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JESUS ONLY

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Acts 4:12:—*And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved.*

A NOTABLE miracle had been wrought. As Peter and John were entering the temple at the hour of afternoon prayer, they had encountered a poor cripple who was in the habit of having himself laid at the gateway to beg alms of the passing worshippers. Him they had healed, attracting his attention and faith by the great word, "In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, walk!" To the confounded crowd that ran together Peter had improved the opportunity to preach Jesus, whose mighty name, on faith having been awakened in it, had wrought this wonderful cure. The Sadducean leaders of the people had been, as the narrative puts it, greatly "worked up" by the occurrence; and, apprehending Peter and John, they had cast them into prison overnight and brought them on the morrow before the Sanhedrin. The question put to the apostles in their examination before this body was studiedly insulting in its every phrase, and runs up into an explosion of angry contempt: "What sort of power is it, and what sort of a name is it that you have done this thing by—you?" There is here an open relegation of the apostles to that herd of "vagabond Jews" who infested every city, working strange things by the power of some great name which they pronounced in their incantations.

"Then Peter," says the narrative, "filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: 'Rulers of the people, and elders, if it can possibly be we'"—note the emphasis of personal protest in this "we,"—"who are to-day called to account, for a good deed"—note this emphatic "good deed"; not the misdeed for which it is customary to call men to account—"to an infirm man, by what it is that he has been saved,—be it known to all of you and to the whole people of Israel"—here Peter it will be seen is rising to his climax,—"that it is by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom ye"—an emphatic "ye" locating the persons with clear and strong assertion—"whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead,"—oh, the tremendous poignancy of that contrast!—"by this name it is that he stands before you whole. This is the stone that was despised by you the builders, that is become the head of the corner."

Assuredly, we will say, pungency of rejoinder, boldness of proclamation, could go no further. And there stood the healed man in their midst, the living witness of the truth of the declaration. But Peter does go further than even this. Not content with so ringing an assertion of the reversal in the court of heaven of their earthly verdict on Jesus the despised Nazarene, and of the living presence among them of Him whom they had foully slain, doing wonders, Peter now suddenly rises to the height of his great argument and sets His Master on the pinnacle of His glory as the sole Prince and Saviour of all the earth. "This," he says, "is the stone that was set at nought by you the builders, that has been made the head of the corner, and in none other," he adds,— "in none other is there salvation; for neither is there any other name under heaven given among

men, by which we must be saved!"

It is too late now to speak of the fine note of defiance, of holy and chastened challenge, that rings in this trumpet-like speech of Peter's. In these last words it has passed beyond defiance and even beyond challenge, and taken on the note of summons and high proclamation. In them Peter steps forth unabashed before the world, as the herald of the Prince of Life, and asserts His crown prerogatives. Into the face of the sneering Sanhedrin before whom he stands arraigned he, an unlearned and ignorant man, flings this great and sweeping declaration: that Jesus Christ of Nazareth—whom they had crucified—was not only God's Holy Servant, by way of eminence the Holy and Righteous One, against whom they had therefore grievously sinned when they laid their wicked hands upon Him; but is actually (though they have slain Him) the very Lord and Source of Life, into whose sole hands are gathered all the issues of Being, whether in this world or in the world to come.

We must not pause to seek to picture the effect with which this daring predication to Jesus of the unique empire over salvation must have struck upon those Jewish ears that day. Him they had slain, but truly He had risen from the dead to trouble them, and was showing forth His might in signs and wonders done in His name. Here was this crippled man, saved from his infirmity; and who could gainsay that the cure had been wrought by the name of Jesus? Nay, here are these unlearned and ignorant men themselves, saved from their special infirmities also; Peter, for example, who had denied his Lord at the mere glance of a serving-woman, now stands before the Sanhedrin itself, careless of their frowns and his own chains, and boldly proclaims his Lord's risen glory and dominion over the whole realm of life. Who could gainsay that this cure too had been wrought by the name of Jesus? It is easy to imagine what searchings of heart there were in the Sanhedrin that day; what marvellings; what anxious inquiries as to what could be done to stop the spread of such a gospel. The two thousand years that have passed have taught us how vain all their efforts were; and, having rejected the stone that the Lord had made the head of the corner, how completely was fulfilled in them the further prediction of this same Jesus, that "he that falleth on this stone shall be broken to pieces, while on whomsoever it shall fall it will scatter him to dust."

