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THE WAY OF SALVATION.

By Frederick J. Jobson, D.D.

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WAY OF SALVATION

PLAINLY

SET FORTH.

BY

FREDERICK J. JOBSON, D.D.

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THE

WAY OF SALVATION.

Reader, you are an inquirer for salvation; and you know the divine requirements for this all-important object, "Repentance toward God, and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ." But you desire to become more fully acquainted with the nature of repentance and with the way of faith, so as to know assuredly what you are to do to be saved.

Observe, then,

ON THE NATURE OF REPENTANCE,
That it is not mere regret for the commission of sin. Most persons when they think of past sins feel regret. They see that sin has not been reasonable or profitable; and that, however plausible or profitable sin appeared at the time, it has not
yielded either satisfaction or benefit. A sense of dishonor and shame is, more or less, in the minds of all who reflect on the sins of their life. Sin is seen to be unbecoming in rational and dependent beings. Then there are periods when the evil consequences of sin are so fully apparent that regret for its commission is very painfully felt; for though man's state on earth is not invariably what Job's friends set forth—a state of punishment for sin—yet a law of retribution is here in operation, and often asserts its power. A bystander may not observe this, when the sinner himself may see distinctly the link which connects sin and its punishment, as did the brethren of Joseph when in Egypt they exclaimed in their trouble,

"We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us."
Pharaoh, when he beheld the destructive plagues upon Egypt, expressed regret for his conduct, which, no doubt, he felt at the time. Saul, the king, when he learned that the kingdom was to be rent from him, was the subject of deep regret. And the most hardened ruffian, on the discovery of his crimes, and when under the sentence of punishment, will regret his course. Indeed, regret for sin is the daily experience of most men, and cannot in itself be viewed as a sure sign of repentance.

Nor is sadness or sorrow to be confounded with repentance. Men may not only regret their sins; they may also be deeply pained on account of them, and yet not be truly penitent before God. Mortified pride, detection, and suffering, such as we have supposed, may constrain men to mourn over sin, and, withal, the consequences of sin, rather than the fact of sin itself, may be the real cause of sorrowful feeling. Besides, the emotions
of sorrow are so different in different persons that they cannot be relied upon with safety. Some men have tears at command, and can weep for mere trifles; others cannot weep under the heaviest calamities. Sorrow, therefore, in its outward expression of sadness, exclamation, or tears, is not the sure criterion for repentance.

Nor is the purpose of reformation and amendment repentance. This, too, is common with mankind in their general reflections on sin, and on experiencing its consequences. Most men who live in sin think of forsaking it at some future and more convenient time; and thousands upon thousands of sinners commence each day, as it returns, with resolutions to act differently in it to what they did previously. Resolutions to forsake sin and to be obedient to the divine law are among the most common passages of human experience, and are, in fact, the pastime of multitudes; for they pass their time
in such resolutions, and do nothing else. Indeed, this is the chief and most successful delusion of Satan with mankind at large. He does not tempt them to think of continuance in sin to the end of life. Such a temptation would be too fearful in its eternal results to be entertained. He leads them on from day to day, and from sin to sin, with the cherished purpose that they will act differently at some future period. To do evil seems necessary or profitable now; but let this desirable object be obtained, and that favorite purpose be fulfilled, then shall sin be abandoned and amendment of life secured. Change of conduct is necessary. This is freely admitted by the adversary; but "not now," he whispers: "at some future time:" shutting out from view the uncertainty of life, and an open grave, which may be within a single step of the sinner's onward course. This, therefore, the mere purpose of reformation and amendment, is not repentance.
What, then, is GENUINE REPENTANCE? We have seen what it is not: let us now consider what it really is.

