

SALVATION OF THE SOUL.

Extract from a discourse preached at Yakima City, Feb. 24, 1884, founded on Mark 8: 28-38. Subject, "The Salvation of the Soul."

We inquire 1st. What is the soul? By soul we mean (for present purpose) all the mental entity of man, while we admit the existence of spirit as in 1 Thes. 5: 23. The soul, philosophically considered, is that which thinks, analyzes, compares, reasons, chooses, decides and acts. It is the motive power that manipulates our bodies, tells us when to move and when to cease movement, has its own tastes, preferences and inclinations. In its nature it is substance, either visible or invisible, tangible or intangible, material or immaterial, constitutionally mortal or immortal, finite or infinite, having form or no form, size or no size. Having a centre or no centre, a circumference or no circumference, a surface and an interior or neither. It has nerves of sensation or no power of feeling. It has eyes or no mode of seeing, ears or no mode of hearing. A soul that can neither think, see, hear or feel, that has no form, shape nor size, is an unknowable and unthinkable nothing. If it can neither think, hear, see or feel, then it can neither suffer nor enjoy in this world nor any other. That the soul of man will at any future time undergo a constitutional change in its elementary principles and powers is entirely beyond the domain of philosophy and nowhere asserted in Scripture. That the soul is a force, a power, is conceded by all believers in its existence. Without substance no force or power can exist. But force and power do exist. Therefore substance exists. Substance is of two kinds, material and immaterial. Soul substance is immaterial substance. Material substance cannot pass through material substance without resistance, while immaterial substance can. "A spirit hath no flesh and bones as ye see me have." Therefore it has not material substance, for flesh and bones are material substance.

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We must carry up our affections to the mansion prepared above, where eternity is the measure, felicity is the state, angels are the company, the Lamb is the light, and God is the portion of his people forever more.

NEGLECTED SCRIPTURE.

In view of the "remarkable statement" which was made in our issue of a fortnight since, it would seem that we must now add to our trilogy, completed last week, another subject which may not be inappropriately styled, "Neglected Scripture." While it appears, from letters received, that a few preachers are still to be found who do occasionally quote the passage referred to, and two or three have actually been known to preach on the text, it is nevertheless true that most preachers of the present time give Acts 2: 38 a wide berth whenever they enter the pulpit. Now why is this? Has the passage ceased to possess any binding force as an authoritative declaration of the Holy Spirit? Is it no longer to be consulted when seeking to know the Divine way of dealing with earnest inquirers? We ask these questions because we have a notion that the passage has special importance in determining the way of salvation. Not that it settles everything. Not that it even settles anything without the concurrent evidence of other Scripture. But if the most obvious interpretation of this text not only does not contradict other parts of the Word of God, but is really supported by the whole tenor of Divine teaching, then we should certainly be slow to neglect it in our preaching, and especially when instructing earnest inquirers. It seems to us its importance is emphasized in the light of the facts in which it stands. It is the first deliverance of the Holy Spirit's teaching after the fulfillment of the promise which our Lord made to his disciples were commanded to "tarry at Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high." At Pentecost they received that power, and Peter, the very person who had been specially chosen to open the new Kingdom, is the speaker. He preaches a most remarkable sermon, concluding with a splendid climax: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." Never was there a finer summary of the gospel facts than this. Jesus, the historical name, is here; Christ crucified is here; Christ, the anointed one, is here; and the Lord, the one having all authority in heaven and earth, is here. What more was needed so far as faith was concerned? The people had clearly set before them the Lord Jesus Christ, embracing

everything that was necessary to be addressed to their faith. No wonder they cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter's answer was, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts 2: 38.

Now, it may be well to notice the order in which the Apostle places the various items. The inquirers were told to "repent, and be baptized." They were deeply moved by Peter's sermon—so much so, that they were pricked to the heart and cried out. Surely here was real conviction. Consequently the Apostle does not tell them they must believe—they, doubtless, already had sufficient faith to obey Peter's command; and so he just told them what to do, and then exhorted them to do it. And the promise was that, following their obedience, they were to receive remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Now, can there be any reasonable doubt that this is the order in which the items stand related? Of course much depends upon the force of the preposition *eis*, which in the Authorized Version is translated "for." And we think it will help us to determine the exact meaning of *eis* here, if we consider the whole phrase, *eis aphasian hamartion*, "for the remission of sins." The phrase occurs in only three other places, viz. Matt. 26: 28; Mark 1: 4; Luke 3: 3. Hence four occurrences exhaust the New Testament use of *eis aphasian hamartion*, rendered in the Authorized Version uniformly "for the remission of sins," and in the Revised Version "unto remission of sins." Now if we can certainly determine the force of *eis* in the phrase, as found in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, we think there is no doubt that it should have the same force in Acts 2: 38. In Matt. 26: 28, it cannot have a retrospective signification, since it is impossible to suppose that Jesus shed his blood because the sins of the world were pardoned. And it is just as evident that John did not preach the baptism of repentance because the sins of the people were pardoned, but in order to remission, Mark 1: 4; Luke 3: 3. Now as the force of *eis* is unmistakably prospective in all the other occurrences of the phrase, it must have the same force in the passage under consideration, unless there are good and valid reasons why the uniformity of mean-

ing should be broken. No such reasons, we feel sure, can be given. On the contrary, there is strong corroborative evidence that the Pentecostians did not have their sins pardoned when Peter told them to "repent and be baptized." It is altogether improbable that he would have told them to repent because their sins were pardoned. Nor is it possible to suppose that their earnest inquiry is the language of sins forgiven. They had been charged, only a few moments before, with crucifying the innocent Jesus. Surely they were not such characters as could expect remission of sins without sincere repentance. But baptism is placed between the repentance and the remission of sins which was promised, and consequently, it cannot be said that they were to be baptized because of remission of sins any more than it can be said that they were to repent because their sins were remitted. Hence we conclude that every rule of fair exegesis compels us to recognise the fact that Peter told these Pentecostians to repent and be baptized upon the name of Jesus Christ in order to the remission of sins.

But it may be asked, how can this interpretation be made to harmonize with many passages which do not mention repentance and baptism as in any way connected with remission of sins? Let us just here state a canon of criticism which is most important in this discussion. When the Scriptures promise a blessing, that blessing may depend upon more, but can never depend upon less than the conditions expressed in any given case. For instance, when salvation is promised to anyone who calls upon the name of the Lord (Rom. x. 13), it is evident that nothing short of this calling will meet the case, but no one would seriously contend that calling upon the name of the Lord entirely exhausts all that is required in order to salvation. Precisely so is it as regards faith. Whenever the Scriptures state this as the condition of salvation, and mention nothing else, it should be remembered that salvation cannot be predicted without this faith, but it does not follow that no other conditions are understood, because they are not specifically stated in the particular case referred to. Surely the command to believe does not exclude repentance, calling on the name of the Lord, confession of Christ, &c. And if it does not ex-