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**SALVATION AS IT IS NOW RECEIVED**  
**NO. 3223**  
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*“Whom having not seen, you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.” 1 Peter 1:8, 9.*

WE usually speak of the greater benefits of salvation as being in the future. We desire that we may be found in Christ in the day of His appearing and that we may have a share in His eternal glory. But, beloved, salvation is not altogether a thing of the future—it is very decidedly a present matter, a blessing to be possessed now and to be enjoyed now—and our text brings out that idea very clearly! Peter does not write about the elect strangers hoping to receive salvation, by and by, but putting it all in the present tense, he says, “Whom having not seen, you love. Though now...you rejoice...receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.” The perfection of salvation is reserved for the second coming of the Lord, for at present the body is mortal because of sin—it is subject to pain and it will die unless the Lord should first come and it will, for a while, lie in the grave. But at His appearing shall be a resurrection of the body and then body and soul reunited shall experience the fullness of salvation! In that respect, therefore, salvation still remains in part a matter for the future, yet with the true child of God, the essence of salvation is a thing of today. Even now we rejoice with unspeakable joy and full of glory, receiving the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls!

I am going to speak upon this matter in the following way. First, we will inquire, what part of salvation do we receive here and now? Secondly, how do we now receive salvation? And then, thirdly we will make the

solemn inquiry for all here, Have we received salvation, and if so, how far have we gone in the reception of it?

I. My first question is, WHAT PART OF SALVATION DO WE RECEIVE HERE AND NOW? My first answer to the question is that, in a certain sense, we already possess the whole of it, for all salvation is wrapped up in Christ and Christ is ours if we are truly believing in Him. He is this day our Saviour and our all in all—He is already “made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.” There is nothing of salvation that is outside of Christ and, therefore, since Christ is ours, the whole of salvation is ours. It is ours by the grip of faith and the grace of hope—that living hope which is sure of realization—that well-grounded hope which cannot be disappointed. Our expectation is of so vivid a character that it brings not only near to us, but into actual present possession, joys which as yet are not revealed! So again I say that, in a sense, it is true for us to say that we have received in faith and hope the salvation of our souls if we have truly believed in Jesus, for—“*The moment a sinner believes, And trusts in his crucified God, His pardon at once he receives, Redemption in full through Christ’s blood.*” But, secondly, if we are to answer the question distinctly and in detail, we should say that if we have really trusted in Jesus, we have so far received the salvation of our souls that we have, at this moment, the assurance of the perfect pardon of all our sins. Let me repeat those words—if we have really believed in Jesus, we have, at this moment, the assurance of the perfect pardon of all our sins! And I will venture to put it as strongly as this and to say that yonder white robed spirits before the eternal throne of God are not more clear of the guilt of sin before the bar of infallible justice than was the dying thief the very moment that he turned his eye in faith to Christ upon the cross of Calvary—or than you are if you are now trusting to the same Saviour, or than I am as now depending alone upon the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Saviour! The pardon which God gives to believers in Jesus is not a semi pardon. It is not a putting away of some of their sins, or a putting them away for a time—it is a perfect

putting away of their sins forever, a casting of them, once and for all, behind God's back into the depths of the sea so that they shall never be found again! Yes, they shall be so completely put away that they shall cease to be, according to that divine declaration, "The iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none." Oh, what a glorious truth of God is this, that although a poor tried child of God may feel the force of his inbred sin and have to continually struggle with it—and though he may, from day to day, be conscious of his many imperfections, yet before those eyes that see everything, there is no spot to be seen upon the believer in Christ—I mean no spot in this respect—that he can never be condemned or punished for his sin! His sin is finally and forever pardoned! God has blotted it out like a cloud that has been blown away and completely dispersed. Therefore let our spirits rejoice if we are truly trusting in Jesus! And oh, that some who have never done so before, would now look believingly unto Him! If they do thus look this moment, they shall obtain perfect pardon and so shall receive the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls! I cannot help repeating that sweet verse of Kent's which I have often repeated to you, which sounds so strange, but which is, I believe, absolutely true—

*"Here's pardon for transgressions past,  
It matters not how black their cast.  
And, O my soul, with wonder view,  
For sins to come, here's pardon, too."*

