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"I DO NOT WANT TO GO TO HELL"

BY: C. D. COLE

"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell," Matthew 10:28.

My subject is a statement most anybody will make. It expresses a universal longing. Nobody wants to burn. Everybody is afraid of fire. Jesus Christ warns us to fear God who is able to cast both soul and body in Gehenna.

A woman once called me over the phone to ask me if she cut her hair would she go to hell. She went on to say that another woman had told her that if she cut her hair she would go to hell. And she repeated again and again the words I have taken for my subject: "I do not want to go to hell." And I echoed her sentiment. She wanted my opinion on the matter. What could I do but read the Bible? I have no opinion, and if I did have, it would be worth nothing. So I read from I Corinthians 11:3-15, and told her that was all I or anyone else could know on the subject. I pointed out that Scripture does not say that to cut the hair will send a woman to hell. I distinguished between the way to be saved and the way to please the Saviour. The Bible makes it plain that the way to be saved is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; that the ground of salvation is what Christ did on the cross in putting away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. The Bible makes Christ and Him crucified as the sole object of our trust--so far as salvation is concerned. Therefore, we must trust Him for salvation because all the merit is in His blood.

As I left the phone, my mind began to work. I recalled the woman's words, "I do not want to go to hell," and I repeated them for myself, for "I do not

want to go to hell."

Hell is a place to be dreaded and God who casts into hell is to be feared. When Paul wanted to climax the terrible condition of the heathen, he said, "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

People Like To Bargain With God

And then I began to think how people like to bargain with God. If people were to be convinced that to go to church twice on Sunday and prayer meeting every Wednesday night would assure a home in heaven, there is not a man anywhere who would not make the promise to do so, and also, make serious efforts to keep the promise. There would be many a stretcher or pallet in God's house. Company would not keep people away from church. There would be nobody on the lake on Sunday if everybody were convinced that they must go to church on Sunday to be saved. And that would be a bargain, would it not? That would be cheap salvation, would it not? But what would it show? It would show that people were only concerned about their own safety and the motive of love--the desire to please God--would not enter into such service. The house of God would be filled with grumblers--they would be there from fear of hell. Their bodies would be there, but their hearts would be elsewhere. They would be there from necessity, not from choice.

Now when God says that salvation is free--without money and without price; that Jesus paid it all; that we are saved by grace through faith; that salvation is not of works; that we are to serve out of love and seek to please our Redeemer, the whole question takes on a different color, and people begin to ask, "Can I do

this or that and be saved?" And this reveals a bad heart and the danger signal needs to be sounded. It is a bad sign when one is willing to do for his own safety what he is not willing to do to please his Redeemer. If a woman keeps her hair long as the price of salvation and is not willing to keep it long in grateful obedience to God's word, there is lack of love.

If God should say in His word that all who tithe will be saved, I doubt whether anybody would refuse to pledge to tithe. That would be a bargain, would it not? Cheap salvation that costs only ten percent of what God, in His providence, enables us to make. We are giving to our government about 40 percent of what we make. Much of the taxes we pay are hidden, but it is tax just the same. And it is a bargain at that. It is much better to pay these taxes than to run afoul of the law and spend a term in the penitentiary. But when God, who saved us by His grace, tells us to honor Him with our substance and the firstfruits of our increase, that becomes a horse of another color. Men will tithe for safety's sake who will not tithe for Christ's sake.

I have had people say to me, "If baptism is not essential to salvation, then why be baptized?" It is the same spirit that wants to bargain with God. Now salvation by being

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MAKING DISCIPLES

BY: C. D. COLE

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen," Matthew 28:19-20.

It is both interesting and profitable to study the various names by which the saved are called in the New Testament. In the four gospels and Acts, the word "disciple" is the prevailing word to designate the saved. The word occurs hundreds of times in the gospels and Acts, and then is dropped and you find it no more in the New Testament. In the church epistles, the word "saint" is most commonly used. Nearly all of the church epistles are addressed to the saints. The word "saint" occurs only one time in the gospels--Matthew 27:52--and four times in the Acts, but it occurs 58 times in the rest of the New Testament. Here is a rather strange thing: we have popularized a word to designate saved people that occurs only three times in the Bible--the word "Christian." *"And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch,"* Acts 11:26. *"Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian,"* Acts 26:28. *"Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf,"* I Peter 4:16.

This message has to do with the word "disciple." What is a disciple? What does the word "disciple" mean? The word means a pupil or learner. A disciple is a student of Christ. A saved person is viewed as a student of the word of Christ. The word "disciple" means that the follower and believer of Christ is interested in His word. A real disciple has entered the school of Christ--for life. Here is a school from which there is no graduation. *"Then*

said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed," John 8:31. It might take some of the spiritual starch out of us if we would examine ourselves as disciples--students--learners.