It is of more importance for us to-day, however, to inquire what we to-day—after these two thousand years of enlightenment during which the gospel of Jesus has had free course and been glorified—should learn from this great declaration of Peter, spoken, we are told explicitly, when he was filled with the Holy Spirit. It assures us too, after so long a time, that there is salvation in none other than Jesus, and that there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. What are we to understand by this tremendous assertion?

We shall be counselled, of course, at the outset, to remember that we have before us here an announcement that belongs to the beginnings of the Gospel; that we are listening to words of Peter, not, say, of Paul or John; and to words of Peter even, which were spoken before he had been enlightened by the great vision that visited him on the house-top of Joppa. We shall even be counselled to remember that a miracle of physical healing lay at the root of this announcement, and that in its primary meaning, at least, it must be held to bear its natural reference to it. It would be a pity assuredly to forget such things as these. It is only by bearing them fully in mind that the large and rich comprehensiveness of Peter's great declaration can be apprehended. It is true that the whole situation turns on a miracle of healing; that Peter is addressing himself in his entire speech to a demand for an explanation of the power by which this physical cure had been wrought; that he had just spoken of the healing as a "salvation," making use of the same word that he employs in this great declaration itself. He certainly means

to declare, and he certainly does declare, that in none other than Jesus is such physical salvation to be had; and that there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby they must even thus be saved. Exorcists there were and healers enough, who pronounced other names over the afflicted children of men. None of them had power to save. If ever the evils of this life are to be relieved, the forces of disease and decay, of injury and death, to be broken, it will be only by Jesus that it will be done; only His name, by faith in His name, can give that perfect soundness for which we long. It is doubtlessly equally true that Peter had not yet wholly sloughed off the hard casing of Jewish exclusiveness that enclosed and straitened his heart. We know not what elements of crude Messianic hopes may not have still clung to his thought and conditioned his conception of salvation. The Jesus whom he proclaimed was undoubtedly in his view a king, the fruit of David's loins, and seated upon David's throne; a prophet aforepromised by Moses and all who came after Moses, now come primarily to Israel that he might bless them first of all, and others, only in and through Israel. He means to proclaim, and he does proclaim, that there is no national Saviour but Jesus, that there is no other name under heaven, given among men, whereby men must be saved from the oppressions of society and the organized life of states. Many other national Saviours had offered themselves and were still offering themselves to his hearers. There was, for example, one Theudas, whom they all remembered, who gave himself out to be a somebody; and there was Judas of Galilee who only the other day had presented himself to their acceptance. What had become of those that followed after them? No; if the yoke of the oppressor is ever to be broken, if society is ever to become that promised kingdom of righteousness for which all long, it will only be by Jesus that it will be accomplished; only His name, by faith in His name, can bring in the long-expected reign of God.

But it is beyond all possibility of doubt equally true that salvation in Peter's apprehension of it stretched far beyond these conceptions and found its real significance in the things of the spirit. "Remission of sins," and the gift of the Holy Ghost as an inward power making for holiness,—these are the ideas which, at least from Pentecost onward, dominated his thoughts; the "blotting out of sin" that seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord might come—here is expressed the very core of all his longing. No doubt, as regards this spiritual salvation too, he had yet much to learn. No doubt the wideness of God's mercy had not yet been fully revealed in his thought, and no doubt he still expected the Gentiles to become participants in this salvation, not as Gentiles, but only as the result of a spiritual conquest of them by Judaism. But assuredly not the less, but much the more rather, was it therefore inconceivable to Peter that Gentiles could be saved apart from that one Saviour in whom alone was there salvation for even the Jews. That channels of salvation could be open to the "sinners of the Gentiles" which are closed to Jews could not enter his imagination. Any remnants of Jewish exclusivism which may be imagined to have still clung to his thought, cannot be supposed, then, to render it doubtful whether or no the Gentiles too are to be understood to be shut up to this one announced means of salvation, but quite the contrary. "Sinners of the Gentiles," in the very nature of the case, rested in his view under a condemnation indefinitely deeper than the chosen people; and could hope for salvation only by participation in the blessing which came first to them. So that it must remain beyond all question that Peter's declaration was intended to assert and does assert in the most unqualified and the most exceptionless way possible that in none other than Jesus is this spiritual salvation to be had, and that there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby men in this sphere, above all, must be saved.

