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



## LECTURES IN BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

### *What Christ Taught Concerning Salvation*

By DR. C. D. COLE

*(Seventh of 23 Lectures delivered in Toronto Baptist Seminary, Spring, 1960)*

**T**HE Lord Jesus Christ as the eternal Word knew of the tragedy of the fall of man in the garden of Eden before He ever came into the world. He was foreordained to be the Saviour of sinners, and stood as a lamb slain from the foundation of the world. He came into this world on a mission of mercy to men in the misery of sin. He did not come to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He came to a world already condemned, for by one man sin had entered the world and the sentence of death had been passed upon the whole human race. Rom. 5:12. Christ did not come to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many. When the angel announced His birth to Joseph, he was told to name Him Jesus, for He was to save His people from their sins. Matt. 1:21.

As a teacher Jesus had much to say on the subjects of sin and salvation. He came not only to preach the gospel, but to provide the gospel. He Himself is the gospel, and so we speak of the gospel of Christ; not merely as coming from Him, but as being about Him. In Romans one Paul says the gospel of God is concerning His Son Jesus Christ Who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, but declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead. Paul gives a clear-cut definition of the gospel when he says, "That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:

3, 4). Christ's death, burial and resurrection make up the content of the gospel, while the words "for our sins" give us the design of His death. His death was not that of a helpless martyr to a good cause; death with Jesus Christ was an accomplishment. On the mount of transfiguration Moses and Elijah came and talked with Him about His death (exodus) which He should accomplish at Jerusalem. Lk. 9:30, 31. His life was not taken from Him; He lay it down of Himself. Jno. 10:18. Christ did not die for the moral influence the story might have on sinners in softening their hearts and making them want to live better. There is only a small element of truth in the moral influence theory of the atonement. Neither was His death for mere governmental purposes in which God was showing His hatred of sin, and as a deterrent against sinning. The death of Christ for our sins means that He was suffering in our room and stead; that He was bearing the guilt and penalty of our sins in His own body; that He was putting away the damning power of our sins by the sacrifice of Himself. 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Peter 3:18; 1 Peter 2:24; Heb. 9:26b. In His death Christ was acting as the sinner's substitute under law to redeem us from its curse. Gal. 3:13.

I.

#### WHAT SALVATION IS ACCORDING TO CHRIST

Jesus spoke of salvation as forgiveness and remission of sins. He thought of salvation in relation to God as a person. He spoke of salvation as res-

toration to fellowship with God. Only one time does He use Paul's favorite term "justify" (Lk. 18:14). Paul emphasized salvation in relation to God as Lawgiver, viewing the sinner as a condemned transgressor of God's holy law. Jesus emphasized the need of fellowship with God as the heavenly Father. And so His favorite terms are forgiveness and remission. These terms mean to send away, to discharge, to remit as a debt. In the Old Testament God is said to put sins behind His back, and to cast them into the depths of the sea, and as removing them as far as the east is from the west. Isa. 38:17; Micah 7:19; Ps. 103:12.

Forgiveness is not like justification which is done once for all. The sinner needs initial forgiveness before he can come into the presence of God as Father. Jesus said, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (Jno. 14:6). And the saint, the child of God, needs forgiveness also. Jesus taught His disciples to pray for forgiveness. Matt. 6:12. This shows that saints sin and need to be brought back into fellowship with the Father. We are justified once for all through faith in Christ Jesus. Justification is the grace in which we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Rom. 5:2. In justification we are delivered from the curse of the law, and never put back under the law as the way of life and salvation. Sin cannot damn us because we are not under law for justification. Rom. 6:14.

But we shall need forgiveness again and again until the end of our earthly sojourn. We are never told to pray for justification, but we are told to pray for forgiveness as we pray for our daily bread.

Justification keeps us from being condemned by God as Lawgiver; forgiveness keeps us in fellowship with God as our heavenly Father.

The two parables on forgiveness are those of the two debtors and the prodigal son. When the debtors had nothing to pay, the creditor was gracious and cancelled the debt. The prodigal son returned to the father's house and to a place of fellowship.

The teaching of Christ on forgiveness is used by some to oppose the satisfaction theory of the atonement. It is pointed out that in forgiveness no satisfaction is demanded, and that where satisfaction is demanded there can be no forgiveness. But let us remember that revelation is progressive. Christ did not give all the truth in a single statement. Forgiveness does mean that nothing is demanded from the one who is forgiven, but it is false to say that there is no just basis for forgiveness. Paul connects forgiveness with redemption in Eph. 1:7: "In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." Jesus told His disciples that He had many things to say unto them, but that they could not at that time bear them. "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth" (Jno. 16:13).

There is a book entitled *The Gospel of the Incarnation*, published by the Westminster Press, and written by Prof. George S. Hendry. This book is a criticism of blood atonement. The author makes bold to say that there is no support from the words of Jesus for the view that He took upon Himself responsibility for the sins of men. To quote him verbatim he says, "There is no word of His (Jesus) to suggest . . . that He deliberately submitted Himself to the judgment of God on sin." In refutation of the contention of this book, it is sufficient to say, that Christ states emphatically and plainly that His

blood was shed for the remission of sins. Matt. 26:28. And Paul quotes Christ as saying at the institution of the memorial supper, "Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you" (1 Cor. 11:24). Prof. Hendry rehashes the old Socinian argument that forgiveness based upon satisfaction is not really forgiveness, and that there is no genuine mercy if Christ died for guilty sinners. This argument denies the justice of God, and overlooks the fact that it is the mercy of God in Christ that provides atonement, and a just basis for forgiveness. Saving faith is faith in Christ Who was lifted up on the cross just as the serpent was lifted up on a pole. Jno. 3:14, 15.

