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"Preaching The Same Truth We Preached Before Kentucky Was A State"

SAVING FAITH

By: C. D. Cole

II Corinthians 13:5, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith..."

"Can such faith save him?" (James 2:14, Weymouth)

"Can that faith of his save him?" (James 2:14, Moffatt)

"My brothers, what good is there in a man's saying that he has faith, if he has no good deeds to prove it? Such faith cannot save him, can it?" (James 2:14, C. B. Williams)

"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law," Romans 3:28.

"But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness," Romans 4:5.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast," Ephesians 2:8, 9.

It is the uniform teaching of scripture that the sinner is saved by faith on-

ly. Romans 4:16, "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace..." If the sinner does anything beyond faith on his part for salvation, he destroys grace on God's part. If the sinner were saved by faith and works, then salvation would be by grace and merit, which is an absurdity. You cannot mix divine grace and human merit; they mutually exclude each other. Romans 11:6, "And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."

If somebody says, 'you cannot find a scripture that says we are saved by faith only,' I tell him that he cannot find a scripture which says, 'we are saved by faith and works, or faith and anything else.' But I can find many scriptures which say, in effect, that salvation is by faith only. John 3:36, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." John 5:24, "Verily, verily, I

say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." Romans 5:1, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Now the scriptures are just as careful to tell us that it is not just any and every kind of faith that saves. There is such a thing as vain faith. The stony ground hearer heard the word and received it with joy, but endured only for awhile, because he had not root in himself. It was just surface and emotional faith and when it was tested, it failed. When the jews saw Christ perform the miracles at Jerusalem they believed, "But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men," John 2:24. Simon Magus believed and was baptized, and in a short time he proved that his faith was not the right sort, for when he saw the apostles bestow the Holy Spirit by laying on of hands, he offered money for the power to do likewise. Peter

told him his heart was not right with God, and that he was in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity.

And James tells of a man whose faith is all talk, and nothing to prove it. And he asks if such faith as that can save? So we can harmonize these scriptures by saying that we are saved by faith alone, but only by the faith that is not alone. Faith is productive of good deeds. The good deeds do not produce the faith; it is the other way round; the faith proves its genuineness by good works. Jesus Christ said the tree is known by its fruits, and that the religious professor is known by his fruits.

There are three things of vital importance about saving faith: I. the agent, or who believes; II. the object, or what is believed; and III. the nature, or the kind of faith that saves.

I. The agent, or who exercises saving faith? This is a sinner--a self-conscious sinner--the man who takes the place of a sinner. The man who thinks he is good could not, in the very nature of things, trust Christ for salvation. That would be like a well man taking medicine, or a millionaire asking for a dollar. Christ is the Saviour of sinners. He did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. He came to seek and save the lost, and a good man would not be lost. This truth is exemplified in the case of the pharisee and publican who went to the temple to pray. The pharisee did not trust the blood on the altar behind the veil because he was good in his own eyes. The publican took the place of a sinner and said, "O God, be propitiated to me the sinner." He put his hope in the blood

on the altar behind the veil there in the temple.

Sinner is the only character in which any person can be saved. To suppose the salvation of anybody but a sinner is nonsense, for just persons need no salvation. Matthew 9:11-13, "And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." The holy angels do not need salvation, for they are not sinners. The devil needs salvation but there is none provided for him.

II. The object of faith, or what must we believe?

The object of faith--the one and only object of saving faith--is Christ and Him crucified and risen again. You might trust a church, but that could not save you. You might put your faith in some great man, but that faith would not save you. Your faith must have for its object the person who settled the sin question--the person who suffered from sins as the just one for unjust people. Sin must be punished, and the only way the sinner can escape just punishment is for someone who was not a sinner and had no obligations of his own to the law, to suffer at the hand of divine justice for him. Sin is the damning thing in human life, and sin must be given what it deserves if the sinner is to be saved. Sin cannot be punished in the abstract--sin is not something apart that can be punished. Sin can only be punished in a person, for there is no sin apart from a

person. If sin is punished in the person who commits it, he is not saved. If the person who commits sin escapes punishment, his sin has to be punished in a person who is not a sinner. And such a person would be a substitute.

Is there such a person? Has anybody ever been here who was punished for the sins of others? Did God ever punish anybody else for their sins? If He hasn't, there is no Saviour and no salvation and I and everybody else will have to face Him in the day of judgment and be punished according to the deeds done in the body.

The Bible answers all these questions and announces the glad tidings of a Saviour. It tells us who the Saviour is and just what He did to save us. The Saviour is the Lord Jesus Christ--the only begotten Son of God--who died the just for the unjust--who put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself--who bare our sins in His own body on the tree. The Bible tells us that it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; that He was stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. The Bible tells us that all we like sheep have gone astray; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Does anybody have any other Saviour? On what ground does anybody dare trust any other Saviour? There is only one Saviour--the Lord Jesus Christ--for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.

I warn every person that it is fatal to trust anybody or anything for salvation except Christ Jesus and what He did in death and resurrection. His death, burial, and resurrection for our sins is the Gospel. Somebody says these are the facts of the Gospel, but not all the Gospel; that the Gospel has to

be obeyed, and that you cannot obey facts.' Let's see about that. To obey the Gospel is to respond to the preaching of the Gospel--to respond by faith. Romans 10:16, 17, "But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." You obey the Gospel by believing it. When Peter had been delivered from prison, he went to the door of the gate where believers were praying for him. As he knocked, Rhoda came to harken, that is she responded to his knock. The word harken is the same word that is translated obey in II Thessalonians 1:8, "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ," and in Romans 10:16, "...they have not all obeyed the gospel."

III. The nature of saving faith.

A. There is in it the element of trust. It is not the mere assent of the mind to a fact. You may sign on the dotted line to all the facts of the Gospel without throwing your hope of salvation upon these facts. You may believe about Christ and yet not trust Him as Saviour. You may be convinced of the truth that He died and rose again and yet not commit your soul to Him as Saviour.

B. Saving faith is accompanied by love. Galatians 5:6, "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love." I Corinthians 16:22, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha." Nowhere does the Bible say we are saved by loving God, but love is a proof of saving faith. No man has saving faith if he merely trusts

Christ to save him and then has no love for Him.

C. Saving faith is productive of good works. Faith that has no works is dead, and a dead faith is not saving faith. We were created in Christ Jesus unto good works not by or because of good works. We are no good without good works.

"Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving." Colossians 4:2.

Have you ever heard your own voice recorded on a tape recorder? Often the voice sounds a little strange.

What would happen if your prayers were ever recorded, and then read or played back to you? What would they sound like? Would there be repeated phrases like, "Bless so and so," or, "Give me this or that"? Would we hear a lot of complaints and meaningless repetition, or would there be much praise and adoration of your Lord?

The Apostle Paul was led by the Holy Spirit to write many very practical instructions for living a Christ-like life. The Bible says much about the subject of prayer. Colossians 4:2 tells us to continue daily or regularly in prayer, and also to pray with a thankful heart.

Do we not have many things for which to thank the Lord every day? Then let us tell Him thank you.

Begin today to make your prayers a real "praise" time. Thank the Lord for His Word which encourages, teaches, convicts, and rebukes you. Thank Him for loving you so much that He would care to correct your wayward steps and lead you in His way everlasting. Thank Him for every breath of life which He gives you. Let's take time right now to list some things for which we can thank the Lord.

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'I Shall Not Want' - Psa. 23:1



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