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THE PRAYER OF FAITH

BY: C. D. COLE

"And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive," Matthew 21:22.

"Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them," Mark 11:24.

The message of these verses is simple. They say that one can have anything he wants if he only believes he will get it. They speak of the prayer of faith. In Romans 10:17 we learn that *"faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."* Faith presupposes a divine revelation. There can be no faith where God has not spoken. If God has not spoken about Jesus Christ there can be no faith in Christ. *"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?"* Romans 10:13-14. And so saving faith is based upon what God says about His Son. This verse before us does not speak of saving faith, nor were these words spoken to the twelve apostles--to men already saved.

Now the prayer of faith is based upon a divine revelation. Suppose I want a million dollars. I ask God for it and I believe I will get it, what then? I am most certain to be disappointed, because my prayer is not based upon any revelation from God. Suppose I have cancer. I ask God to heal me and I believe He will heal me. Will my faith that He will heal me make me well? No, not unless I can point to a promise that He will. I believe He can, but I do not know His will.

In the prayer of faith we must distinguish between the general promises of God and promises made to particular people for a particular time. A general promise covering everything and for all time is Romans 8:28. *"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."* When I am ill I cannot know what the out-

come will be, because I have no particular promise from God, but I do know that whether I get well or die, it will be for my good.

Now the promises of the Scriptures before us were made to a particular group for a particular emergency. These promises were associated with miracle working faith. And miracle working faith was for men endowed with power to work miracles. By faith they could have removed a mountain into the sea, if God had told them to. We have no account that this was ever done.

In Matthew, chapter ten, we have the account of Christ commissioning the twelve. He gave them power to perform miracles, commanded them to heal the sick, cleanse lepers, raise the dead, and cast out demons. They were to go out without money or provisions or extra clothes. This power was free and they must make no charge for using it, but depend upon the hospitality of the people among whom they worked. And they were to go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Now this was a temporary and limited commission. This was for the twelve for a limited time. We today have nothing to do with such a commission. Our commission is found in Matthew 28:19-20. *"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 [age]."* In this commission there is no command to perform public miracles, neither is there any promise that we will be able to do so if we have faith. As further proof that the commission to the twelve in the beginning was not permanent, we find in Luke 22:35-36 these words of Christ: *"When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing. Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one."*

Now this power to perform miracles was not automatic and mechanical. In Matthew 17 we have a case of failure on the part of

nine of the apostles. While Christ and three of his disciples were on the mount of transfiguration, the other nine had a lunatic boy brought to them for healing and they failed. When Christ came down from the mountain he was met by the father of the boy who told Him about the failure of his disciples to cast the demon out. Jesus healed the boy. And when the disciples asked Him why they had failed, he said *"Because of your unbelief,"* verse 20.

Now the texts we have before us are associated with this miracle working power. *"Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done,"* Matthew 21:21. *"For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith,"* Mark 11:23.

To take these verses as the basis for the prayer of faith is to claim power to work miracles and the command to do so. Such miracles as healing the sick, cleansing lepers, raising the dead, and casting out demons. Much confusion and disturbance to faith has resulted in making these verses the basis for the prayer of faith.

Several years ago a certain preacher was a sensation at the Murray Baptist Institute. He preached daily from Matthew

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SALVATION

BY: C.D. COLE

Salvation is the most important word ever uttered and yet how meaningless it is to the masses who are absorbed with the thought of food and raiment and pleasure, during their brief stay on this earth.

Salvation; the greatest blessing that can possibly come to a human soul, and without which it would be better never to have been born, and yet the most neglected thing in the world today. Salvation the blessed gift of God, paid for by His darling Son, and yet that which conceited men think they can earn with their own puny hands.

WHAT IS SALVATION?

Salvation means soundness and safety. The opposite of a saved state is to be unsound and to be in peril. There is the double thought of sickness and danger in sin. Sin is both a disease and a crime. Sin as a disease has to do with our nature, it is a state of being. As a crime it has to do with our position or standing before God as a transgressor of His law. Salvation is deliverance from the curse of God's law and deliverance from a sinful nature.

