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ing. The central portion contain illustrations of how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to 'keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.' The illustrations—the holy anointing oil and the fertilizing dew—are both types of the Holy Spirit. In the final clause of the Psalm we find the first mention of 'eternal life', the only other occurrence in the O.T. being in Dan. 12:2. The great theme of eternal life is characteristic of the N.T. Scriptures which tell of the advent of Him Who said, 'I am come that ye might have life and that ye might have it more abundantly'.

The last song of the series tells of blessing emanating from the house of the Lord. In it the worshippers are viewed as Servants in His house, using in their ministry their feet, as they stand by night in His house, their hands lifted up in holy supplication, and their lips as they offer 'the sacrifice of praise to God continually', the fruit of their lips, making mention of His name.

Thus end the 'Pilgrims' Progress' and their songs by the way.

DISTINGUISHING THINGS THAT DIFFER

W. FRASER NAISMITH

Peter, in writing his first epistle, refers to three great and fundamental principles in the opening chapter viz., SALVATION—v. 9: REDEMPTION—v. 18: and NEW BIRTH—v. 23.

It is not uncommon for believers in our Lord Jesus Christ to assume that those truths are synonymous; but it is wise to distinguish things that differ.

Salvation

Salvation is a work accomplished both outside the believer and inside him. It should be realised that in salvation there are three different aspects of this great blessing. The salvation of the soul would emphasise the fact that the individual is saved from the penalty of sin: for Paul assures us in Romans 8:1 'there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ

Jesus'. The writer to the Hebrews also affirms that God will no more remember the sins of those whom He has sanctified and perfected to perpetuity—Heb. 10:17. The salvation of the life is a daily experience as the believer is saved from the power of sin. Paul affirms in Romans 6:14 that 'sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace'. He further states in Romans 5:10 'if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.' In the salvation of the whole being the believer is saved from the presence of sin. Paul assures us that 'now is our salvation nearer than when we believed': Rom. 13:11; and again 'we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope.' Rom. 8:23.

The salvation of the soul is the result of faith in the person and sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. His death was the only means by which we could know salvation—for Peter affirms, 'neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.' If salvation should be our portion it can only be bestowed in righteousness: the sacrifice of Christ made a basis upon which God in righteousness could operate as He offers salvation to lost souls. God never compromises His holy character to accommodate anyone! His character must remain inviolate, and it does; because the sacrifice of Christ has satisfied every claim of divine righteousness and enables God to act in mercy towards the sinner.

The salvation of the life is effected through the present ministry of Christ on high, that is, by His life. Not the life of Christ here below, (for that only condemns the sinner, though it gives example to the saint), but the life of Christ on high. There is One who labours to keep us from stumbling: One who constantly and consistently affords aid to the weary, tempted soul; for He can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities: and readily responds to the touch of faith. The present ministry of Christ enables us to travel through the labyrinth of this scene without fear of stumbling, and enables us to keep our garments

unspotted. The activity of our Great High Priest with God on our behalf is because of the infirmities which cling to us—e.g., temptation and bereavement. He is able to save to the uttermost those who come to God, as worshippers, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them: see Heb. 7:25.

The salvation from the very presence of sin will be our abiding portion when Christ comes to take out of this world His own. Paul reminded the Philippian saints in ch. 3:20-21, 'we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body'. The blessed hope of the believer is emphasised in 1 Thess. 4:17 'we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and so shall we ever be with the Lord'.

Redemption

Redemption is a work wrought wholly outside us. Mankind is seen in the slave-market of sin, fettered by captive chains, and unable to extricate himself from such bondage: a real vassal to the dictates of Satan. In Luke 4 Christ is seen going into the synagogue at Nazareth, where He had been brought up; there was handed to Him the scroll of the prophet Isaiah, and He unwound the scroll till He came to that portion which we know as chapter 61 and commenced to read. He emphasised the fact that He was anointed to preach three things—viz., 'the Gospel to the poor'—v. 18: 'deliverance to the captives'—v. 18: and 'the acceptable year of the Lord.'—v. 19. One of the purposes for which He came was to preach deliverance to the captives. The Lord saw us in such a desperate plight that He came to where we were, and paid the price for our redemption. This word 'redemption' means buying back a lost possession. He bought back the lost possession, but at what a price! The cost was His own precious blood.

Now, we who have had this wonderful experience can say—

"We are by Christ redeemed;
The cost His precious blood;
Be nothing by our souls esteemed
Like this great good."

“Were the vast world our own,
With all its varied store;
And Thou, Lord Jesus, wert unknown;
We still were poor.”

In the parable of the hid treasure in the heptad of parables of Matthew 13 the Lord informs us that the field was bought, and the field is the world. Everything belongs to Him by creative right, and because He bought it with His own most precious blood; but all He will get out of the field is the treasure that is hid therein. The treasure is the redeemed. The Lord virtually says ‘I have taken you from the bondage of the slave-market of sin, and I bring you your freedom’. What a transformation this is! Ought we not then to readily become the bondslaves of such a worthy Lord? The apostles of our Lord willingly became bondslaves of Christ, as indicated in their writings. We know redemption by blood today; but when Christ comes to take out of this world His own we shall know redemption by power: Rom. 8-23. Israel knew the liberty of being in communion with God as they worshipped and served Him according to the divinely given instructions. Paul exhorted the Galatians thus—‘Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free.’ We are now in the freedom that grace affords; let us not go back to the bondage that once held us. The land of freedom for the saint of God is Christ, and we ought never to forget that we have been purged from our old sins. If we keep near to Him we shall not easily forget we have been redeemed at the cost of His precious blood.