Repentance toward God is heart-piercing conviction for sin. It is not the mere sense of sin committed, such as we have named, but conviction of sin which pierces the inmost soul, inducing the anxious inquiry, "What must I do to be saved?" It was thus with the repentant hearers of Peter on the day of Pentecost. "They were pricked in their heart" at the accusation of having crucified the Lord Jesus Christ, "and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" It was thus with Saul of Tarsus when arrested by Christ on his way to Damascus, and when convinced of his sinfulness in persecuting the Church of God, he, "trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" It was thus with the jailer at Philippi, when, convinced of his sin and cruelty to the
servants of the Lord, he "came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

And it is thus with all real penitent seekers of salvation. They are thoroughly convinced of the evil and danger of sin, and they desire to know the way of deliverance. They may not all experience the agitation and alarm just named. Some may be gently and gradually enlightened, as was Lydia of Thyatira, whose heart the Lord opened. But all who experience repentance unto life are inwardly penetrated with a sense of guilt and condemnation. They feel that they have sinned against mercy and love and goodness; that their sin is the vilest ingratitude, for they have sinned against their best friend. They see and feel that sin is the abominable thing which God's soul hateth; that life spent in sin is worse than wasted; that it is prostituted to injurious objects; and the
conviction of all this enters fully into the soul.

Genuine repentance, while not to be safely estimated by regrets and tears, nevertheless has in it deep, poignant sorrow for sin. It may not, in all cases, wail and outwardly weep, but inwardly it laments and mourns. Poignant grief for ingratitude and disobedience to a God of love fills the soul of a real penitent, and in some instances he feels as though he could weep himself away in view of his sinfulness. He dwells upon sin, and its special aggravations, until he is penetrated with sorrow to the inmost depths of his nature, and until with bitterness of feeling he bemoans his condition.

See this in the penitent David, as set forth in the fifty-first Psalm; and see how deeply he laments his state as a sinner, and how sorrowfully he dwells upon the circumstances of his great transgression. "My sin," he says, "is ever
before me.” Wherever he was: whether in his palace alone or abroad among his people, whether rising up or lying down, his sin was painfully in remembrance. “Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.” He did not attempt to excuse or palliate sin on the ground of natural inclination to it, but views this as aggravating his offensive and polluted appearance before God. “Behold,” he exclaims, “I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.” . . . “Purge me with hyssop,” he prays, “and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.”

Saul of Tarsus spent three days and three nights with fasting and prayer, be-
meaning his state as a sinner, and imploring forgiveness. And (in the New Testament) gospel penitents are spoken of as “broken-hearted.”

All may not have the strong emotional feelings which some experience, but all repentant sinners mourn for sin with sorrow that is unfeigned. A sense of divine goodness smites the heart. The view of Christ’s sufferings and death bows down the soul to the dust. To have sinned against infinite goodness and love; to have despised a crucified Saviour; and to have still, after all such ingratitude and rebellion, mercy and grace freely offered—the consideration of all this dissolves man’s nature and makes him contrite.

Real repentance, however, is the resolute turning from sin to keep the commandments of God. It not only purposes reformation and amendment, but enters upon it, and with full determination to accomplish it. This is, in fact,
the scriptural meaning of its own term, repentance—change in mind and conduct. "Godly sorrow," declares St. Paul, "worketh repentance." This is the result of sorrow's operation in the soul. It is not repentance itself, but it leads to and produces the change from sin to obedience. This change is the divine test of penitence. "Cease to do evil, learn to do well." "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." "Repent and turn yourselves from all your transgression; so iniquity shall not be your ruin." "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out."

And this change is the only sure sign
of repentance. Who would deem a child truly sorrowful for disobedience if he willfully continued in it? The prodigal must not only mourn over his perishing condition in the far country, but he must also arise and come to his Father. Real repentance is turning from all sin to keep the commandments of God. It makes no reserve. It leaves all to follow Christ. The right eye and the right hand are sacrificed, if necessary. All sin, however pleasurable or however profitable, is forsaken, and respect is had to all the divine commandments. It is true that, until renewed by the Holy Ghost, sin will not be successfully overcome. Until that inward and spiritual change be accomplished the penitent sinner will groan under the bondage of a sinful nature, and confess, "The good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do." This very conflict with sin, and fighting against it, is a proof of a change. There would be no
such conflict if the disposition was for evil.