And next, beloved, we have received the salvation of our souls in this sense, that the alienation of our hearts from God is now effectually removed. We are saved from that alienation and that is a very great part of salvation. Once our backs were turned towards God, but now our faces are turned towards Him. At one time we did not admire His character, nor desire to imitate Him, nor wish for His friendship nor, perhaps, even so much as think of His existence, much less did we aspire to give Him

honour! But now, having believed in Jesus, we have undergone a complete change! We are not yet what we ought to be—we are still a long way off what we expect to be one day—yet we do desire to be what we should be. We admire the character of God even though we have to prostrate ourselves in the dust when we see how far our own character is from likeness to it, and the whole set and current of our desires is towards purity and holiness. If we could have our way, our way would not be a sinful one. If our will could be gratified, our will would be that God should have His will with us and that we should be in all things conformed to the divine will! All true Christians are conscious that it is so with them and this is a great part of salvation. Indeed, it is destruction to be alienated from God, and it is salvation to be reconciled to Him! It is destruction to anyone to be a lover of sin. The man who loves evil is a destroyed man—a man who is broken in pieces—that which should be the glory of his manhood is absent from him. But when he is brought to love God, the ruins are rebuilt! And though, as yet, every part of the renovated building may not be finished, the divine architect who drew the plans of it from eternity, will never leave the work till the last stroke of the sacred hammer and chisel shall have been given—and the completed structure shall have had the headstone placed upon it amid shouts of, “grace, grace unto it!” Blessed be God that we have this salvation, now, in that we are saved from our former alienation of heart from God! In the next place, we have received the salvation of our souls in the sense that we are saved from the killing power of sin. Before we believed in Jesus, we were not capable of those sacred actions which are now our daily delight. We could not pray. We may have “said our prayers,” as so many do, but the living breath of true God inspired prayer was not in us. How could it be in us while we were still dead in trespasses and sins? We could not believe. How could we do so when we had not received the gift of faith from the ever blessed Spirit? The fact is, we were under a terrible bondage and just as a corpse is under bondage to death and cannot stir hand or foot, lip or eye, so were we under bondage to sin and Satan. But we are under that deadly bondage no longer, for we are living men, free men in Christ Jesus our Lord who has overcome that death for

us! Now we can pray! Now we can praise—not always as we would like to do, but still, the aspiration is there and the power is there—and when God graciously helps us by His Holy Spirit, we rise to a high degree of vigour in both those sacred exercises! So, when the killing power of sin is gone, what a mercy it is! What a bliss it is! And in this sense, also, we receive the salvation of our souls.

More than that, beloved, the reigning power of sin has now gone from every believer. Once we were slaves to sin, under sin's domination. Sin said to us, "Go," and we went, or sin said to us, "Stay! Obey not God," and we stayed and at sin's bidding disobeyed God. But now, sin no longer has dominion over us, for we are not under the law, but under grace. And though we even now sometimes hear sin's mandate and the flesh inclines us to yield obedience to it, there is a blessed spirit of rebellion against sin within our heart so that we will not obey sin's commands, but seek after that which is just and holy and right in the sight of God!

Now I am going to take another step and possibly some of the feebler folk among us may think it is too long a step for them to take. Yet I pray God that many of us may practically prove that we have taken it. Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, it is possible and it ought to be the general rule for Christians to enjoy present salvation in the sense of being now free, to a very high degree, from sin in their daily life and conduct. No, more—they ought not to be satisfied without aspiring to be absolutely free from it! It is after this that they should seek, even though they do not attain to it. I am fully persuaded the perfection in the flesh is not attainable here, yet that truth of God, as I believe it is, has been used by a great many persons as a sort of damper to the sad ambition of renewed spirits! I do not think it ought to be so used, nor that it would legitimately be so used. Suppose I am a sculptor? If it is not possible for me to attain to the perfection of Praxiteles or Phidias, yet I must come as close to them as I can—and I shall not be a master of the sculptor's art unless I seek to imitate those who have been the most proficient in it. Suppose, also, that