The Command To Make Disciples

We have here in our text a command to make disciples. This command is based upon the fact of authority. It is a command, not mere advice; it is a command, not mere exhortation. It was given to the apostles directly, but not to them as mere individuals, but as representatives of believers of all centuries. This command is to be obeyed until Christ returns.

It was not given to the ministry, but to the church. Every believer is commanded to make other believers; every disciple is commanded to make other disciples. The Great Commission means that the whole church is to work in the whole world during the whole age. The idea is that the pastor is the professional soul-winner, and that others are to support him. Some even think the pastor is to do all the praying. They say, "Pray yourself, That's what we hired you for." But the pastor's official duty is not soul-winning. As a member of the body he must win souls--he must make disciples along with other members, but his official duties are to shepherd or care for the flock and be their overseer in their work of making disciples. *"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers. For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ..."* Eph. 4:11-16.

Now the word "bishop" means overseer or superintendent. The pastor is the overseer or superintendent of the Church. The service of the saints is for the building up of the body of Christ. What is the distinct and primary work of a believer? It is to make other believers.

There are two kinds of witnessing:

public and private; two kinds of evangelism: mass and personal. The pastor does the public witnessing in his official capacity; the members are to do private witnessing as they go into their personal world. This was the order on the day of Pentecost. The 120 gave their private testimony and Peter stood up with the eleven to do the public preaching. This was the order after persecution scattered the members. They went everywhere preaching the word--not from public pulpits, but by private testimony. The apostles looked after the public ministry in Jerusalem. "The pastorate is not a religious lecture-ship; it is a spiritual leadership."

How To Make Disciples

1. There must be some going. As every disciple goes into his own personal world, he is to make disciples. This is not a command to certain or a few individuals to go as missionaries; it is a command to every believer to go out into his own world--small as it may be--and make disciples. We can no more limit making disciples to missionaries than to pastors.

Some seem to want to make the Great Commission read: "Come ye out of all the community into our church and hear the gospel." But it does not say, "Come," to the lost; it says "Go" to the saved. There is no command in all the Bible for a lost man to come to Church and get the gospel. The Church is commanded to take the gospel to the lost. The field will never come to us for the seed; the seed must be taken out into the field and the field is in the world. Of course, it is gratifying when the lost do come to Church and they should be invited and urged to come, but disciples are to be made by taking the gospel to them out there in the world. Nobody can hire somebody else to do his soul-winning.

2. Now when the contact is made, how are disciples to be made? A. Not by getting them to join the church; B. Not by getting sinners to come forward at church and give their hand to the preacher; C. Not by having them sign a card; D. Not by making them think that

a certain seat in the church is the place to sit to be saved; E. Disciples are saved by preaching the gospel to them.

"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." On our part, we make disciples by taking the gospel to the lost. We make a disciple when we get the lost person to take the place of a sinner and trust Jesus Christ as Saviour. We make a disciple when we have convinced a lost man that he is hopelessly and helplessly lost, and that Christ is the one and only hope. In Bible terms this is called repentance and faith--repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ. We get the sinner to repent by showing him that he has broken God's law and has been cursed by it, and we get him to believe by showing him that Christ has satisfied divine justice that cries for his punishment. Repentance is the sinner taking the place of a sinner, and faith is that sinner trusting Christ for salvation. The two go together--they are inseparable graces. Nobody but a conscious sinner will trust Christ. Nobody will trust Christ until he distrusts himself. Nobody will have hope in Christ until he loses all confidence in himself. Nobody will see Christ as Saviour until he sees himself as a sinner. The man who thinks he is good enough to be saved or has done enough to be saved is not saved and will never be saved until he changed his mind on that question. The only qualification for salvation is badness and the bad man is not saved by doing: he is saved by trusting--trusting what the Saviour did on the cross.

Now there is a Divine agent in making disciples. And His work is indispensable to success. Paul may plant and Apollos may water, but God gives the increase. We may take the Saviour to the sinner, but the Holy Spirit must bring the sinner to Christ. We command the sinner to repent, but God gives the repentance. See Acts 5:31; 11:18; II Timothy 2:25. We tell the sinner whom to believe, but God gives the faith. See I Corinthians 3:5. We instruct the sinner outwardly, but God teaches him inwardly. See John 6:45; II Corinthians 4:7.

The only drop of merit in salvation is in Christ. His blood cleanses from all sin. He paid the sin-debt in its entirety--He paid it all. Nothing can be done by

any sinner to contribute to his salvation. But somebody may, in all sincerity, ask: Doesn't mourning contribute to salvation? My dogmatic reply is, "No!" "Could my tears forever flow, could my zeal no respite know; all for sin could not atone; thou must save and thou alone."