I said the other day that our battle is over the Book — over the Bible as the Word of God. The Bible is vitally important because it emphasizes blood atonement. The devil hates the blood, and if he can get the blood out of the gospel he has accomplished what he failed to do in the wilderness temptations, when he made repeated attempts to swerve Jesus from His determination to go to the cross and redeem sinners with His precious blood. That blood was precious to Peter as the price of redemption, and woe to him who lightly esteems it. 1 Peter 1:19; Heb. 10:29. The devil knows that the death of Jesus Christ spells his doom, and he wants to keep the blood out of the story of His life. The devil well knows that the only way the sinner can meet his accusations and overcome him is by pleading the blood of the Lamb, even Jesus the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. Jno. 1:29.

How are the mighty fallen! Prof. Hendry occupies the Charles Hodge Chair of Systematic Theology at Princeton University, but his teaching is far removed from the teaching of Hodge who said, "It is the language and spirit of the whole Bible and of every believing heart in relation to Christ, that His blood alone has power sufficient to atone."

Jesus Christ was more than a herald of salvation; He was also the provider of salvation. His mission to earth was not primarily to preach salvation, but to provide a salvation to be preached. Paul says, "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (1 Tim. 2:5, 6).

## II.

### CONDITIONS OF SALVATION

The author of our text book acknowledges that this expression is somewhat misleading. We have already seen that Christ met the conditions of salvation in giving His life as a ransom for sinners. And so what we mean by "conditions of salvation" is the terms upon which the salvation provided by Christ is offered and received. What we are thinking about now is salvation as a conversion experience. Dr. Conner warns against thinking of a checker game in which God makes a move and then waits for the sinner to move. Salvation is of the Lord, both in its provision and in its application. Christ provided salvation and the Holy Spirit applies it. We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works. Eph. 2:10.

In speaking of the terms of forgiveness, Jesus used two words: repentance and faith. He did not develop these two doctrines as they are later developed by the apostle Paul. If all the truth on salvation is to be found in the gospels, the rest of the New Testament would be nothing more than repetition.

## Repentance

Repentance was called for by Jesus. He said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Lk. 13:3). After His death and resurrection, He commanded His disciples to preach repentance and remission of sins in His name among all nations. The word for repentance means a change of mind, such a change of mind that leads to a change of action. It involves a reflection on the past and the realization that one is a sinner facing the wrath of God. It involves also hatred and repudiation of sin. When Job repented he abhorred himself. Repentance is viewing sin as God views it. Repentance is taking sides with God against self. In speaking of the ministry of John the Baptist, Jesus said that all the publicans and sinners justified God by being baptized. And in contrast He said that the Pharisees rejected the counsel of God against themselves by refusing to be baptized. John baptized those who confessed their sins, thereby justifying God in His charge against them. But the Pharisees refused to take the place of sinners, thereby rejecting God's charge against them. Luke 7:29, 30.

We get a good definition of repentance in the parable of the two sons. A man had two sons. He said to the first, "Son, go work today in my vineyard." This son, at first, refuses and says, "I will not." But he got to thinking this matter over and repented; that is, he changed his mind and went. He had a change of mind that led to a change of action. And when we preach repentance and remission of sins in the name of Christ, we are urging men to reflect on their past, and change their mind toward sin and Christ.

We have a good illustration of repentance in the parable of the prodigal. He got to thinking over the past, had a change of mind about what he had done, and said, "I will arise and go to my father." There was an inner change of attitude leading to a change of conduct.

## Faith

Faith is another word often on the lips of Jesus; however, it does not have the place in the Synoptics that it has in Paul and John. In the Synoptics faith is seen primarily in connection with physical healing. When Christ saw the faith of the men who brought the man of palsy and let him down through the roof of the house, He said, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee" (Mk. 2:5). To the woman with the issue of blood, He said, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague" (Mk. 5:34). Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, sought Jesus in behalf of his daughter. And as Jesus journeyed to his house, word came that the child had died. To the father, Jesus said, "Be not afraid, only believe" (Mk. 5:36). The father of the boy with a dumb spirit came to Jesus with the report that His disciples had failed in their efforts to cast out the evil spirit, and frantically appealed to Jesus, saying, "If thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us." Christ replied that it was not a matter of what He could do, but of what the man could believe. To blind Bartimaeus, the Lord Jesus said, "Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole" (Mk. 10:52). To the sinful woman who washed and kissed His feet, Christ said, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace" (Lk. 7:50). And so it seems that physical healing and forgiveness of sins went together on the condition of faith. To His critics our Lord said, "For which is easier,

to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise and walk" (Matt. 9:5). Jesus often rebuked His disciples for lack of faith. When Peter was about to sink as he walked on the water, Christ said, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" (Matt. 14:31). Let us ever remember that the blessings of God are by means that honour Him, and this is by faith in His power and promises.



## CHEER FOR THE LORD'S SERVANTS

Tired in the Master's service?  
Yes, I did feel tired today,  
And the devil came near and whispered,  
"You are wearing yourself away."  
But not heeding his tempting  
I turned—my Saviour to see  
And He came near and whispered,  
"Are you sorry you're tired for Me?"  
Then quickly the burden was lifted  
And the tiredness all had fled,  
As, with a heart full of rapture,  
"Not sorry, but glad," I said.  
Glad to be tired for the Master  
And the pathway was light that I trod,  
For He had come near and taught  
It is sweet to be tired for God.

—Author Unknown

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