through the infirmity of the flesh, I shall never in this life be perfect, like Christ— yet I must have no lower model, nor must I say to myself, “I cannot imitate that perfect model,” but, crying to the strong one for strength, I must believe that the omnipotence of God can overcome every sin! And I must also believe that it is possible for me, by the grace of God, to get every sin beneath my feet. And I must never say to any one sin, “I shall have to spare you, for you are too strong for God to slay.” It would be blasphemy to talk like that! I fear that some brothers and sisters think that a quick temper can never be overcome. But it must be overcome! The reason why so many professors so often fall into that sin is that they do not believe that it is conquerable and, therefore, they do not pray it down! Another person, perhaps, has a sluggish disposition and he thinks, “I must always be so. It is my nature and the flesh is weak.” It is true that the flesh is weak, but it is equally true that God is almighty! And it is not our own strength but divine strength that is to procure the deliverance of our soul from sluggishness! So we must cry mightily unto the Lord for divine grace to overcome this or any other sin to which we are peculiarly prone. God has not put us into Canaan and said to us, “You may spare some of those Amorites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hittites, Gergashites, Hivites and Jebusites!” His command to us is, “Slay them all! Let not one of them escape!” There must be no sin tolerated in any believer in Christ! And though you are not perfect, you must never say, “Up to this point, I am perfect, and that is as far as God can make me perfect.” Dear friends, do you believe in an infinitely powerful God? Do you believe that the Holy Spirit is able to work in you anything and everything that He wills to work? Then, brothers and sisters, stop not short of the highest point that is attainable by mortal men and seek to be “holy as God is holy!” Alas, some professors of religion are hardly even moral! Their pretended Christianity is a stench even in the nostrils of non-believers, for they do not conform to the common rules of ordinary decent society—and what true Christians long for is to possess real holiness, to walk with God as Enoch did, to abide in Christ, to shun every false way, to have—“*A heart from sin set free*”—and a conscience tender as the apple of the eye! Oh, that we could all come up to this

standard! And we can! It is possible! This is attainable, by the grace of God, through the effectual working of the Holy Spirit. I again say that I do not think that absolute perfection can be reached here, but I cannot tell how near we can come to it. That I would like to prove by happy personal experience—and I beseech every brother and sister in Christ here to join with me in seeking to know how we may, even now, receive the salvation of our souls from the power of sin!

I am quite sure that there are many Christians who have been completely delivered from sins into which they readily fell in their early days. You know that infants suffer from a great many diseases. All through the period of babyhood, they are liable to various ailments which no longer afflict us who are grownup men and women. So it is with some Christians—when they have grown in grace to the stature of men in Christ, they do not have the little complaints of babyhood. I do not say that this is true of all professors of Christianity, for alas, there are many of them who have to be wheeled about in baby carriages although they are 50 or 60 years of age! While they were little children, we had to dandle them on our knees and carry them in our arms and give them milk—and they still want milk, and still want dandling now that they are getting grey—grey bearded babies! But we need to get them out of that state of babyhood, for there is something far better even on earth than being spiritual babes all our lives! May all of us who are in Christ grow to the stature of men and women in Christ! The more of such any church shall have among her members, the better will it be for her and the more will God be glorified! Let us who are the Lord's, resolve that everything that is to be had of God this side of heaven, we will have! Let us not be content to get just inside Christ's house and to sit down there and say, "Thank God, we are safe. We have got over the threshold," but let us seek to press onward to the chief table of rich refreshment and inner fellowship with Christ and to know the secret of the Lord which is with them that fear Him, that so we may find that "glory begun below" of which Dr. Watts so truly sings—

*“The men of grace have found  
Glory begun below!  
Celestial fruits on earthly ground  
From faith and hope may grow.”*

II. And now, secondly, (and with greater brevity, not professing to dive into the depths of the text, but merely skimming its surface, as the swallow touches the brook with its wing)— HOW DO WE NOW RECEIVE THE SALVATION OF OUR SOULS?

