

BRYAN STATION BAPTIST CHURCH

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GIRDED LOINS, BURNING LAMPS, WAITING HEARTS

BY: C. D. COLE

"Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately," Luke 12:35,36.

"Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth..." Ephesians 6:14.

"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ," I Peter 1:13.

Introduction: These words ought to stir us like the sound of a trumpet. The picture they suggest, as an emblem of the Christian state, is that of a great house at midnight. The Master is gone, the Lord of the palace is absent, but expected back, the servants are busy in preparation for his return, each man with his robe tucked about his waist, so that it will not interfere with his work, his lamp in his hand that he may see how to do his work, and his eye turned toward the gate to catch the first sign of the coming of the master. This is a parable of the Christian life. Is your life like this picture? It is the ideal for every true believer. It is the true pattern for us to follow. The church is a great house, it is night time and the darkness is great, the Master is away but is coming back, everyone of us ought to be working and watching for His return. Are we?

THE GIRDED LOINS

The metaphor is taken from the Far East where men wore long, flowing

robes, and when work had to be done he had to gather his skirt around him. We would have the same problem if we were to work in our bath robe.

So the girded loins speaks of service and says that there must be concentration and attention. The Christian life of service is a work that demands all our powers. Paul said, *"So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also,"* Romans 1:15.

The difference between men that succeed and men that fail in any undertaking is not so much intellectual as moral. It is not because one is so much smarter than the other; it is because he works harder. To succeed in anything we must focus all our powers on it. It is the difference between doing our best and not half trying.

But who is doing his best in living the Christian life? Where is the man with girded loins? The Christian life is the only thing I know of that men expect to make a success of without effort. Where is the man who does his best to be a good church member? And no man is making a success who is not a good church member. You cannot ignore the church and make a success of the Christian life. If you could Christ would not have founded the church. We need to be more church conscious. The church is the great house where we are to work while the Master is away. He loved the church and gave himself for it. He died for it. And we must live for it. The Christian life is not a negative something. It is not merely keeping out of sin; it is doing good. A preacher once said: "I don't want people to leave church saying, What a wonderful

sermon, what a wonderful preacher. I want them to go out and do something."

Girded loins also suggest detachment. Concentration and detachment go together. If we concentrate in the service of Christ we must detach ourselves from the moral ways of this world. Girded loins not only mean ease of movement; they also mean that we will not be hindered by things that would catch our robes and hold us back. We must live a life separated from the ways of this world if we are to make a success of life.

A critic of Christianity once remarked that Christianity had been tried and found wanting. No, said another man, It has been found difficult and not tried.

THE BURNING LAMPS

"Ye are the salt of the earth...Ye are the light of the world..." Matthew 5:13, 14. What is a light for but to shine? And for it to shine it must be on the candlestick; it must be in the open, not under the bed or under the bushel. *"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick;*

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HOW MANY WAYS ARE THERE TO BE SAVED?

BY: C. D. COLE

"Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all," Romans 4:16.

Introduction: Somebody told me the other day of hearing a man say from the pulpit, that he was going to preach seventeen different ways of salvation. And a man can make a fair show in the flesh in an effort to present several ways to be saved. For example, we read that *"For by grace are ye saved through faith..."* Ephesians 2:8. And we read that Christ is coming *"In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ,"* II Thessalonians 1:8. So here we have salvation by obedience. *"For we are saved by hope,"* Romans 8:24. *"...Being justified by faith..."*, Romans 5:1. *"The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us,"* I Peter 3:21. *"Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only,"* James 2:24. *"I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish,"* Luke 13:3. *"If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed when the Lord comes,"* I Corinthians 16:22. *"Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him,"* Romans 5:9. Now, this seems to say that here are several ways of salvation. Let us sum them up: By grace; By obedience; By hope; By faith; By works; By baptism; By repentance; By love; By Jesus Christ; Justified by blood.

Now does all this mean that there are ten ways of being saved? Hardly, and yet as a matter of argumentation a man might make it seem so. But surely this is not the way to deal with the Scriptures.

Our text gives us all the truth on the way of salvation, so far as the cause and the way are concerned. There is one way of salvation and that is through faith in Jesus Christ.

THE MOVING CAUSE

The moving cause of salvation is the grace of God. We are saved by grace, which means there is no human merit in it. As to the cause of salvation we are

saved by grace alone. And every aspect and step of salvation is by grace. This means that in saving us God acted according to His grace and not according to our works or anything else in us. Every step towards glory is by the grace of God. *"But by the grace of God I am what I am; and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me,"* I Corinthians 15:10.

Everything God does for us in fitting us for heaven is a matter of grace and not of debt. Our election was by grace. *"Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then it is 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,"* Romans 11:5, 6. Our justification is by grace. *"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,"* Romans 3:24. Our calling is by grace. *"But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace,"* Galatians 1:15. Our glorification is of grace. *"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ,"* I Peter 1:13. When it comes to accounting for the cause of our salvation it must not be ascribed to anything but the grace of God. If you mix anything of man with it you destroy grace. *"I do not frustrate the grace of God:..."* Galatians 1:21.