But repentance, it must be remembered, is not of itself efficacious to salvation. Genuine, thorough, and reforming as it may be, it cannot atone for sin, or merit forgiveness. Amendment of life does not compensate for past offenses, any more than the payment of all just demands in future would defray debts already contracted. Perfect obedience in all time to come would have no surplus merit to cover past delinquency. "The soul that sinneth it shall die." "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." What, then, do you ask, shall be done? Am I left wholly without help?

No: God himself points out help for you. He proclaims, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." His word declares that "God so loved the world, that he gave
his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Jesus “tasted death for every man.” “He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” Atonement for sin is required. That has been fully made in the sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus Christ: he has borne the penalty due to our sins, and has fully satisfied the demands of infinite justice. “His own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree.” “He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities. . . . The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” He has magnified the law and made it honorable in man’s forgiveness; and “we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.” Full satisfaction having thus been given, God can be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. He now justifieth the ungodly.
Personal acceptance and appropriation of Christ’s atonement, however, is required of the sinner; for he is a free agent, and may or may not avail himself of God’s righteous method of saving sinners. And to every inquiring penitent the answer is, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

What, then, is the faith which connects us with the atoning merit of Christ and which instrumentally justifies us before God, so that we are pardoned and accepted by him?

WHAT IS SAVING FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST?

It is not mere belief of what is related in the Scriptures concerning him. Few persons in our country doubt the truthfulness of Holy Scripture concerning the Saviour. The nation at large avows its belief in all the essential articles of Christian truth, and readily subscribes to that venerated form of sound words
called "the Apostles' Creed." But with all this open avowal of faith, how few, comparatively, are saved! Multitudes around us, who have no doubt of the truth of the Christian revelation, show by their daily life and conduct that they are "in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." Belief of Scripture records concerning Christ is essential to faith; but saving faith is more than this; for thousands have this faith and are not saved.

Saving faith in Christ is not mere general belief in him as the Saviour of sinners; for this, too, is the faith of many who are unsaved. They intelligently and firmly believe that he was sent from God to redeem mankind; that by suffering and death he has made full atonement for sin; and that he is able, also, to save all to the uttermost who come to God by him. This belief, however, as in the former case, is mere credence, and may be possessed by devils in their un-
relieved misery, as well as by unsaved men. It is the mere assent of the understanding to that which is credible, and which is seen to be true.

Saving faith in Christ is personal reliance upon him for a present salvation. It is not the mere belief that he is the all-sufficient Saviour of mankind, but it is the actual committal of the soul to him for salvation now. Saving faith is trust, confidence, reliance. It is the act of the heart, as well as of the mind; for “with the heart man believeth unto righteousness.” Saving faith in Christ realizes his divine presence, though unseen by the bodily eye, and commits the soul to him with sure trust in his power and willingness now to save. “Faith,” says the apostle St. Paul, “is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen;” and the penitent believer as fully confides in Christ for salvation as he would if he saw him in the flesh. Saving faith is not only the eye, which
intellectually looks to Christ, and the feet, which obediently move to him, but also the hand which lays hold of Christ, and which hangs upon him for salvation. It is receiving and embracing Christ with loving trust as the Saviour of the soul; for “to as many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.”

It is not the presumptuous, unwarrantable act recommended by some overzealous counselors, who say, “Believe that you are saved, and you are saved.” To believe this is to believe what is not; and Jehovah will never justify a sinner on the ground of falsehood. Man believes in order to salvation. Faith is its instrumental means, and is a reasonable service. Faith is not presumption. It is not a cold process of the understanding, which seizes hold of the mere letter of God’s word and says, “Well: I am told, ‘believe and be saved,’ and therefore I will conclude that
I am saved. If I only believe, I am safe. I have no more to do."