SALVATION FROM THE GUILT OF SIN

1. Instantaneous; "The moment a sinner believes and trusts in the crucified Son, His pardon at once he receives, salvation in full through His blood."

2. It rests upon the substitutionary death of Christ. "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. "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. "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed," I Peter 2:24. "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all," Isaiah 53:5-6.

3. It is eternal. "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," John 5:24. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life," John 6:47. "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified," Hebrews 10:14.

4. It is the gift of God. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God," Ephesians 2:8. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord," Romans 6:23.

Salvation from the guilt of sin is called justification. This means that there is nothing against us in the sight of the law. The law inflicted punishment for our sins on the body of Christ.

SALVATION FROM THE NATURE OF SIN

1. It is progressive. It is not done in an instant, but is a process. It begins in the new birth, in babyhood and ends in the glorification of the body. You can grow in the grace of sanctification, you can become more and more sanctified, but you cannot become more justified.

2. It is certain of accomplishment. "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ," Philippians 1:6. "For they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall," Proverbs 4:16. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is," I John 3:2.

3. There is a group of scriptures which give us the two contrasted conditions of believers and unbelievers, as processes going on in the present, but not complete. "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God," Acts 2:47. "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved," I Corinthians 1:18.

In these passages the human race is divided into two classes: "Them that are

being saved and them that are perishing." The condition of neither class is said to be fixed or complete. There is the thought of progressiveness. Some are being saved; others are perishing. The climax of neither state will be reached until the resurrection. No man is what he ultimately will be. Believers are progressing towards a condition of complete sinlessness, utter soundness and glorious health; while unbelievers are progressing towards a deterioration that is indescribable. The climax of being saved is to be conformed to the likeness of Christ; but who can say what the climax of a perishing state will be as to the actual state of the man? In either case there will be meetness for environment, every man will be fitted for the place where he is to go. Heaven is a prepared place for the prepared people of God; there will be a prepared place for the devil and his angels.

REPENTANCE

BY: C. D. COLE

"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, thou desireth truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee. Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise. For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem. Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar," Psalm 51.

The Bible puts much emphasis on repentance. Except ye repent ye shall perish. God has commanded all men everywhere to repent. We are not lost because we do not repent, men are lost because they are sinners but refusal to repent aggravates men's sins. Men remain in a lost condition because they do not repent. And refusal to repent is adding another sin to their record.

The sin of refusal to repent is a worse

sin than the sin of which a man ought to repent. To illustrate: A man commits murder, that's an awful sin, but he refuses to repent of that sin, and his refusal to repent is worse than the act of murder. Why? In the act of murder he might have acted under a sudden impulse, without taking time to think the thing thru, but refusal to repent is deliberately saying that you had the right to kill. It is an attempt to justify the sin of murder, a denial of any wrong doing.

1. What is repentance? The literal meaning of the word means a change of mind. Repentance unto life is a change of mind in which the sinner turns from sin. It is a change of view, of feeling, and of purpose; a change of view, feeling, and purpose towards God on the subject of sin.

As we analyze the subject we find there are three distinct and essential elements in repentance: 1. An intellectual element; 2. An emotional element, or a change in feeling; and 3. A voluntary element, or a change of purpose.

1. The intellectual element, or change in the understanding. This is the recognition of sin. There can be no repentance until sin is recognized. I had a neighbor once who claimed he had never done anything to repent of. Nobody but a sinner can repent. Christ came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. But this intellectual element must be accompanied by the other elements or it is not the proper recognition of sin.

There can be recognition of sin without repentance but no repentance apart from recognition. Just because you have recognized you are a sinner is no proof that you have repented. The confession "I have sinned" was made by the hardened Pharaoh; by double minded Balaam; by remorseful Achan; by insincere King Saul; by the despairing Judas, but none of those men repented. They recognized that they had sinned, but it was not the recognition that constitutes true repentance.