It would seem quite clear, therefore, that to catch Peter's meaning in this great declaration, we must take the conception of salvation in the most comprehensive sense possible for it to bear, and that we must give to his restriction of this salvation to Jesus and His mighty name, the strictest and most stringent interpretation. Doing so, we shall not be subjecting Peter's words to

undue pressure, forcing them out of their natural and simple meaning. Rather it is only thus that we can protect them from wresting and preserve to them their natural and simple meaning. Nor can we affect surprise that such is the case. In both matters Peter is here only reflecting in his own way and consonantly with his own personal stage of growth and the circumstances which were determining his language, the common Biblical doctrine.

We certainly shall never do justice indeed to the Biblical conception of salvation taken as a whole, save by giving to that term its widest conceivable connotation. It may be that we are prone to narrow and limit it on this side and that, and then to feel some surprise, perhaps some perplexity, when we open the pages of Scripture and light upon passage after passage which will not square with our poor starveling ideas. In the Biblical conception of it,—we shall not be able to say it too emphatically—salvation broadens its beneficent reach to cover every evil that afflicts the afflicted race of man. And that with the best of reason. For in the centre of its centre, in the heart of its heart, salvation is deliverance from sin, and accordingly it is deliverance from all the evils that find their roots in sin: and every evil of every kind that has ever entered the sphere of human life is consequent on sin and but the manifestation of sin's presence and power in humanity. We open a recent book and find written: "God Himself cannot prevent the consequences of sin, the sorrow, disgrace and suffering which are the direct effect of evil doing." We bless the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Lord of heaven and earth, that such is not the teaching of this blessed Bible. "They shall hunger no more," we read, "neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun strike upon them, nor any heat, . . . and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes . . . and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." Symbolical this language no doubt is, but it is such, nevertheless, because it expresses much more, not less, than it directly says: and so far as faithfulness to Biblical teaching goes it could be read with the literalness of a legal document. The favourite expression for salvation in the Biblical record is that great word Life; which is set over against the equally great word Death, as the best comprehensive term to gather up all the evils from which we shall be saved. Whatever Death is, and all that Death is, and all that leads up to, accompanies and follows Death, in any one of its possible applications, physical and temporal, spiritual and eternal—that is what we shall be saved from in this salvation. And whatever Life is, and all that Life is, and all that leads up to, accompanies and expresses, and grows out of and crowns Life—in every possible application of that great conception—that is what we shall be saved to in this salvation: or rather that, in Biblical language, is salvation. "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die"—in these terms was couched the great prohibition of "the fruit of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste," as Milton, not a whit too comprehensively, puts it, "brought death into the world and *all* our woe." Everything that vexes and troubles human life in every sphere of its manifestation is but the issue of this first disobedience. Conceive man as a physical organism held together by the subtle forces which govern material life; all that brings him pain, disease and death, emerges as the unavoidable result of sin and therefore the necessary object of salvation. Conceive him as a social being bound in fellowship with his companions by those mutual ties which hold together the fabric of society; all that brings him discontent, strife, injustice, oppression, want or neglect, equally truly is the fruitage of sin and equally truly is therefore the object of salvation. Or conceive him at the height of his nature, as a spiritual being standing in relation to that spiritual world above him which stretches upwards to the throne of God itself; all that breaks the free play of this high communion and rouses in him the sense of incompatibility with his higher environment; all that rises within him as a bar to that favour of God which is life, whether in the form of guilt or corruption,—this above all is the bitter fruit of sin and therefore above all the immediate object of salvation. We must conceive salvation as reaching out with its healing hand to the utmost confines of the effects of sin, or else fail to recognize with the poet the Restorer as a "greater

man" than him through whom we suffered this grievous loss. The Scriptures certainly will not permit us to entertain fancies so derogatory to the glory of the Redeemer. They do not content themselves indeed even with an equation of the spheres in which the forces of destruction and restoration work as if it were enough to say that the gift of life shall supplant the curse of death—following it into all the ramifications of its baneful effects that it may work their reversal. Nay, no sooner have they drawn the parallel than they at once correct it with a fervid, "but *not* as the trespass, so also is the free gift. For if by the trespass of the one the many died, *much more* did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one man Jesus Christ *abound* unto the many." There is a superabundance of grace, and an extension of it immeasurably beyond the ravages wrought even by sin.

