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SALVATION NOT NEEDED IF. . .

BY: C. D. COLE

"The fool hath said in his heart there is no God," Psalm 14:1.

"Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee," Job 36:18.

"Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God," Romans 3:19.

My theme is stated with an incomplete sentence and it is my purpose in the message to complete it. Salvation is not needed if certain preachments of some men are true. I want us to see what slender threads the eternal well-being of the masses of mankind hang upon. I see many of my fellow mortals trying to support themselves on worthless crutches--some are walking on a crutch labeled "No God," another on a crutch labeled "No Hell," and still others are on a crutch labeled "Self-righteousness." The hope of these men is to take these crutches away from them for they are broken reeds and cannot support them. And my three texts do this very thing. The crutch of the theory of "No God" is taken away by the text that says that it is the fool who says there is no God. The crutch of "No Hell" theory is smashed by the text that says "Because there is wrath, beware." And the crutch of salvation by law theory is destroyed by the text that says that the law stops every mouth and brings all the world in guilty before God.

Salvation Is Not Needed If... There Is No God.

Salvation is not needed if there is no

moral lawgiver to whom men must give account for the deeds done in the body. If there is no court of justice with which men will have to settle, salvation is not needed, and preachers are a pest in the earth and are guilty of robbing men and women of the happiness they so much covet.

Is there a God. Below are four answers:

1. The theoretical atheist: "There is no God." It used to put a man in a bad light before his fellow men to be known as an atheist, but this is no longer true. Atheism today, in many quarters is a badge of wisdom and a mark of pedantry.

a. There are no natural atheists. Men have to educate themselves into atheism. The existence of God is written deep on the human constitution. No atheists among the heathen; they believe there is a supreme being to whom they must give an account. They are wrong as to character but are right as to his existence. An atheist is a sinner who has used the finger of philosophy with which to turn off the alarm clock of conscience.

b. There are no atheists in places of danger or in the agonies of death. All the atheists are well men and in places of apparent safety. The famous atheists of other days like Voltaire and Tom Paine shook like other lost sinners in the agonies of death.

2. The practical atheist: "I wish there was no God," or "No God for me." Every man is by nature a practical atheist. If every lost man will be honest, he will confess that he wishes there were no God. No God means no law, no order, no restraint to lust, no limit to passion, no interference with my plans,

no check on my will, no penalty for my sins. No God means no god but myself, nobody to consult but myself about what I can do.

Sin is self-substituted for God; it is doing what I please instead of what God commands. Sin is entering into competition with God for authority; it is taking counsel of my desires instead of making God's word the man of my counsel. Sin in its purpose is the overthrow of the government of God; it is pulling God from his throne and placing self there. Sin is deicide or the murder of God in its desire. Every unregenerate man would do away with God if he could. The carnal mind is enmity against God.

3. The agnostic: "I do not know whether there is a God or not."

4. The answer of the Christian: "There is a God--I know there is a God--I cannot do without God. My soul thirsteth for God, the living God. I know God through Jesus Christ--in the forgiveness of sins.

A man once sought to ridicule the idea of any God. He asked his Christian neighbor if he had ever seen God. The believer admitted he had not. He was then asked if he had ever heard God speak, or if he had ever smelled God, or if he had ever tasted God, or if he had ever touched God. The believer readily admitted he had never apprehended that He might have us for His own possession. He died not only to keep us from hell, but to fit us for heaven. He purifies as well as justifies. He gave Himself for me that I might give myself to Him. In the commerce of love, nothing but a heart can buy a heart. He

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CHRIST'S GIFT OF HIMSELF

BY: C. D. COLE

"Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works," Titus 2:14.

Without introduction, I want to plunge directly into our text. There are three big words that cover the truth of it, but I'll try to make these big words simple and plain. These words are "self-bestowment," "emancipation," and "self-acquisition." Christ gave Himself for us--that's "self-bestowment"--that He might redeem us from all iniquity--that "emancipation," or freedom from guilt of sin--that He might purify unto Himself a people who should be His own--that's "self-acquisition."

His Self-Bestowment...

...He gave Himself. To give one's self for a cause or a person is the token of supreme devotion. As we seek for illustrations of what Christ did in giving Himself, we find that there are no parallel cases. His gift of Himself is unique; there has never been anything like it. Yes, we know what it is for a person to give himself for a cause or for a person. But usually that cause or that person had an appeal--an attraction for the person. We have seen happy husbands and wives give themselves to each other in mutual service, but this was because of mutual attraction which led to mutual love. We have seen parents give themselves for their children, but this was because of relationship. We see men give themselves for a cause, but this cause had an appeal to them--they believed it to be a worthy cause. Napoleon had such an attraction for his men that they counted it an honor to fling their lives away for him.

But there is no parallel to Christ's giving Himself for us. There could be nothing about us to attract Him, for there was nothing in us to merit esteem or give the Creator delight. He gave Himself for us sinners--for his enemies--for deformed and depraved sinners. A woman went to an orphan's home and asked for a child to adopt as her own. The matron naturally thought she

would select the most attractive and beautiful child there. But to her surprise the woman said, "I want the ugliest and most unattractive child you have--the child nobody else would want. I don't want a child for what it can be to me, but for what I can be to it. I have a craving to show pity and gracious love for somebody who is miserable and helpless. I want a child to bestow myself upon." And so Christ's love for us was a gracious love that longed for expression in helping the unworthy and miserable. Otherwise, He would not and could not have loved us.

Christ's gift of Himself was expensive; it exhausted His resources. He who was rich for our sakes became poor. In giving Himself for us, He let Himself down from glory. He gave up the prerogative of deity to become the servant of sinners; to put us on top, He sank lower and lower until He went into the grave after the shameful death on the cross.

Emancipation...