Dr Stron: "Apart from God's working in the heart there is no proper recognition of sin, either in people of high or low degree. When Lady Huntington invited the Duchess of Buckingham to hear Whitfield preach, the duchess answered: "It is monstrous to be told that you have a heart as sinful as the common wretches

that crawl on the earth--it is highly offensive and insulting." Mr. Moody preached to prisoners in jail in Chicago and then visited them in their cells. In the first cell he found two men playing cards. They said false witnesses had testified against them. In the second, the man said the guilty man had escaped, but that he a mere accomplice had been caught. In the last cell he found a man crying over his sins. The last man was the only one who had proper recognition of sins.

2. An emotional element; a change in feeling. A sorrow for having sinned against God. Exemplified by David in the 51st Psalm. We must distinguish between sorrow for sin because it is against God, from shame on account of it and fear of its consequences. A man can be ashamed of himself without repenting. A man can be afraid of the consequences of sin without repenting. Shame and fear may result from a selfish heart. But true repentance is to be sorry that you have sinned against God. True repentance takes God's part against ourselves, feels how unworthily God has been treated. True repentance does not ask, "What will my sin bring me to; but, what does my sin mean to God?"

Much so-called repentance is illustrated by this little girl's prayer: "O God, make me good; not real good, but just good enough so that I won't have to be whipped."

True repentance is illustrated in Psalm 51. (1) It does not think of consequences. David was not thinking of how much he might be punished, but of how God must think about what he had done. (2) It does not think of what others might think about his sin, but of what God thinks. "Against thee and thee only have I sinned." (3) It does not think of heredity as an excuse. David speaks of inherited sin but not as an excuse for his sin. (4) True repentance thinks of what we are as well as what we have done. David distinguishes between transgressions and sin. Transgressions refers to what he had done; sin means what he was. The lost man is not always sinning, but he is always a sinner. True repentance thinks of what the heart is as well as what the hand does.

3. The voluntary element: a change of purpose. Inward turning from sin and purpose to quit it.

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21:22 emphasizing that failure to get any thing one prayed for was lack of faith. But some years afterward he quit the ministry and dropped out of sight.

George Whitfield, a great and good man, friend of the Wesleys, made these passages the basis for his prayer of faith. He prayed that his small son might become a preacher and confidently believed he would be called into the ministry. But the child died at the age of four. One can imagine his perplexity. This did not prove Whitfield had no faith, but it did prove that his faith was based upon a promise not made to him.

Now let me give you the foundation for the prayer of faith today. In I John 5:14, *"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us."*

The child of God may pray with the assurance that if what he asks for is in the will of God, that he will get it. He can have implicit faith in God's ability to do what he prays for. *"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God,"* Philippians 4:6. But he has no right to say that he knows God will always give what he asks for. One may pray with the feeling that he will get it, but his feelings might prove wrong. We cannot always depend upon our impressions.

We can honor God by praying in faith that he is able, but we cannot pray in faith that he is willing, for there are many things he has not promised which we might desire. We cannot know His will apart from a specific promise.

Illustrations: (1) David praying for his baby. *"And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live?"* II Samuel 12:22. (2) Paul praying for the removal of the thorn. *"And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. There-*

fore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong," II Corinthians 12:7-10.

Let me close with my definition of prayer:

Prayer is going to God as our Father in the Name of His Son, Jesus Christ, with a desire for something, believing He is able to do what we desire, but willing to be denied it if it is not according to His will.

If we pray without desire we are formal pretenders; if we pray without believing God is able to do what we ask, we deny that he is Almighty God and if we pray without submission to His will, we cease to be supplicants and become dictators. We have no claims upon God, nor do we have the right to make demands of Him. We are only beggars before Him. And let us remember that He is wiser in giving than we are in asking.