

So Great Salvation

by J.F. Strombeck

~ 1940 ~

Second Edition

Strombeck Agency, Inc.

Moline Illinois

~ out of print and in the public domain ~

Chapter Eighteen

SALVATION AND MAN'S CONDUCT

While it is of the utmost importance to recognize that GOD says nothing whatsoever in His Word to the unsaved about the matter of conduct, and that salvation is offered as a free gift apart from the question of conduct, it is not to be assumed that there can be indifference in this matter on the part of those who are saved. GOD does not try to improve or reform an unsaved person because however much such a one might become improved, he still cannot measure up to GOD's demand for righteousness and thereby secure a standing before GOD as one who is righteous. Another reason why the unsaved are not urged by GOD to improve their conduct is that there is no power within them to live a life according to GOD's standard for those who are saved. The question of Christian conduct must, therefore, never be considered in relation to being saved. To do so is but to confuse the issue. After a person has accepted JESUS CHRIST as SAVIOUR, and only then, does GOD appeal to that person in the matter of how his earthly life should be lived.

In salvation GOD freely gives to man a new position before Himself. Before a man is saved his standing before GOD is that of a sinner (a sinner by nature and because he commits sin) and he is under the condemnation of death. After he becomes saved, he stands before GOD entirely upon the merits of JESUS CHRIST Himself. He is a child of GOD because he has been born again, and is every moment so considered by GOD. He is a member of the family of GOD. He is clothed in the very righteousness of GOD and nothing can be charged against him to alter that condition. He stands before GOD as the object of His unalterable love and full measure of His grace. This

standing before GOD is entered into the moment a person believes on, or receives JESUS CHRIST as SAVIOUR. Because it depends solely upon the merits of CHRIST, the position is the same for the most stumbling and failing Christian as for the most godly saint.

That it is possible for any man to so stand before GOD is known only because it is revealed in GOD's Word. It is never known because of one's experience. But because of his knowledge thereof the saved person enters into rich experiences.

It is the fact of this perfect standing before GOD that is always made the basis for GOD's appeals to the saved in matters of conduct. They are exhorted to live their earthly lives in harmony with their standing and with what they are in their saved state.

The following serves as a limited illustration of this condition. The children born into a royal family are taught and trained and exhorted to conduct themselves as royalty which they are by birth. They are an honor to the king only as they so conduct themselves. There are many things they cannot do that are not forbidden to other children. On the other hand, to the street waif of the lower east side of New York City there can be no appeal to live as a son of a king because he does not hold that position.

All of the writings in the Bible that are addressed to believers of this age hold with perfect fidelity to this principle. For every gift of grace there is an appeal to a life consistent with that gift.

It would be most inconsistent for those who have been delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the SON of GOD to continue to live according to the practices of their former state. So the appeal to them is: **"For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light . . . And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them"** (Ephesians 5:8, 11).

All who are saved have been redeemed from the penalty of the law by the payment of a ransom price, even by the blood of JESUS CHRIST. The appeal to godly living because of this reads: **"For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's"** (I Corinthians 6:20). While it is contrary to human reason that GOD should give His Own SON in death to redeem man from the death penalty of the law, and can be explained only on the basis of love, it is most reasonable to expect that one who has been so redeemed and given an eternal position with GOD should spend the days of his earthly life so that GOD might

thereby be glorified. This is not as a compulsion but because of what GOD in love has done.

Paul writing to the Christians at Rome, in a message that also applies to all Christians of today, said; **"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of GOD, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God"** (Romans 12:1). Notice that this which Paul urged the believer to do he called a "reasonable service." This was no small thing. Its reasonableness is because of the "mercies of God." What are these mercies of GOD? They are all that is related to justification by the grace of GOD through the redemption that is in CHRIST JESUS because He was set forth as a propitiation for sin (Romans 3:24-26). Surely one whose every sin has been forgiven and to whom GOD has freely reckoned divine righteousness because His own SON has died to satisfy His justice, ought to present himself to GOD, renounce the things of this world, and seek to live according to the will of GOD.

In reconciliation, the saved person, who had been afar off from GOD, is made nigh to Him. But many who have been reconciled are not living in close contact with Him. It is not only their privilege to do so; they are admonished to **". . . draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith . . . Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; . . . And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works"** (Hebrews 10:22-24).

He who is born again is born of the SPIRIT. The SPIRIT of GOD dwells within him. Because of this condition Paul could write to the Christians at Corinth; **"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God . . . ? . . . therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's"** (I Corinthians 6:19-20).

He who is born again is a new creation in CHRIST JESUS (II Corinthians 5:17). Because of this he is admonished to **". . . put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; . . . and . . . put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness"** (Ephesians 4:22, 24).

Though some are not fully aware of it, all who are children of GOD have a blessed hope of seeing JESUS CHRIST their LORD and being changed into His image. This fact is made the basis for a strong appeal for a pure and

godly life. **"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure"** (I John 3:2-3). The unconditional promise to all believers to become like the SON of GOD should be the greatest possible incentive to godly living.

Unsaved men (and also many who are saved) think of conduct only in terms of compliance with a moral code. None of the above appeals is in the nature of such compliance. They are appeals to a new life on a divine plane, even while the saved are still on this earth. Only as a person realizes and enters into those things which come to him through salvation can these appeals have any meaning to him. That is another reason why conduct is not a matter for consideration until one has been saved.

In contrast to the above, under the law that was given by Moses, man's standing before GOD was always conditioned upon that which he did. If he fulfilled the law GOD blessed him. If he failed to fulfill the law he became subject to severe curses. Both blessings and curses were faithfully predicted to Israel by Moses in his farewell address to them in Deuteronomy chapter 28.

There is much, indeed very much, confused thinking because the order under the Mosaic law is not distinguished from GOD's order under grace. Under law, because of the fact that the standing before GOD depended upon what man did, it was possible to lose one's standing and the blessings that went with it, and in the place of being blessed one became cursed. Under that condition the motive to conduct became one of fear of punishment. That motive to a very large extent underlies human conduct. It is the controlling motive in most lives. It is only natural that the unsaved man should think that fear is the motive for godly conduct, but when one who has been saved still thinks of fear as the impelling motive for conduct there is a great loss in that life. The motive to true Christian conduct is love. Paul wrote, **"The love of Christ constraineth us"** (II Corinthians 5:14). It is the love of GOD that gave His SON that whosoever believes shall not perish (John 3:16). It is the love of CHRIST who gave Himself to save the lost. It is the love of GOD by which all who are saved are called the children of GOD (I John 3:1). It is divine love as expressed in all that has been done to save man and that is being done to consummate the work of salvation.

That fear is not the motive for Christian conduct is clearly stated. **"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father"** (Romans 8:15). **"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of**

power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (II Timothy 1:7).

Christian conduct, then, is the result of that which GOD does in saving man. Love, not fear, is the true motive thereto. These two are contrary, the one to the other. **"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love"** (I John 4:18).

~ end of chapter 18 ~