Would we do justice to the Scriptural representations, then, we must conceive nobly of salvation. We must enlarge its borders if we would give to it all the land which the Lord has promised it. It belongs to the glory of Christ that His salvation enters into every region of human need and proclaims in all alike complete deliverance. Even the lower creation, by virtue of the relation in which it stands to man, partakes in his redemption. If the very ground was cursed for man's sake that the place of his abode might sympathetically partake in his punishment, no less shall it share in his restoration. Man's sighs are not the only expression of the evil that curses human life in its sinful development. The whole creation groans and travails together with him. But it shares also in the hope of the coming deliverance. For there shall be a new heaven, we are told, and a new earth. Under these new heavens, in this new earth, shall gather redeemed humanity, in the perfection of its idea, and in perfect harmony with its perfected environment. In the perfection of physical vigour: for what is sown in corruption shall have been raised in incorruption, what is sown in dishonour shall have been raised in glory, what is sown in weakness shall have been raised in power, what is sown in selfishness shall have been raised in spirituality. In the perfection of social organization and intercourse: for there shall be none to hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain, and all the people of the Lord shall have learned righteousness. In the perfection of spiritual communion with God: for then it is that the Lord shall make Himself known to His people and shall dwell with them, and they shall need no Temple to which men should require to repair in order to meet the Lord, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are the Temple thereof, and the grace of the Lord shall flow down the streets in a river of the water of Life washing into every nook and corner. Such is the picture the Scriptures draw for us of the salvation of our God. And let us not fail to note that it is a picture of a saved world. As no sphere of human life is left untouched by it; as on its touch, every sphere of human life is transformed; so the completeness and the profundity of its renovation of man is matched by the wideness of its extension over man. It is the renewed heavens and the renewed earth that we are bidden to contemplate; and dwelling in them in endless bliss renewed humanity. Renewed humanity; not a meagre company withdrawn from the sin-festering race, but the race itself, cleansed and purified and gathered home to the Father's arms; not without loss suffered by the way, it is true, for there are some who shall not enter into this holy city; but with all losses made good, all breaks in the ranks filled up, and all lacks and wants supplied by Him who has redeemed it to Himself and led it to its new estate of perfection in itself and eternal communion with Him. Such is the salvation that has been wrought out for us by Christ.

Now the point to which the words of Peter, which are particularly engaging our thought today, energetically direct our attention is that neither this salvation as a whole, nor any least part of or element in it, can possibly be attained save in Jesus Christ. "And in none other," he declares with tremendous emphasis, "in none other is there this salvation," this well-known salvation which fills all our hopes and longings:—"in none other is there this salvation: for neither is there any other name, under heaven, given among men, wherein we must be saved."

Peter's interest, we will observe, is absorbed, not in the greatness of the salvation, but in the greatness of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, who is the Lord and sole disposer of this great salvation. He assumes that the idea of this salvation and its indescribable greatness, and an insistent craving for it, are all present, persistent, controlling in the minds and hearts of his auditors. What he is concerned with is to carry home to their minds and hearts the autocracy of Jesus Christ the Nazarene over it. Hence the negative form given to his declaration. He does not say, you observe, "You ask by what power or by what name this cure has been wrought. I reply by the power and name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, in whose mighty hands rests power to heal all the ills of men." No, he gives quite a different tone to his declaration when he turns forward its negative edge and declares with enormous energy of expression: "You ask by what sort of power or by what sort of name we have done this thing. I reply it is by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, and there is not in any other this salvation; for neither is there another name, under heaven, given among men by which we must be saved." Observe the accumulation of emphatic phrases to enhance the stress laid on the exclusiveness of Jesus' power to save. First of all, there is the redoubled assertion: "in none other is there salvation," and then again that none might miss it, "there is no other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved." Then there is the heaping up of clauses, in almost superfluous reiteration of the absoluteness of the exclusion of all but Jesus from the power of saving: there is "none other," there is "no other name," "under heaven," "given among men"—as if it should be said, "Seek you wherever men can be found, search to the utmost limits of the encanopying sky,—nowhere among men, nowhere under the stretch of heaven's roof, will you find a whisper of another name in which salvation can be found." And then, at last, there is the curious turn given to the phrase: "in which we must be saved." We weaken it vastly in our careless current reproductions of it, saying, "neither is there any other name under heaven given among men wherein we *may* be saved,—wherein we *can* be saved." Peter does not so phrase it. He says, "wherein we *must* be saved." The accent of necessity is in it. It is not merely that we may be saved by Jesus, or that we can be saved by Jesus; but, if we be saved at all, it *must* be in Him that we are saved. There is no possibility otherwise or elsewhere. And with the emergence of this vigorous *must* at the end of the sentence the last hammer falls, the last rivet is clinched, and the last band of steel is fixed around this tremendous assertion of the exclusiveness of salvation in Jesus Christ alone.

