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SCARCELY SAVED.

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And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?—1 Pet. iv. 18.

SAVED! and what is it to be SAVED? Salvation is *deliverance*—deliverance from sin, from its guilt, pollution, and power. To dream of salvation without a separation from sin, is an absurdity. Yet some are cherishing this delusion. They are hoping for heaven, and yet following their corruptions. Such hopes are vain. They must be relinquished, or the soul is lost. For to be saved, is to be delivered from sin. Salvation in sin is a contradiction. “And thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall SAVE HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR SINS.” Matt. i. 21.

SAVED! Salvation is *preservation*—preservation from the fearful consequences of sin, from the horrors of the second death, the eternal miseries of hell. They who are delivered from sin, shall also be preserved from its sad consequences in the world to come. On them the second death shall have no power. Rev. xx. 6. But where sin remains, there its sad and awful consequences must be felt for ever. Deliverance from the effects of sin, and yet not from sin itself, is an impossibility. Deliverance from sin secures preservation from the punishment which it deserves.

SAVED! Salvation is *eternal glory*; not eternal being merely, but *eternal well-being*. They who are delivered from sin, and preserved from its punishment, shall be received to the rewards of heaven. That world of glory is prepared for all who love God. There are mansions in readiness for the followers of Christ. John xiv. 2. To be

saved, is to be received into those mansions, cleansed, purified; and to spend eternity in the presence of God and the Lamb. Salvation begins on earth; it is completed in heaven;—and where it is begun, it shall be perfected—they who are justified shall also be glorified. Rom. viii. 30. Some shall be saved—the righteous.

THE RIGHTEOUS! But who are *righteous*? Not such as have never sinned, for there are none such among the family of man. All have sinned; and in the sense of entire freedom from sin, none are righteous, no not one. Rom. iii. 9—23. The righteous are those who, through divine grace, have become interested in the provisions of the gospel; who, by faith, have embraced Jesus Christ as their only hope and refuge; and who, believing in him, are pardoned, justified, sanctified. They not only trust in the righteousness of Christ, but in consequence of their trust in him, they have that righteousness imputed to them, or reckoned to their account. They are justified by faith in Christ's righteousness, and are therefore accounted righteous. Men are not justified because of any inherent righteousness, nor for any thing done in them, for them, or by them; but solely on account of the righteousness of Christ, received and rested in by faith alone. Salvation is not of works, but of grace; righteousness is not by the deeds of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. Eph. ii. 8; Rom. iii. 20—28.

THE RIGHTEOUS, therefore, are not such as are natively, nor inherently, righteous; but such as, having embraced Christ by faith, are accounted righteous for his sake. They are renewed by the Holy Ghost, and so are delivered from the power of sin; they are justified by faith in Christ, and so are delivered from its guilt; they are sanctified through the truth and by the Spirit of our God, and so are delivered from its pollution. In reference to the work of grace on their hearts, they are saints; in reference to their interest in the work of Christ—their justification by his righteousness through faith, and their humble endeavours by divine grace to live in obedience to the gospel—they are righteous.

Now the righteous shall *certainly be saved*. There can be no doubt about this, for the Scriptures unequivocally declare it. The righteous shall be received into life eternal. Matt. xxv. 46; John iii. 36. Saith Jesus Christ, "They shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand."

John x. 27—30. Their salvation does not depend upon their native goodness, nor upon their own fidelity apart from the grace of God, but upon the immutable purpose and promise of Jehovah. Eph. i. 4—12. It is his plan that they who are once united to Christ by faith shall never be permanently separated from him; that they who are once justified by his righteousness, shall never be brought into final condemnation; that they who are sanctified by his Spirit, shall never be driven away in their wickedness, to suffer the pains of hell for ever. John xiv. 3, 17, 24; Rom. v. 8, 10; viii. 1; 2 Thess. ii. 13, 14; 1 Pet. i. 3—5. The righteous were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and without blame before him in love, Eph. i. 4; and being made holy by the operation of the Spirit of God upon their hearts, and being justified by faith, and entitled to the rewards of innocence by the imputation of Christ's righteousness unto them, they shall surely be saved. If one is a real Christian, there can be no doubt of his salvation. He may himself be in doubt, because of the obscurity of his views; he may doubt whether he *is* a Christian; but if one *be* a Christian, his eternal salvation is sure—as sure as if he were already in heaven—for the righteous shall be certainly saved.

But though the righteous shall be *surely saved*, they yet shall be *scarcely saved*. “And if the righteous *scarcely be saved*.” CERTAINLY SAVED, YET SCARCELY SAVED!—how is this? and why is it?