No: true faith does not impel the soul to forge its certificate for heaven. It cries out, "Lord, thou hast died for me, and I want to experience the benefit of thy precious death. Lord, I will cry out that thou art the Saviour, until I feel that thou art my Saviour. I know, intellectually, that thou hast tasted death for every man; but I wait, and will wait, till I know it, though it be to the end of my life, that thou hast tasted death for me. Give me to know it by heartfelt experience. I will believe, I do believe, I now believe; Lord, give me to feel that thou hast saved me."

And in thus persevering to come to Christ, and to cling to the direction, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," the soul is sure to experience not only full belief, but also the full assurance of faith. In thus coming to Christ, and trusting in him, the
soul believes, not that God has saved, but that God does now save, according to his gracious word, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." "He that believeth in the Son hath everlasting life." When we pray, said Jesus, we are to believe that we receive the things we ask, and we shall have them. That is, not believe we have already received the things we ask, but believe now, even while we ask, that we receive them. Thus saving faith is trust and confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ as able and willing to save now.

The GOSPEL NARRATIVES, which are intended to instruct and encourage us in the way of faith, show this with certainty. They teach us that where trust in Christ was wanting benefits were withheld; and that where confiding faith was exercised benefits were bestowed.

Read, for instance, St. Mark's narrative of the DISTRESSED FATHER'S application to Christ on behalf of his lunatic son,
who was so sorely rent and torn by the devil, and who was in constant danger of death, (ix, 14–29.) The apostles, left in the valley under the Mount of Transfiguration, had failed in their attempt to cast out the evil spirit from the child; and when our Lord returned to them, the half-despairing parent besought him, saying, "If thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us!" Jesus rejected the doubting prayer, and said, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." As if he had said, There is no doubt of my power; the doubt is of thy faith. Only trust in me, and all things desired shall be bestowed. "And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe;" but, fearing the effect of any lingering unbelief upon his son, he added, "help thou my unbelief;" when the Almighty Saviour at once commanded the deaf and dumb spirit to come out of him, and never to enter him more.
Read St. Mark’s account of the diseased leper, who came forth from his polluted hut into the Saviour’s presence, and kneeling down, said, with confiding faith, “If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.” “I will,” said Jesus instantly; “be thou clean,” (i, 40–42.)

Read St. Matthew’s account of the woman with the issue of blood, who in the fullness of her confidence said within herself, “If I may but touch his garment I shall be whole;” and to whom the Saviour said, “Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole,” (ix, 20–22.)

Read St. Matthew’s narrative of the Syrophoenician mother, who besought Christ on behalf of her daughter grievously vexed with a devil. At first he was silent, and answered her not a word. Then he replied in the language of a contemptuous Jew, saying, “It is not meet to take the children’s bread and cast it to the dogs.” “‘Truth, Lord,’ she respond-
ed; "it is not meet; and I do not seek to deprive the Jews of their apportioned blessing; 'yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table.' I am a poor, undeserving Gentile dog, and I only ask for a dog's portion—a crumb, compared with the abundant blessings thou hast to bestow." "Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." (Matt. xv, 21-28.)

In some instances, it will be remembered, Jesus spoke comparatively of faith. He declared, for example, that the faith of the centurion was greater faith than any found in Israel. In what appeared the surpassing greatness of the centurion's faith? In believing that Jesus could heal by a word and at a distance. He had applied for relief on behalf of his servant; and the Saviour sent the message, "I will come and heal him." The centurion replied that he did not require such marked attention, and that he was
not worthy to have so distinguished a personage under his roof, but that if the Lord would speak the word where he was the servant would be healed; and he illustrated this by his own authority over soldiers under him. “When Jesus heard it he marveled,” and expressing his admiration of the Gentile captain’s faith, as greater than any he had found among his own people, the Jews, he said: “Go thy way, and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.” The greatness of his faith was in unwavering trust and confidence in Christ’s almighty goodness. “Lord,” said Martha and Mary, who belonged to the house of Israel, “if thou hadst been here our brother had not died.” The centurion did not consider it necessary for Jesus to be in his house to heal his servant. (Matt. viii, 5–13.)