The note of Peter's declaration here, you will observe, is, "Jesus only!" "Jesus only!" There is a note of severity in the mode in which he declares it, for the occasion of its declaration was such as to call for assertion,—assertion in the face of hard unbelief, of persistent denial of the crown-rights of the King. But through all the severity there sounds also a note of exuberance. This is the account to be given indeed of the almost unexampled piling up of phrases to which we have adverted, adding little to one another as they do except an ever-growing emphasis for the main declaration; expressive in a word only of the overflowing emotion that was flooding the speaker's heart. The name of Jesus was inexpressibly precious to Peter, and it was thus inexpressibly precious to him because it was the saving name, nay, we will not express it adequately until we say it outright—because it was the only saving name in all the universe. It was much to him, no doubt, that he had come to perceive that there had been given to that broken and suffering man whom he had seen but yesterday hanging on the cruel cross, the Name that is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. This supreme exaltation of his Master alone must have filled his soul with swelling delight. But there was something beyond this supreme exaltation itself that was suffusing his whole being with unutterable joy. It was the exuberant sense of the uniqueness of Jesus' office of Saviour that pressed for utterance and found it haltingly in an accumulation of phrases that must appear extravagant to all who do not with him rise to the height of the great

vision. Jesus exalted to the throne of the universe,—that is a great vision; but Jesus the sole Lord of salvation, holding in His hands the keys of life, and dividing to each as He will,—Jesus the only Name under heaven given among men whereby man must be saved—to sin-stricken and despairing men, surely this is a much greater vision. It was this greater vision that had caught Peter's uplifted eyes.

Not, of course, as if it were to his eyes alone that it was given to see it. There is nothing that Peter tells us here that is not told us over and over again by every writer of this New Testament. It belongs indeed to the very heart of the Gospel that these writers preached, which centred not precisely in the proclamation of salvation, but in the preaching of Jesus as Saviour. To them indeed Jesus is the Gospel; and where Jesus is not, there there is no gospel at all. It is of the very essence of the Gospel, therefore, that salvation can be obtained through Jesus alone. And so it was preached from the beginning. "I am the way, the truth, and the life," said Jesus Himself as plainly as majestically: "no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me." And equally plainly again, in that equally majestic assertion reported to us by Matthew and Luke on which He founds one of the most touching of His invitations: "All things have been delivered unto Me by My Father; and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and *he to whom the Son willeth to reveal Him.*" That as there is one God, so there is only "one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus," after whose once offering of Himself "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins," became accordingly the centre of the Gospel proclamation by His accredited messengers. And therefore they did not hesitate to proclaim boldly that only they who believe in Jesus Christ shall be saved: and that those who are without Christ have no hope and are without God in the world. The life that God has given us, explains John in his searching way, is deposited for us "in the Son," and therefore, "he that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life."