SCARCELY SAVED? Why? It is not because of any defect or deficiency in the provision made for the salvation of men. There is no such defect or deficiency. The plan is perfect; the provision all-sufficient. The way of salvation is open to the world; the invitation is to all; and if any perish, it is not because of any insufficiency in the work and satisfaction of Christ. So if the righteous scarcely be saved, it cannot be because of any narrowness or scantiness in the provisions of the gospel. There is sufficient merit in Christ's blood to atone for the sins of ten thousand worlds; of course an abounding sufficiency for the justified believer, though the chief of sinners. 1 Tim. i. 15.

SCARCELY SAVED! It is not because of the insufficiency of divine grace. The grace of God is sufficient to subdue the hardest heart, and conquer the most obstinate corruptions.

This is able to give the victory to every saint, and to bring them off more than conquerors over all that resists their heavenward course. My grace is sufficient for thee; as thy days, so shall thy strength be; my strength is made perfect in weakness. 2 Cor. xii. 9; Deut. xxxiii. 25.

SCARCELY SAVED! And why? Because of the trials through which they must pass. We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. Acts xiv. 22. There are many trials to which the righteous are subject in their pilgrimage to heaven. The time has been when they who would live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution; and such times may ere long come again. 2 Tim. iii. 12. They were at hand when the apostle wrote. Hence he speaks of fiery trials—of being partakers of Christ's sufferings—of being reproached for the name of Christ—of suffering as Christians—and of suffering according to the will of God. 1 Pet. iv. 1—3—12—19. The time was come that judgment must begin at the house of God. Those times would try the church, sift out the unworthy, and render the path of the righteous difficult, so that they should be scarcely saved—saved with difficulty. There are trials now for the righteous; these often set their path with thorns; render their course difficult; and make it true that they are scarcely saved—saved with difficulty, or, as some say, with much ado—through much tribulation.

SCARCELY SAVED! Because also of the many temptations to evil with which they are surrounded. This is a world of temptations as well as of trials; and from these the righteous cannot hope to escape. Indeed these temptations are intended to try their faith, and patience, and fortitude; and being addressed to their own evil hearts, which are sanctified but in part, they often find it difficult to resist and overcome them; and sometimes, it may be, they are themselves overcome and fall into sin. At all events, they must be engaged in a constant warfare; and this renders their progress difficult, and they are in consequence scarcely saved. When they would do good, evil is present with them. Though they delight in the law of God after the inward man, they see another law in their members warring against the law of their mind, and bringing them into captivity to the law of sin which is in their members; and they exclaim, O wretched men that we are, who shall deliver us from the

body of this death? Rom. vii. 22—24. The world too has its allurements. Not that religion interferes with innocent and rational pleasures: it does not; it befriends them. By enabling us to estimate them truly, it prepares us to enjoy them properly. Nor does religion conflict with necessary worldly business. It requires no man to neglect his worldly affairs; nay it condemns and censures those who are not diligent in business. So much is needed now to send the Gospel over the world, that every man should make it a part of his religion to be diligently devoted to his worldly affairs, that he may be able to afford efficient aid to the various schemes of the church which have in view the conversion of the world to God. But, while we may partake lawfully of lawful pleasures, and while we should engage diligently in our necessary business, we should beware of worldly conformity. This is a great danger to which the righteous are exposed,—especially at the present day. They are too prone to conform to the world in its business, amusements, and pleasures; to be governed by a worldly spirit, and fail to cherish and exhibit the spirit of their Master. There is not that difference visibly manifest between the professed followers of Christ and the world around them, that there should be. Too often the light of the church is obscured, or hid under a bushel, or extinguished amid the dust and rubbish of worldly business and earthly pleasures and amusements. In these things, the righteous seem too much like the world, and hence are scarcely saved, even so as by fire; and there is need of the caution, Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. Heb. iv. 1; 1 Cor. iii. 13—15. Thus we see why the righteous, though *certainly saved*, shall yet be *scarcely saved*.

Now if *the righteous*, though certainly, shall yet be *scarcely saved*, what shall become of *others*? What is the prospect before those who are not righteous? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, *where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear*?

THE UNGODLY AND THE SINNER! Such are all, while in their natural state, while unrenewed by the power of the Holy Ghost, and destitute of faith in Jesus Christ. Hence the ungodly and the sinner are those who have *no part in Christ's righteousness*. Not that that righteousness is not

sufficient for them, nor that it has not been offered to them, but they have *not sought an interest in it*. If any thing can augment the guilt, condemnation, and misery of men, it is the rejection of Christ—the neglect of the great salvation. When men have wilfully refused the offer of eternal life, and said by their conduct that they would not have Christ to rule over them, it may well be asked, Where shall they appear? If those who have accepted offered mercy, availed themselves of the provisions of the Gospel, become interested in the righteousness of Christ, endeavour to live to his glory, to overcome their corruptions, and to do good in the earth; if these scarcely be saved, where, O where, shall the ungodly and the sinner—the rejecters of Jesus Christ and his salvation—appear?

