oh! what a solemn, solemn state sin reduced the poor man to. Dost thou know what this is? Was there not a time when you enjoyed God's salvation? Perhaps you have lost it, and have gone as far as to say, "I will go to chapel, but I will never speak any more about it." But are you happy? Are you comfortable? Can you kneel down as aforetime? Can you open God's Book, and say, "I have found His Word, and it is like honey and the honeycomb to my soul."? I have often heard people say, "I have a hard heart." But what is the cause? There *must* be one. You have sinned, you have backslidden. You are looking another way. Your hands are holding some forbidden thing. Your heart is estranged from God. It is divided. You have lost the joy. God is not angry with the persons of His people, but He can be angry with their ways. I know that is true. You have lost the joy of His salvation, and what is salvation without the joy of it? Can you rest upon past experiences? Can you say, "Twenty years ago I was all right; it's all right now"? No; you cannot. You want a daily supply, and where that is withheld barrenness follows, darkness follows. You will walk without the light of the Sun. There will be no drinking from the sweet Well of Bethlehem; never will you feel you want to hear God's people talk about their joy. You will be filled with jealousy when they speak of how God favours them. "Oh!" you will say, "He does not favour me like that." But is there not a cause? In your first love you said, "Oh! I hope I shall always be blessed as I am now. He is precious to my soul. I am a miracle of grace. It seems wonderful that He should have singled me out, 'one of a family,' and

blessed me in this marvellous way." But now you have let the enemy in. He has got in at "Eye-gate," "Ear-gate" and "Mouth-gate," and now you say:—

"Where *is* the blessedness I knew,
When first I saw the Lord,
Where is the soul refreshing view,
Of Jesus and His Word?"

"What peaceful hours I then enjoyed,
How sweet their memory still,
But now I find an aching void,
The world can never fill."

Is there any hope for you? Yes; you are *still* a *child*. You are *still* in the covenant. You are *still* loved, because it is with an *everlasting* love that God loves His dear people. But you have lost the joy, and something must be done ere that joy is restored. Says God to Nathan, "You go to My child, he has sinned; take the rod with you;" and Nathan begins with his parable of the one little ewe lamb. "And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die"—he had so sunk into such a pharisaical spirit—"And Nathan said to David, Thou *art* the man" (2 Sam. xii. 5, 7). Oh! I can see that servant looking the king in the face: "*Thou art the man!*" and I can see David's eyes drop, and I can imagine the solemn pang that was felt in his soul. Ah! it does not need anyone to tell him in detail what he had been doing. Conscience had done its work over and over again, and had said to him, in effect, "You know it is a forbidden path; you know it is sin, and God will punish sin; God will chasten you for your sin." Sin is such a hardening thing that he grows hard in committing it; but note, in one moment down he falls: "*I have sinned*" (2 Sam. xii. 13). Oh, what blessed music there is in these words! it is the cry of a penitent sinner: "I have sinned." Do you know that cry? If that is in your heart, it will come through your lips, and there will be a falling before God, a confessing with godly sorrow; and, joined to that confession, there will be the acknowledgment that it was against *God*: "I have sinned against the Lord." The poor prodigal was brought there. When he came to himself that was his cry, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants" (Luke xv. 18, 19). And look how he was restored. I do not know how long will elapse before you receive the joy again, but it will be restored. But before the restoration this must come: a godly confession, a godly sorrow, a godly forsaking, a godly hating of oneself.

"I hate the sin that made Thee mourn
And drove Thee from my breast."

Then comes the cry, "Restore." "Oh! give me back Thy salvation; give me communion; give me access to Thy mercy—

seat; give me faith to plead once more the precious sin-cancelling blood; give me grace to remember that precious truth, 'Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever' (Heb. xiii. 8). 'Restore.' Enliven my heart, strengthen my faith; remove the distance, and purge the sins of my heart and life. 'Cleanse Thou me from secret faults. Keep back Thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me'" (Psa. xix. 12, 13). Oh! you will have to pray this on your knees. You will have to find the Word of God again; that will have to be opened. "Is there any hope?" you will say. Then your eyes may light on this very Psalm, "To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after his sin with Bath-sheba." "Why," you will say, "God restored *that poor sinner* who was allowed to go to such lengths. I will go to God, and I will ask Him, if He can and if He will, to have mercy upon me, and restore unto me the joy that I have lost;" and so you will begin to pray these many petitions that are found in this Psalm, and you will get it in God's good time. You will get the restoration. He has a wonderful way of coming again. "But I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you" (John xvi. 22). And oh! how jealous that poor soul is. Oh! how he says, "Do not let me sin again; shut my eyes to it, Lord; close my ears to it; do not let me have one moment in which to be able to sin; and in the future, 'Uphold me with Thy free Spirit.' Then, what will I do? 'I will teach transgressors Thy ways.' I will tell them they need never despair since I have mercy found, and 'Sinners shall be converted unto Thee.'" So David goes with a broken and a contrite heart and sacrifices to his God, and he tells God of what He had been to him, and I believe he would say, "For the sake of Thy dear Son, *do* forgive, *do* restore, and bless me as aforetime;" and He did it. And you have the proof of that in David's last words, "Although my house be not so with God; yet He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although He make it not to grow" (2 Sam. xxiii. 5). Amen.

G.w. another sermon will be published in July, 1932.

Copies can be obtained from Mr. Hubert J. Patterson, "Bewlys," 20 Dixon Road, South Norwood, S.E.25.

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