First, it is entirely from Jesus Christ—“Whom having not seen, you love, in whom, though now you see Him not, yet believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.” Everything of salvation that a believer receives, comes to him out of the one storehouse wherein all fullness abides—that is in Christ Jesus! Never believe, Christian, that you will ever get any divine grace out of yourself! It is a dreary and useless task to send the bucket down into the dry well of our nature in the hope of drawing up a supply of grace. Oh no, beloved, look away from self and look alone to Jesus, for from Him, and from Him, only, do we receive the salvation of our souls! Then note that the channels through which we receive salvation from Christ are first, faith—“in whom, though now you see Him not, yet believing, you rejoice.” None of us have seen Christ. We sometimes foolishly wish that we had, but believing in Him is better than merely seeing Him—for many saw Him when He was upon the earth—and yet perished! But no man ever truly believed in Him and then perished. Faith is that eye which savingly sees Christ on the cross. And it is only as we continue to look to Him by faith that we receive the present salvation of our souls from sin. You can never kill any sin if you turn your eyes away from the cross. There is no stream that can cleanse from inward lusts but the precious blood of Jesus that flowed on Calvary. Whoever has been victorious over any temptation, it may truly be said of him, “he overcame through the blood of the Lamb.” So that there



is no way of receiving the blessings of a present salvation except through believing in Jesus!

Our text also tells us that another channel of salvation is love—“Whom having not seen, you love.” The love of Christ is the great force that enables grace to kill sin! The love of Christ and sin are like the two balances of a pair of scales—if sin goes up in our esteem, our love to Christ is going down! And whenever our love to Christ goes up, sin must go down in the same proportion. With little love to Christ, you will walk unwarily, but with great love to your Lord, you will walk carefully before Him and your practical holiness will become manifest to all around you. Though we have not seen Christ, we love Him! And through that love we receive a further assurance of the salvation of our souls from inward as well as outward sin. This is the precious golden conduit through which the power of divine grace flows freely into our souls. Oh, for more fervent love to Christ! Then our text stays that we also receive this present assurance of salvation through joy in the Lord— “In whom...believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” This joy is a flaming sword like that which the cherubim waved at the gates of the Garden of Eden! It blazes, it cuts, it kills. Once let us really rejoice in Christ as our Saviour and we become immediately guarded from sin. I believe that many sins are hatched beneath the wings of doubt and fear, but when we get away from those ugly things and live rejoicing in God, then we say, “Down with sin! We cannot endure to have it in our lives.” He who has sweet flowers in his hand flings away evil smelling weeds! And he who has such a diamond of heaven as “joy unspeakable and full of glory” casts away the pebbles of earth with which He was pleased before. He who rejoices with joy unspeakable is not likely to be allured by the paltry joys of earth—they have lost all their former charm to him. Their siren songs have no attraction to his ears for he has heard the celestial note of the harps of heaven! What bliss it is to be able to rejoice in Christ as our Saviour, for this guarantees to us the salvation of our souls, not only now, but to all eternity!

Why does the apostle say that we rejoice with joy unspeakable? Is it not, first, because this joy is too great to be told? He is indeed rich who cannot count his wealth. He has so much that he does not know how much he has and he is indeed full of joy who has so much joy that he cannot tell anyone how much he has!

I also think that Peter calls our joy, “unspeakable,” because if we were to try to explain or describe it to carnal men, they could not understand us. You cannot explain to a person who has never tasted honey, how sweet it is. Neither can you explain to a man who knows not the joy of the Lord, how joyous a thing it is. He could not comprehend what your words meant—you would be talking to him in an altogether unknown tongue!

Moreover, brothers and sisters, you all know the old proverb, “Still waters run deep.” The worldly joy barely covers the stones of his daily sorrow and, therefore, it babbles like a shallow brook as it runs along in its narrow bed. But the Christian’s joy is broad and deep and it scarcely makes any sound as it majestically rolls on like some great river on its way to the sea! The Christian’s joy is unspeakable because it is unfathomable even by those who enjoy it! And wherever this joy comes, it has a purifying effect, delivering us from sin and making us thus receive the salvation of our souls.