New Birth

New Birth is a work accomplished wholly within us. Man is spiritually dead in trespasses and in sins. What a dead person needs is life. Who can dispense this life to dead souls? There is but One who can do so even the Lord Himself. New Birth is a necessity if man has to enjoy the favour of God, and to be in the delights of heaven forevermore. How is this new birth effected? This was the question asked by Nicodemus in John 3. In this chapter we have the finest dissertation on the subject of new birth

extant. Christ, addressing Nicodemus, virtually said 'I am not going to teach the flesh'. Nicodemus had approached the Lord with these words, 'we know thou art *a teacher* come from God'. To this Christ said 'except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God:' (John 3:3). It seems evident that Nicodemus was ignorant of the teaching which Christ would give—for he asked 'how can a man be born when he is old?' The Lord Jesus in verse 10 said 'art thou *the teacher* of Israel, and knowest not these things?' The Lord expected one who was recognised as *the teacher* of Israel to know from the Holy Scriptures this truth. The Old Testament Scriptures had numerous allusions to this great theme, especially in Ezekiel's prophecy chapters 26 and 37. Numbers 21 might also be sighted as illustrating this theme, for in this very chapter (Jno. 3) the Lord Jesus Christ used it to illustrate the truth of new birth: see verse 14.

New birth is effected by the Word of God in the hands of the Holy Spirit. 'Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God:' Jno. 3:5. Water is used symbolically throughout the Scriptures, and it does not always mean the same thing. At times it may signify judgment as indicated in the language of Psalm 69:1 'the waters are come in unto my soul'. We are told in Rev. 17:15 that water symbolises peoples. In John 7 (37-39) it is used of the Spirit. It has been suggested that in John 3:5 water signifies baptism; but test such an interpretation by the Word of God! There is not such a doctrine in holy writ as 'baptismal regeneration'. Peter stated in 1 Peter 1:23 that the believer is 'born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever'. The Word of God is the seed of the life. It is incorruptible seed, and it can produce what nothing else can. 'The Word of God is living, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword:' Heb. 4:12. The Holy Spirit is the divine person who uses the Word of God to produce conviction of sin. He shows us our lost estate, revealing to us that the condition in which we are found does not suit God, and reminding us that

nothing short of new birth will do for God. 'The entrance of Thy Word giveth light', said the Psalmist in Ps. 119:130. The Spirit uses the Word of God to bring assurance to the individual of life through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

It would appear transparent to the onlooker that the woman in John 4 was in need of new birth; yet Christ did not state this to her, but rather gave to her that masterly dissertation on worship which is the greatest extant. Everybody knew she required to be born again; and she received the draught of living water which brought the change in her life and satisfaction to the soul. Nicodemus was a religionist, well versed in the law; and the populace viewing him possibly assumed that he was beyond reproach and required none of these things; but Christ said to him—'Ye must be born again'. The Lord convinced that man that flesh can only remain flesh, and what it produces will ever be akin to the original—flesh. The person who is born again is 'a new creature in Christ Jesus'.

James touches on this teaching in his epistle ch. 1 verse 18 saying 'Of His own will begat He us with the Word of truth'. It is no mere dead formalism to which James alludes here, but a definite new birth accomplished through the Word of truth.

The evidence of having had this experience of being born again is seen in the fact that the Holy Spirit takes up residence in the believer. In Eph. 1:13 we are informed that 'after ye believed ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise'. The Holy Spirit, who is the active agent in effecting new birth through the Word of God, deigns to dwell in all who have been born again. The Lord indicated this in John 14:17 when He said 'He dwelleth with you and shall be in you'.

New birth is an experience of a spiritual character in which a dead soul becomes alive to God through the operations of the Holy Spirit of God. The Spirit uses the Word of God for this purpose. The dead soul, the sinner in his ruin, hears the Word of God, and through the influence of the person of the Holy Spirit, believes the message it contains and a mighty transaction takes place—that person is born again. This is not understood

by the natural man but is revealed to the spiritual. In other words the one who believes is not governed by his senses but by faith established on the Word of God—for 'faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God:' Rom. 10:17.

New birth is evidenced in the new aspirations which characterise the believer. A new walk, too, demonstrates to others that something has happened—he is a new creature in Christ Jesus; 'old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new:' 2 Cor. 5:17.

There is also a change of companions; for those with whom we associated in our unregenerate condition are unsuitable to us who have experienced new birth. The normal condition should be that expressed by the Psalmist in Ps. 119:63 'I am a companion of all them that fear Thee, and of them that keep Thy precepts'. To say that we have had the experience of being born again and still pursue the paths of sin and selfishness is to give a lie to our profession. New birth finds new pursuits which are pleasurable to God.

Have you had this experience? Are you born from above? Is your name inscribed in the pages of God's family Bible? It ought not to be difficult to know how to answer such questions if you have passed from death to life. If in doubt about this do make sure that you have the experience of being born again, otherwise you shall never enter into the kingdom of God.