

ILLUSTRATIONS OF BIBLE TRUTH

by

Harry A. Ironside

Colportage Library #230

Copyright @ 1945

CHAPTER NINE

~ S ~

SALVATION ALTOGETHER OF GOD

“Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light” (Colossians 1:12).

There is a story told of an old man who owned a little narrow lot with a poor miserable cabin on it. Lots in his neighborhood had been selling for fabulous prices and he felt that some day his place would make his fortune. By and by a millionaire came along and seeing the possibilities of that block, said, “I want the whole thing.”

He sent his agent to buy the whole block; when he came to the old man, he said, “What is the price of your place?” As the old man had waited long for this opportunity, he priced it at what he thought was a tremendously big figure. “Very well,” said the agent, “I will take it.”

“When do you want it?” the old man asked.

“In about two weeks I will be around with the deed and you can be ready to sign it. Here is a thousand dollars to bind the sale,” replied the agent.

The old man was simply delighted and thought, “Well, if somebody has bought this place who is able to pay all that money, I ought to fix it up a bit.” And so he bought some paint and went to work painting the old cabin. He bought some glass to replace the broken panes, and for two weeks he worked on the cabin. When this millionaire purchaser and his agent brought the papers for him to sign, he was so nervous about it he could hardly hold the pen. He was surprised that the purchaser did not say anything about the shack and so he said, “You see how beautifully I have painted it up and have put in some new windows. It is going to make a nice place. I hope you will be very comfortable in it.

“Oh,” said the millionaire, “but I didn’t buy this place for what is on it, but for what I am going to put on it.”

That is how God justifies the ungodly. It is not because of what He finds in men, but He saves them for what He is going to put in them, for what He is going to do for them. When they put their trust in Him, they get everlasting life, they are justified, and all their sins are forgiven. Then God proceeds to make them fit for His own blessed presence, and when we get home to heaven, we will give Him all the glory.

SATISFACTION IN CHRIST

“I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content” (Philippians 4:11).

Christ is enough to satisfy the hearts of all who confide in Him and who leave everything in His hands. Such need never be cast down by seeming misfortunes.

A Christian asked another how he was getting along. Dolefully his friend replied, “Oh, fairly well, under the circumstances.”

“I am sorry,” exclaimed the other, “that you are under the circumstances. The Lord would have us living above all circumstances, where He Himself can satisfy our hearts and meet our every need for time and eternity.”

SIMPLICITY IN PRAYER

“Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7)

We need to realize that our God takes a Fatherly interest in every detail of our lives and bids us bring everything to Him in prayer. Nothing is too small for His concern and nothing is too great for His power.

Years ago, the Free Kirk of Scotland was holding a meeting in the granite city of Aberdeen and worshippers were flocking in from all nearby towns to participate in the services. An aged man was wending his way to the city on foot, when he was overtaken by a young theological student; the two walked on in company.

Despite the difference in their ages, they had much in common, and so they enjoyed chatting together as they jogged on toward their intended goal.

At noontime they turned aside to a crassy copse and sat down to eat the lunch which each had brought with him, first giving God thanks for His gracious provision. Afterwards the aged pilgrim suggested that they pray together before continuing their journey. The young theologian was a bit embarrassed, but agreed, intimating that the elder man should pray first, which he did.

Addressing God as His Father in all simplicity, he poured out his heart in thanksgiving, then uttered three specific requests: he reminded the Lord that he was very hard of hearing and if he did not get a seat well up to the front in the kirk he would get little out of the sermon that evening, so he asked that a seat be kept for him near enough to the pulpit so he could get the benefit of the message; secondly, he told the Lord that his shoes were badly worn and not fit for city streets; he pleaded for a new pair though he had not the “siller” to purchase them; last of all, he asked for a place to stay for the night, as he knew no one in Aberdeen and did not know where to look for accommodations.

By the time the student’s eyes were wide open as he looked upon the old man with mingled disgust and amazement, thinking it the height of impertinence to burden Deity with such trivialities. When his turn came to pray, he delivered himself of an eloquent, carefully composed discourse, which in turn amazed his older companion, who saw in it nothing that indicated a making known of his needs to God the Father.

Proceeding on their way, they reached the kirk just as the people were crossing in; it was soon evident that there was no longer even standing room left. The student thought, “Now we shall see what becomes of his presumptuous prayers. He’ll see that God has more to do than to use His time saving a seat for a poor, old, country man.” However, someone came out and the old man was just able to squeeze inside the door, where he stood with his hand up to his ear trying to hear what was going on.

Just then, it happened that a young lady in a front pew turned and saw him. She called a sexton and said, “My father told me to hold our pew for him until time for the sermon; then, if he did not get there, to give it to someone else. Evidently, he has been detained. Will you please go back and bring up that old man who has his hand to his ear and is standing just inside the door.” In a few moments, petition number one was fully answered.

Now, in Scotland, some folks always kneel for prayer, as the minister leads; others reverently rise to their feet. The old man was the kneeling kind and the young woman always stood. As she looked down, she could not help observing the worn soles on the feet of the kneeling worshipper. Her father was a shoe-dealer! At the close of the service, she delicately approached the subject of the need of a better pair of shoes, and asked if she might take him to her father’s store, though closed for the night, and present him with a pair.

Needless to say, her offer was accepted as graciously as it was made. So petition number two was answered.

At the store the lady inquired where he was to stay for the night. In all simplicity he answered, “I dinna ken yet. My Father has a room for me, but He has no’ told me whar it is.”

Puzzled for a moment, she exclaimed, “O, you mean your Father – God! Well, I believe we have that room for you. We were saving our guestroom for the Rev. Dr. Blank, but a telegram came this morning saying he could not come, so now you must just come home with me and be our guest.” And so the third petition was granted.

The next day the student inquired as to the outcome of the prayer and was astonished to find that God had heard and answered each particular plea. He is never too busy to heed the cries of His needy people. What we all require is more confidence in His love and more earnestness and directness in prayer.

STANDING WHERE THE FIRE HAS BEEN

“Who loved me and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).

One of the first Gospel illustrations that every made a real impression upon my young heart was a simple story which I heard a preacher tell when I was less than nine years old.

It was of pioneers who were making their way across one of the central states to a distant place that had been opened up for homesteading. They traveled in covered wagons drawn by oxen, and progress was necessarily slow. One day they were horrified to note a long line of smoke in the west, stretching for miles across the prairie, and soon it was evident that the dried grass was burning fiercely and coming toward them rapidly. They had crossed a river the day before but it would be impossible to go back to that before the flames would be upon them. One man only seemed to have understanding as to what should be done. He gave the command to set fire to the grass behind them. Then when a space was burned over, the whole company moved back upon it.

As the flames roared on toward them from the west, a little girl cried out in terror, “Are you sure we shall not all be burned up?” The leader replied, “My child, the flames cannot reach us here, for we are standing where the fire has been!”

What a picture of the believer, who is safe in Christ!

“On Him Almighty vengeance fell,
Which would have sunk a world to hell.
He bore it for a chosen race,
And thus becomes our Hiding Place.”

The fires of God’s judgment burned themselves out on Him, and all who are in Christ are safe forever, for they are now standing where the fire has been.

~ end of chapter 9 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>