...That He might redeem us from all iniquity (lawlessness). Our lawlessness had brought upon us the curse of God's law. Christ redeemed us from the curse by being made a curse for us. Never did anybody's emancipation come at such a cost. He settled with the law that we might not have to settle with it. Suppose you had to settle with the law of God in the day of judgment! What do you think would become of you? Some people are so ignorantly self-righteous as to think the law of God will be satisfied with them. They are wrong on the requirements of the law. What does the law require of us? It requires obedience to its every precept and at all times. To keep one law will not make us righteous, or to keep all the law a little while will not make us righteous. To be righteous with our own righteousness, we must keep all the law all the time. And to keep all the law all the time is to love God all the time and our neighbor as ourself.

Here's the trouble with many sinners: they don't see and realize that they are under the curse of Divine law.

People who are in trouble with human government show concern. If guilty of some crime, they look for a way of escape from the punishment due them under law. They will try to escape by lying or by pleading for mercy. And sometimes they will cheat justice. But nobody can cheat Divine justice. To deny guilt is to add to guilt. To plead for mercy at the expense of justice is to plead in vain. Begging God for mercy, while refusing to trust His Son will be of no avail. If the sinner wants mercy from God, let him trust God's Son. Mercy comes through Him.

Every sinner potentially is as mean as the devil. Christ told some religious sinners their father was the devil and that they were doing his bidding. The only reason any of us has not been worse than we have been is not due to any good in us, but it is due to restraining grace. Did you ever hate anybody? Christ called that murder. Did you ever have a lustful look? Christ called that adultery. What hope is there for nay man in his own record under law? None in the world. If there was, there would be no need of Christ, and every man would be his own saviour. Christ does not save by enabling sinners to keep the law, but by redeeming them from its curse. The only reason any man will not be cursed by the law is that Christ was cursed for him.

Self-Acquisition...

...That He might purify unto Himself a people for His own possession. He not only gave Himself to redeem us from the curse of the law, but also to fit us for His presence bought me at Calvary, and in my conversion by His Spirit, He brought me to Himself as His possession. If we have really been converted--born again--we have not only trusted what He did on Calvary in order to redeem us from all lawlessness, but we gave Him our hearts. We said with Saul of Tarsus: *"Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"* Surely, no conversion is genuine where there is no giving of self to the Lord. He is both Lord and Christ. Saving faith is belief in the Lord Jesus Christ. Saving faith

has other concerns besides keeping out of the fires of hell. Christ is the one and only Saviour, but He is a Saviour to be served. If He has redeemed us, He is also purifying us and fitting us for His presence and for His service. We do not serve to be saved--that would be self-salvation--we serve because we are saved. We do not serve for fear of hell; we serve for love of the Saviour.

Brethren and sisters, let us analyze our profession of faith. What happened when you made your profession and joined the church? Did you see yourself a helpless sinner on the road to hell? Did you see that your only hope was in Christ? Did you trust what He did on Calvary to redeem you from the curse of the law? Did you follow that trust up with obedience to His command to be baptized? Did you give yourself to Him for service? All these things are a part of an experience of grace. Let us keep our experience fresh and up-to-date by considering these questions. What is my hope of heaven? If it is a true hope, we will have to say, "It is what Christ did for me on the cross when He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." What further use have I for Christ? If our experience is genuine, we will gladly say, "He is my Lord, and I must obey Him. I must love Him and His people and His Word and His church. I must remember that I am not my own, that I belong to Him, and must be zealous of good works."

SALVATION NOT NEEDED IF...

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God with any of the five physical senses. He then asked the atheist if he had ever told a lie, and he admitted he had. He was then asked how he felt, and he confessed he had an uneasy or apprehensive feeling--a sort of something he could not describe. Now that feeling was his conscience telling him there was a God--a moral Lawgiver, to whom he must give account. The human conscience is God's inner witness to the fact that there is a God. Every man whose conscience has not been seared or tampered with has the feeling that there is God to face. They have a sense of sin, and must have a religion to atone to their offended deity. That's why we have religions every where and among all people.

Salvation Is Not Needed If... There Is No Punishment For Sin.

If there is no day of judgment when all men will stand before God to be judged for the sins done in the body, then nobody needs salvation. But every man must give an account of himself to God. If sin is not dangerous, salvation is not needed. If there is a God who will punish sin in a day of judgment, then all sinners need salvation. *"Beware lest he take thee away and a great ransom cannot deliver thee."*

Salvation Is Not Needed If... There Is No Law.

If there is a man anywhere not under moral law of God, that man will not need salvation. *"For until the law, sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed where there is no law,"* Romans 5:13. You have to have a law to have sin, for sin is lawlessness. In the Bible we are told that salvation is from the curse of the law. *"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree,"* Galatians 3:13. The salvation we have in Christ makes the believer right with the law. *"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth,"* Romans 10:4.

"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," II Corinthians 5:21. To be saved we must have a Redeemer, and Jesus Christ is the only adequate Redeemer. *"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,"* Romans 3:24. *"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace,"* Ephesians 1:7.

Salvation Is Not Needed If... Men Are Not Sinners.

If you can find a man or woman on earth who is not a sinner, you have a person who needs no salvation. But the Bible says all have sinned--that there is none that doeth good and sinneth not--that there is none righteous, no not one.

Are you a person who is willing to risk his eternal welfare on any one or all of these negatives? Are you willing to risk it on the proposition that there is no God? On the proposition there is no punishment? On the proposition that there is no moral Lawgiver to whom you must give account? Or on the proposition that you have never sinned?

God has spoken to us in His son. We have the message about His son in the Bible. It tells us that eternal life is in Jesus Christ. It tells us that the Son was punished that sinners might not perish. Despise this message and reject the Son, and when God speaks again, you will hear him speak in tones of judgment.