This joy is also said to be “full of glory.” Now, the joys of this world have no true glory in them. Look at the worldly man who is most joyous and glad—what glory is there about him? Any so called joy that comes through sin is just the opposite of glorious! The drunk’s joy puts him below the level of beasts. But there is an elevating power about the Christian’s joy—the joy of salvation, the joy of adoration, the joy of gratitude, the joy of love to God, the joy of being made like Christ, the joy of expecting His coming—all this is glorious joy and it is “full of glory!” I saw lately a picture representing the

coming man, the Lord Jesus Christ. It represented Him as having in His hands cannons, triumphant arches, flags, kings, emperors and all the insignia of royalty—and blowing them away as chaff is driven before the wind! Come, O blessed coming man! You know how we need You! Well, He will come at the right time—and all the glory of this world will fly away just like that when He comes! But our joy is full of a glory which the coming man who is, “over all God, blessed forever,” will keep on increasing so that it shall be to us the fuller of glory forever and ever! Such joy as this glorious joy is, makes us look down upon the world’s joys and sin’s joys as utterly despicable! And so, by lifting us up above them, it further enables us to receive, here and now, the salvation of our souls!

III. There was much more that I wanted to say, but my time has almost gone. In the good old Puritan times, they had an hourglass on the pulpit and when the sands were running out, the minister was warned that it was time to stop. But he often turned it over, again, and went on for another hour! I cannot do that, so I must hasten to a close with the solemn inquiry, **HAVE WE RECEIVED THE SALVATION OF OUR SOULS? AND IF SO, HOW FAR HAVE WE GONE IN THE RECEPTION OF IT?**

The first and most vital question for you, my hearers, is this—have you received the salvation of your souls? I know that you have heard about salvation and many of you know what the Bible says about it. But that is not enough. “I know what salvation means,” says one, “I know the way.” Then take heed that you do not perish in the light! If two men have to go out in the dark, which is the one to whom the darkness is the more dense? Why, the one who has been sitting in the light! If you go out of your brilliantly illuminated room, you realize how dark it is outside where there is no light above or below. Take care, you who are sitting in the light of God today, lest for you there should be “reserved the blackness of darkness forever” because you shut your eyes to the light and will not receive the salvation of your souls.

“Ah, but,” say some, “we profess to be saved.” I am glad to hear that and I would not even hint that your profession is not sincere, but I would urge you to hint to yourself that there is a possibility that all may not be well with you! Are there not many who think they have received the salvation of their souls, but who have not really done so? In St. Peter’s, at Rome, I saw monuments to James III, Charles III, and Henry IX—kings of England—but these potentates were quite unknown to me! Certainly they never reigned in this land, so the royal names upon their monuments are only a subject for ridicule and scorn! And you profess and call yourselves Christians? If you really are so, it is well, but if you are not so, I can conceive that in the next world there may be spirits that shall say to you, “You professed to be Christians, yet you are in hell! You sat at the Lord’s Table and ate the bread and drank the wine in memory of His death—that death in which you had no saving interest—the atonement that never redeemed you!” O no, my hearers, may this never be true of any of us! But may God, in His infinite mercy, save us and so may we really and truly receive, and not merely profess to have received the salvation of our souls! If we have really cast ourselves upon Christ, though we have not seen Him—if we do truly love Him and if we have, to some extent, at least, the joy unspeakable and full of glory within our hearts—then, indeed, we have received the salvation of our souls!

Then comes the other question, how far have we received this salvation? If we had a sacred thermometer given to us in order to measure our spiritual heat, what would our temperature be? Are you, brother, above freezing? I fear that some here are below zero! Have any of you come up to anything like blood heat yet? What a wondrous heat of love that must have been when the lifeblood of Jesus flowed from His wounds as He hung upon the cross of Calvary! Oh, that we could always have our religion at such blood heat! Have we reached that spiritual temperature yet? There have been saints—and there are still saints willing to suffer the loss of all things for Christ’s sake. Nothing has been too hot, too hard, or too heavy for them to endure in His blessed service. They have counted shame and

loss to be honour and gain if they might but “glorify God and enjoy Him forever.” Have we come anywhere near to them? We do have occasional communion with Christ, but have we abiding fellowship with Him? Do we dwell near to Christ?

But what about these who have not yet believed in Him? I heard an evangelist say one night in this Tabernacle, “He that believes on the Son has everlasting life. H—A—S—that spells, ‘got it.’” That is an odd way of spelling, but it is sound divinity! The Lord enable you all to believe in Jesus! Then you will have “got it,” as our friend said. Or, as Peter, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit wrote, “Believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.”