Thus it plainly appears from Scripture teaching that faith in Christ, which he accepts and honors, is trust and reliance upon him.
And this trust is man's own act. It is the effect of divine operation in the soul; and, in that sense, is the gift of God; but in its energetic putting forth, and confiding reliance, it is the voluntary effort of the believing soul itself, strengthened and confirmed by the power of the Holy Spirit. See this truth illustrated in the case of the Man with the Withered Hand. Jesus said to him at once, as he stood forth obedient to command, "Stretch forth thine hand!" He did not reply, "Lord, I cannot do so. My arm is dead and powerless; and to stretch forth my hand is the very strength I lack." He made the effort, and he who issued the command gave power to obey; for while the man endeavored to stretch forth his hand health and vigor flowed into the dead, cold limb, and "his hand was restored whole as the other." (Mark iii, 1–5. It is thus with penitent sinners trying to believe. In the effort personally made by them to obey the divine
command, and to believe in the Son of God, strength is communicated, enabling them to do so, and they are saved through faith.

And that instantly. The moment the penitent sinner believes in Christ, that moment he is saved. As soon as Zaccheus receives the Saviour and gives proof of his repentance, it is declared, “This day is salvation come to this house.” Immediately on seeing the faith of the helpless paralytic, and of his friends who let him down through the roof and the tiling, Jesus said, “Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee.” The murderers of Christ, when prick ed in the heart with piercing conviction of their enormous criminality, were not directed by Peter to perform a round of preparatory duties before they could be saved, but were at once exhorted to repent and make confession of their faith; and on that very day they were baptized and added to the Church. The
alarmed and trembling jailer at Philippi, on his agonizing inquiry, "What must I do to be saved?" was not exhorted to prayer and fasting for the improvement of his character. The apostolic direction was, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved;" and in that very midnight hour of his conviction he believed, was baptized, and rejoiced in God his Saviour. It is so still. The moment of faith is the moment of salvation.

And with salvation assurance of it is given. This might be inferred from the very nature of the case itself; for being reconciled, enmity ceases; and as the apostle declares, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Archdeacon Paley has observed, in his own forcible manner, "A man might as soon forget the day of his deliverance from shipwreck as forget the day of his salvation;" and if the fact is to
be thus signally remembered it must be known.

Assurance is first given by the Holy Spirit to the believer's soul that he is forgiven and accepted through Christ; for "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying 'Abba, Father.'" This direct and immediate assurance by the Holy Spirit is confirmed and corroborated by his work within the believer's soul; for when saved, the believer is not only justified or pardoned, and not only adopted into the family of God, but he is regenerated, born of the Spirit, made a new creature in Christ Jesus, so that he has spiritual dispositions and spiritual power. Feeling that God loves him, he loves God in return. The believer knows that he has passed from death unto life, because he loves the brethren. He knows that they who are
born of God do not commit sin. Though conscious of innumerable imperfections and infirmities, yet he does not willingly do that which is evil; and strengthened by the Spirit's might in the inner man, he rejoicingly declares, "Sin hath not dominion over us; for we are not under the law, but under grace."

But, reader, seek not the evidences of salvation before salvation itself. The tree must be planted before the fruits appear. The fountain must be opened before the streams branch forth. To be saved is more than assurance and enjoyment. If not a single spark of peace or joy were to be kindled within your soul on this side of eternity, yet, if saved, the chief object of faith would be realized. Seek salvation simply and directly, by faith in Jesus Christ, and the effects will assuredly follow. Remember! it is not promised, He that feeleth shall be saved, but he that believeth. With confiding, trustful, relying faith, then, go at once to
the Saviour, saying, "Lord, I am a guilty, condemned, perishing sinner; but thou hast suffered and died for me, and hast thereby made full atonement for all my sins. I forsake all sin, and thankfully receive thee now as my Saviour and Lord, joyfully consecrating all I am and all I have to thy service; and this I do without any reliance upon my repentance and obedience:

"In my hand no price I bring.
Simply to thy cross I cling."