Not even scarcely saved, *where shall they appear?* There are some places where they **MUST APPEAR**. They must appear upon a *dying bed*. They must die. So Heaven has decreed. Dust we are, and unto dust must we return. Gen. iii. 19. However men may wish to banish the thought of death, they cannot flee from the reality. In God's appointed time, the messenger will come, and, reader, you must fall before him! You cannot flee from death. You must die! On a dying bed, and in the grave, all must appear.

**WHERE SHALL THEY APPEAR?** They must appear at the *judgment seat of Christ*. There all must stand. 2 Cor. v. 10. Many may wish to escape from that tribunal, but there is no escape. Not one of the human family can be absent from that solemn reckoning. Reader, **YOU MUST BE THERE!** Whatever may be your character, you must stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.

**APPEAR!** The ungodly and the sinner cannot appear at the right hand of the Judge. When all nations are gathered before Christ in judgment, a separation shall be made between the righteous and the wicked—the godly and the ungodly. The righteous shall be placed upon the right hand of the Judge, the wicked on the left. Matt. xxv. 31—33. **THE WICKED ON THE LEFT!** On the right hand, then, the ungodly and the sinner cannot appear. They cannot stand in that day among the righteous, because they are not righteous; they must stand with all the wicked, and receive their sentence, **DEPART, YE CURSED!** Matt. xxv. 41. There is a curse now hanging over every unbeliever, and remaining

so, that curse will be eternal! John iii. 18, 36; Gal. iii. 10; 1 Cor. xvi. 22. To appear on the left hand of the Judge, is to appear where mercy is unknown, and where every lingering hope expires.

*Where shall they appear?* Not in heaven. No unclean thing shall enter that blessed abode. None but the righteous can have a place in the paradise of God. And if the ungodly and the sinner cannot appear at the right hand of the Judge, nor in heaven, **WHERE SHALL THEY APPEAR?** They have no righteousness to shield their souls; they have no wedding-garments with which to go in unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb; they have no oil in their lamps, no grace in their hearts, no preparation for eternal glory. Having rejected the only Advocate of sinners, and refused a part in his spotless righteousness, they cannot be acquitted in the judgment; they must be condemned; they must abide for ever under the curse of God, and be doomed to the miseries of the world of darkness and despair for ever. For if the righteous scarcely be saved, there can be no hope in the case of the ungodly and the sinner, who die unrepenting and unforgiven; and the *doctrine of universal salvation can find no place for the sole of its foot!* That represents salvation as *so easy that all shall obtain it*; whereas the scriptures represent it as *so difficult that even the righteous are scarcely saved!* Therefore strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. Luke xiii. 24. And if not able to enter into heaven, what other abode is there for ruined man but the prison of eternal despair? These shall go away into everlasting punishment. The wrath of God abideth on them. Matt. xxv. 46; John iii. 36. And oh, to be shut out of heaven, and shut up in hell! Sin remaining, and the wrath of God without mixture of mercy for ever inflicted, while every sense of the body and every faculty of the soul is an avenue of pain! This is hell! Awful doom! There must the ungodly and the sinner appear; there must they abide for ever! Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings. Isa. xxxiii. 14. Who among us shall make his doom in hell? Reader, art thou the man?

The righteous *scarcely saved!* The ungodly and the sinner **LOST!** Then let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall. 1 Cor. x. 12. Let no one boast of his

own strength, nor trust in his own heart. Dangers beset the path of the righteous; they have need ever to be on their guard. Let them live near to Jesus, be engaged in his work, and trust only in his grace. Let them show their attachment to Christ by their devotion to his cause; and let it be their great aim to be useful, and so to live that an abundant entrance may at last be administered unto them into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. 2 Pet. i. 11.

The ungodly and the sinner LOST! LOST! Then let the reader ask, "What am I? Am I righteous? Am I united to Christ by faith? Have I an interest in his atoning blood? Am I justified? Have I peace with God? If not, I am yet ungodly, in my sins, and cannot be saved at all! Dying as I am, I too must perish,—I too must be *lost for ever!*" LOST! Reader, is there nothing in the SALVATION of the Gospel to render it an object of intense desire? And is there nothing in ETERNAL DESTRUCTION to excite your fears, and to raise the inquiry how you may escape so fearful an end? You are hastening to eternity; soon you must stand before the bar of God; and are you ready? It is a question of solemn moment; give it a serious thought, and begin to seek the salvation of your soul? Prepare to meet thy God. Repent of your sins. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Cry unto God for mercy and pardon, that you may be with the *righteous*, who shall be *surely*, though SCARCELY SAVED, and not with the *ungodly* and the *sinner*, for whom there *is no hope, and* NO SALVATION! Ponder the words of inspiration,—“And if the righteous SCARCELY BE SAVED, WHERE SHALL THE UNGODLY AND THE SINNER APPEAR?” 1 Pet v. 18.

That awful day will surely come,  
The appointed hour makes haste,  
When I must stand before my Judge  
And pass the solemn test.