Let me illustrate: A man thinks he is well; he has no idea of any organic physical trouble. By a sort of coincidence he learns that he has cancer--the fast working kind. Naturally, he is thrown into great grief and mourning over his condition. But will his mourning contribute anything to his healing? No. Now suppose the news comes to him of a certain physician who has a remedy--a certain cure--a specific for cancer. And suppose this doctor has credentials showing he has never lost a case. Now if he has faith in this doctor, he will put himself into his hands in faith that he will cure him. If he were to keep on mourning it would prove he did not have faith in the doctor. The good news, when believed, will stop his mourning.

Now the careless sinner discovers through the law of God that he is ruined and undone--lost and in danger of hell--in the toils of a law he cannot escape or beat. This causes grief, but mourning will not contribute a thing to his salvation. When the gospel that Christ died for sinners comes to him, and he believes it, his mourning stops and there is peace and joy in believing. From the side of human responsibility, there is no reason for five minutes' mourning after we have heard the gospel. The sinner ought to trust Christ at once, and all his mourning is in the sin of unbelief. From the divine side--the side of sovereignty--conviction may precede faith by many years. It did in my case.

Place Of Prayer In Making Disciples

You ask me if I believe in praying for sinners? I most certainly do. But let us look into this question. When we pray for a sinner, what do we ask God to do? Do we ask Him to send His Son back to this world and die again? Do we beg God to be willing to receive a penitent sinner? No, for we know He is willing to receive any sinner.

My prayer for sinners depends upon who the sinner is. If he is a careless, indifferent sinner, I ask God to convict

him of his lost condition. Until he takes to heart the fact that he is a lost sinner, giving him the gospel will be like casting pearls before swine.

If the sinner is concerned, distressed and uneasy about his lost estate, I ask God to reveal to him that Christ is the Saviour--that what Christ did is all that had to be done to make any sinner right with God. *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life,"* John 3:16.

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baptized would be a bargain, would it not? It is a cheap salvation that can be purchased with a bath. But when God says, *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved,"* and then goes on to command baptism to symbolize the believer's union with Christ in death, burial and resurrection, then obedience becomes a matter of love--a desire to please the Redeemer.

If Ye Love Me, Keep My Commandments

God does not want hell-scared service. He wants love to be the motive of our service. There is a filial fear--the fear a child has for its father--the fear of chastisement--that may exist where there is love, but this is altogether different from the fear a criminal has of the judge.

God wants obedience from the heart--glad obedience--voluntary obedience. Obedience from fear of hell is selfish and does not express the love of the heart. It is saying that something else is preferable--I really hate the God who commands it, but I realize He is too much for me, and I'll have to do it to keep out of hell.

The woman who keeps her hair long because she is afraid of going to hell; the church member who tithes from fear of hell; the person who is baptized in order to be saved, are serving in the letter that killeth, but it is the Spirit that giveth life. God wants worship rendered in spirit and truth.

The Fear of God Is The Beginning of Wisdom

It is my candid judgment that in the conversion of every sinner there is fear--

fear of God as a Judge. But as one grows in grace, he increases in love and the fear element becomes less. The Philippian jailer was moved with fear when he asked, "What must I do to be saved?" The saved thief on the cross rebuked his fellow sinner, "Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?"

The thought of fear is wrapped up in the word "salvation." To be saved is to escape something terrible--it is to be delivered from the wrath to come. The motive of fear is held up as the reason for repentance. *"I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish,"* Luke 13:3. Fear is given as a reason for faith. *"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 3:36. See also Mark 16:16 and II Corinthians 5:11. John says there is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. When we get to heaven there will be no fear, for then our love will be perfected. There will be no chastisement in heaven, for there the spirits of the just are made perfect.

The person who wants to drive a bargain with God will naturally render as little service as possible--just enough to escape hell. If I can do something without risk of hell, I will do it." This is why people who believe in salvation by works are not better in their daily conduct than those who believe in salvation by grace. Fear is not as valuable a motive as love is. Fear looks for a bargain; fear does as little as can safely be done; love delights in service; love sees how much it can do, not how little.

This whole question of Christian living looks simple as a matter of reason--it looks good on paper, as a matter of statistics. For example, a church of 150 members; every member claims to be saved and to love God. Think of what 150 people who are devoted to a cause can do--150 people with their hearts in a thing can do wonders. Then why are wonders not done? One hundred and fifty members loving Christ and His church can fill this building for every service. There why are there so many empty pews? There is but one answer: too many of us are trying to bargain with God, and the

bargain hunter pays as little as possible for an article. And this bargaining spirit is a bad sign--it shows lack of love--and lack of love reveals a lost condition. If any man love not the Lord, let him be accursed when the He cometh.

When a man resigns being a Christian, it is a sure sign he was never a Christian. *"They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us,"* I John 2:19. These resignations reveal an alarming situation. God never saves a sinner and then abandons him to Satan, the flesh, and the world. The child of God has many foes, but his faith will hold fast to Christ to the end, and plead nothing before God save the blood of His Son. Preserving attachment to Christ is the grand mark of a saved person. Peter says that the born again person is kept by the power of God through faith, I Peter 1:5.