THE MERITORIOUS CAUSE

The meritorious cause of salvation is the blood of Christ. We are saved by Christ, but it is the Christ of the cross. *"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot,"* I Peter 1:18, 19. *"Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him,"* Romans 5:9. *"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the rich-*

es of his grace" Ephesians 1:7. All the work as the ground of salvation was done by Jesus Christ when *"he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself,"* Hebrews 9:26. And it was in grace he paid our sin-debt.

THE INSTRUMENTAL CAUSE

The instrumental cause of salvation is faith. *"Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,"* Romans 4:16. Faith is the receiving grace. If Christ is the Saviour, and if salvation is by grace, it can only be through faith. *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God,"* Ephesians 2:8. If salvation is by grace there can be no merit in it. If there is any human merit in it, then man could boast of what he had done.

Suppose I'm judge of a court. You commit a crime for which the penalty is death. I must be a just judge; I have sworn to uphold the law. I could not uphold the law and maintain my honour and justice of my court if I let you go free without any consideration. But suppose I love you and want to save you from death; I charge your sins to my son and the justice of my court puts him to death for your crime. Can you see any possible way for you to escape from death except by faith in what my son had done in dying for you? Would you expect to escape by crying, or praying, or working, or paying? Your crying and praying and working might be signs of intense interest and earnestness on your part, but you would escape death only on the grounds of my son's death for you. And if you depended upon these things in part or in whole you would not be trusting the death of my son.

What about repentance? Obeying the Gospel? Hope?

FIGURATIVE OR SYMBOLIC

The figurative or symbolical way of salvation is by baptism. Baptism is a symbol of our union with Christ in his death and resurrection. *"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his*

death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection," Romans 6:3-5.

Back to my ills. Suppose I should institute a simple ceremony to show your legal union with my son in his death. To show this I want you to be buried. You are dead to the law that cursed you because my son died for you, and I want you to be buried with him in baptism. That would be fatal to you, for my son would still be dead and to show your union with him you would have to remain in the grave of water. But suppose my son, like Christ; rose from the dead. Then to symbolize your legal union with him you would have to be raised up out of the grave.

Baptism is not a sign or seal of any spiritual grace in us; it is a sign or symbol of our union in law with Christ.

[The following paragraph has been inserted by the editor:

I understand what C. D. Cole is saying and that baptism declares the sinners death with Christ when he repents and believes. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me..." Galatians 3:20. "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. A judicial death, not under law. Sins-- past, present and future--all paid for. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live," John 5:25. This tells us that there is a work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration to make the sinner hear and passing from spiritual death the sinner begins to live. This, to me is a spiritual resurrection, and is referred to in Romans 6:4 "...that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." The sinner pictures that he is a new creation. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new," II Corinthians 5:17.]

THE EVIDENTIAL CAUSE

Now so far as the evidential cause of our salvation is concerned, it is by works. "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only," James 2:24. Paul and James are not at variance with each other. "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt," Romans 4:4. "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, by ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only," James 2:14-24.

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and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven," Matthew 5:13-16.

The Christian life as a light has been lighted from above. The believer is a man who was sometimes darkness but now is the light on the Lord.

If you are saved you are a light in a world of darkness. Let your light shine before men. This does not mean to make yourself shine before men. It is not self you are to advertise. There is no blowing of the trumpet. Light makes no noise in shining.

We are not to hide our convictions for truth. We are not to live the Christian

life in isolation from the world of humanity. We are not to run away from opportunity to serve the cause of truth. When Hitler was riding high in Germany and in the world, there was at least one preacher who had to cross him; who had to say "that is not right, I can't do that." That preacher was Martin Niemoeller. And because he opposed the powers, he was sent to a detention camp. One day he was visited by a chaplain, who said, "Martin, why are you here?" Niemoeller retorted, "Why are you not here?"

THE WAITING HEARTS

The parable suggests that a part of the Christian life is an attitude of watching for the coming Saviour. This does not involve any particular theory of the Second Coming. I do not have to believe that Jesus will come in my day in order to be watching for His return. I am of the opinion I will die before He returns. Peter knew he would die and yet he had the expectant attitude. I can have the expectant attitude whether I die and go to Him or whether I live and he comes to me. It is all the same; it will mean being with Him.

The Christian has a backward and also a forward look. As the basis of peace he looks back to the cross where peace was made for him; and he looks forward to the throne and he sees the same person on the throne that was on the cross. He looks back in faith and forward in hope. He looks back to the cross where all was purchased; he looks forward to the throne where all will be possessed. Christ has come--Christ shall come. These are the two comings of the Bible.