It was, in fact, this arrogant exclusiveness of the Gospel in which its offence in large part consisted. Even the Jew might have been persuaded to accept Jesus as a Rabbi, teaching a way to God; and the Gentiles in that syncretistic age would have welcomed with acclamation such a teacher among the multitude of their other masters. But neither Jesus nor His followers would accept such an assignment. He and they alike claimed for Him the sole empire over salvation and would brook no fellow by his side. When we contemplate the wide liberality of the Roman world, and consider the ease with which the most varied cults found room for themselves side by side in that spacious toleration, we are sometimes tempted to wonder why, among all this crowd of religions, Christianity alone was singled out for violent and indeed relentless persecution. The solution is of course that Christianity was not, and would not consent to be considered, one of these multiform religions. It was and it proclaimed itself to be the one only valid religion; and, thus pitting itself against them all, it drew the hatred and the assault of all against itself. A recent writer, seeking to draw for us a picture of the exclusive attitude of Christianity in those old days of the beginning of the Gospel, commences with a string of quotations from the great representative writers of the time,—Irenaeus and Tatian and Commodian and Tertullian and Cyprian himself, that man of moderate, one might say even politic, spirit, from whom more smooth speech might have been expected: but wearying of his task he breaks off suddenly with the remark that to present the whole case it would be necessary to cite the whole body of Christian authors, and well-nigh the whole list of Acts of Martyrs with them—since there is, he says, no one of them who does not assert the exclusiveness of Christianity. It brought them ridicule; it brings us ridicule yet. It brought them persecution of unexampled ferocity, as it brings us the scorn of man yet. But in that sign they conquered. Heathenism, throwing itself upon them with fury, did not break them: it broke itself upon them. And they have handed on the banner to us still bearing the unsullied legend of "Jesus only,"—Jesus the sole author of

salvation.

Now, it is not a popular thing to-day any more than it was two thousand years ago to assert the exclusiveness of Christianity. Men no longer cast us to the lions when we proclaim Jesus the only Saviour the world can know; His name the only name under heaven given among men wherein they must be saved. But the world of to-day endures with no more real patience than that older world two thousand years ago the arrogance of such lofty claims. This is above all others that have preceded it the day of eager and appreciative study of other faiths; and equally with the others that have preceded it, the day of indifference, if not hostility, to the high claims of Jesus. You will be pressed on every side to give some recognition to the large element of truth and good that is found in the historical religions of the earth; to the high conceptions of God that are enshrined in some of them, the noble ethical teaching that is the essence of others, the poignant pity for suffering humanity that throbs through others. You will be pressed on every side to accord an appreciative hearing to the voice of the religious spirit speaking in the hearts of men, who, nevertheless, have not learned to express their religious emotions in the formulas with which you have been made familiar. What, you will be asked, will you refuse your welcome to the aspirations of the soul that is naturally Christian; will you not give hearty recognition to the service that is rendered to the "essential Christ" by thousands who have never heard His earthly name, or who, having heard it, have failed rightly to estimate His unique character? Will you forget that the man Christ Jesus was the Word of God before He became flesh, and remains through all the ages that Light that lights every man that comes into the world? Will you dare to deny to His sovereign grace the right to quicken whom He will, under whatever sky and calling on God by whatever human name; or refuse to recognize the movings of His inspiration in the hearts of men—because, forsooth, they speak not your words and swear not in your symbols? It will be hard for you to resist the specious pleas with which you will be plied and to preserve in your heart—I will not say now on your lips—the echoes of Peter's great declaration that in none other than Jesus is there salvation, that there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved.

I beg you, when the temptation to admit other saviours to a place by His side, to acknowledge other names as equally potent with this unique name of Jesus, is strong upon you to remember three things. Remember the great commission: remember the peril of your own souls: remember the honour of Jesus Christ your Saviour.

Remember the great commission! "All authority is given unto me in heaven and earth," declared our Saviour when He was about to ascend to His throne. "Go ye, therefore," He commanded His disciples, "and make disciples of all the nations." Was this great commission the great mistake of history? It has required all the heroism the Church could command to make even the tentative efforts she has been able to make to fulfil it; and every step of the way has been watered by floods of her best blood. Have we now come at last to see it in a clearer light and to understand the error of judgment, or rather the profoundly deflected point of view, on which it was all founded? From our higher standpoint, shall we say that all the nations are already in the right path, and need no instruction from us to find the way: that the essential truth is already in their grasp and they may be trusted to its guidance: that having thus the leading of the Logos they cannot fail of the life? Such clearly was not our Saviour's view, whom we recognize as the Logos, to the guidance of whom we would trust the world, and who proclaimed Himself the Truth indeed, or He would never have sent His Church upon this—in that case—useless if not noxious mission. And if such be our view, we will never go upon this great mission in which consists, nevertheless, the very reason for the existence of the Church on earth. Only if we catch the apostles' view-point, and can say to our souls with the clearness of conviction which they felt,

that there is salvation in Jesus alone, will we be inspired with the zeal that filled them, to evangelize the world. The nerve of the missionary spirit after all is embalmed for ever in Paul's great sorties. Only they that call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent?" The salvation of the world hangs, thus, in our human mode of speaking, on the clearness and the strength of our conviction that there is salvation in none other than Jesus, that there is none other name under heaven, given among men, wherein they must be saved. O the cruelty of that indifferentism, miscalled broadness of mind, that would withhold from a perishing world the only healing draught, on the pretence, forsooth, that it is not needed. O remember that the whole world lies in iniquity—ill to death with the dreadful disease of sin,—and that you have in your hands the one curative potion, the only water of life which can purge away sin and restore to spiritual health and beauty. Remember the great commission!

And remember the peril of your own souls! Jesus Christ has come into the world to save sinners. And He calls you to Him, you who are weary and heavy laden with the burden of your sins. He points you to His wounded hands and feet and to His riven side. He points you to His outpoured blood. He points you to His finished sacrifice and to the Father's great, It is enough! In Him he proclaims to you there has been opened up at last access to the Father, and to the Father's forgiveness, and to the Father's love He is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God through Him. He pleads with you to come. He presses upon you the greatness of the opportunity, the greatness of the peril. He urges you with the great promise: He that believeth shall be saved. He importunes you with the sharp warning: He that believeth not shall be lost. Will you neglect so great salvation, which has at the first been spoken by the Lord, and has been confirmed unto us by those that heard Him, God also bearing witness by the wonders of His grace without us and within? And all because, forsooth, we cannot believe there is no other way? Other masters enough will demand your attention; other teachers essay your guidance. The wisdom of the world will laugh at your narrowness and point you to other ways of approach to God. I charge you, by the welfare of your own souls—and what should a man give in exchange for his soul?—to bear steadily in mind that the world by its wisdom has never yet attained to the knowledge of God. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? Let those who are set on perishing despise the word of the cross as foolishness. You who are set on salvation—bear it well in mind that it is the power of God unto salvation, apart from which there is no salvation. On the peril of your souls, I charge you to remember that Jesus Christ is the only way, the only truth, the only life; that no man comes or can come to the Father except by Him, that all the life that is in the world is in Him, and he only that hath Him hath the life, while he that hath not Him hath not the life. Listen to the solemn words of the apostle of love: "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: he that confesseth the Son," he, and he only, "hath the Father also." Let us note it clearly and note it whole: there is no access to God for sinners save in the blood of Jesus Christ.

Ah, I know what is rising upon your lips to say! You are of these who have believed in Jesus; your hearts are full of joy because you find yourselves in Him, and, being in Him, in the enjoyment of His salvation. I charge you, then, brethren, companions of the blessed life, remember the crown rights of your Lord and Saviour! Let His honour be precious in your sight! I have charged you in the words of Paul to let no man rob you of your crown: I charge you now in yet more insistent tones, to let no man rob your Saviour of His crown. In Him and in Him alone is redemption. In His hands He holds, as sovereign Lord of salvation, all the issues of life. Being at the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promised Holy Spirit, it is He and He alone that sheds down on earth all the currents of influence that make for salvation.

Say in your heart and shout abroad with your lips, that all men may know it assuredly, that God has made this Jesus both Lord and Christ, and beside Him there is no other. See to it that you ever honour Him in your hearts and ceaselessly proclaim Him with your voice as the one only Saviour the world can ever have; since in none other is there any salvation; and there is no other name under heaven given among men, wherein we must be saved. Only so will you render to Him the glory that is His due. For when there was no one in the heavens or on the earth or under the earth who was able to open the book of salvation or to break the seals thereof, this man was counted worthy; worthy to endure the pangs of death for the offences of men, worthy to rise from the dead for their justification, worthy to be exalted to the throne of God and to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honour, and glory, and blessing. He by whose hand has been wrought salvation, He is and remains the only Lord of Salvation, and beside Him is no fellow. Let this good confession, I beg you, echo throughout all the corridors of your life and fill with its voice all the recesses of your souls. Above even the great commission, above even the peril of your own souls, remember—remember as those should remember who owe their all to Him, remember the honour due to Jesus Christ, the Saviour, the sole Saviour, of this lost world.

Scanned and marked-up by Lance George Marshall