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THE WAY TO FORGIVENESS

By: Dr. C. D. Cole

Luke 24:47, “And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”

Introduction: A well-known preacher in New York, on a recent Sunday, announced as his subject, “How to be free from Guilty Feelings.” After announcing his subject, he stated that he would pause while those who had no guilty feelings left the service. We are told that each person remained, somewhat to the surprise of the preacher. He did not expect that to happen in New York where everybody was a comparative stranger to one another. But he said in a small town no one would dare to leave, because there every man’s faults are usually well know.

But in the New York church the people did not remain in their pews because their faults were known to one another, but because they were honest and dared not deny their guilty feelings. Feelings of guilt are universal to some degree. Everybody has a religion because everybody has a feeling of guilt. And this New York congregation was a typical congregation. The same thing would have hap-

pened in Mortons Gap or Chicago or anywhere else. Somebody has said man is a religious animal, and this is so because man - every man - has feelings of guilt.

An atheist was once silenced in a very simple way. He was asked if he ever told a lie. He confessed he had. Then he was asked how he felt, and he had to admit he had what could only be called a feeling of guilt. And that feeling was an inner witness to the existence of God; there was something in him that told him there is a God to whom we are responsible.

This feeling of guilt has produced many kinds of religions, because religion is an effort to escape guilty feelings. This is true of Atheism as of other religions. It is the feeling of guilt that makes a man wish there were no God, and in Atheism, the wish is father to the thought. Atheism is a good way to escape a guilty feeling; it works for a little while, but it is dangerous. If a man can truly persuade himself there is no God, then of course he can have an easy feeling, so far as guilt is concerned.

This is what makes the Catholic go to the confessional; he goes there to confess his feelings of guilt. He is seeking ease of con-

science.

Men are not as sensitive to sin; they do not have the guilty feelings their condition and position warrants, but the feeling is there. Sir Oliver Lodge said many years ago, that the average man is not bothering about his sins. And then somebody quipped: “He may not be bothering about his sins, but they are bothering him.”

Two past best sellers, “Peace of Mind,” and “The Modern Mind,” are books that attack the teachings of Augustine, Luther, and Calvin in reference to sin. H. A. Overstreet uses the word “taboo” for any religion that is concerned with sin. And yet, after all, that is all that any religion is really concerned with.

The late Joshua Liebmann also deplored the emphasis of Paul, Augustine, Calvin, and Luther and declared they were obsessed by a notion of man’s wickedness. And Liebmann blames religion, not God, for this “morbid guilt-ridden attitude.”

(Continued on page 3)

JESUS THE SAVIOUR

By: Dr. C. D. Cole

Matthew 1:21, "...and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins."

John 3:17, "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."

Introduction: Dr. F. Townley Lord tells of a city in Austria where there used to be various representations of Jesus in art, each figure representing a certain aspect of his ministry to men. And as the country folk crossed the bridge into the city they could find and consider the peculiar figure of Jesus that most appealed to them. The herdsmen would naturally stop at the figure that represented Jesus as a Shepherd. The artisans would pause by the figure that represented Jesus as a carpenter. Gardeners would pause by the figure of Jesus as a Sower. The weak and ailing would be struck by the figure that represented Jesus as the great Physician. And on and on.

John Newton wrote that beautiful hymn:

*"How Sweet the Name of Jesus
sounds in a believer's ear;
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
and drives away his fear.*

*It makes the wounded spirit whole,
and calms the troubled breast;
'Tis manna to the hungry soul,
and to the weary, rest.*

*Dear Name, the Rock on which I build,
My shield and Hiding Place;
My never-failing Treasure,
filled with boundless stores of grace.*

*Jesus, my Shepherd, Saviour, Friend,
My Prophet, Priest, and King,
My Lord, my Life, my Way, my End,
accept the praise I bring."*

In this hymn John Newton had to call on many ideas and metaphors to do justice to that name. Jesus is called Rock, Shield, Hiding Place, Treasure, Shepherd, Friend, Prophet, Priest, and King, Lord, Life, Way and End. And we could add other names such as Mas-

ter, Leader, Teacher, Here - our all and in all.

But Saviour is the Name that expresses what Jesus should be to every man. Here is the common denominator of the one who meets every human need. Saviour is the exclusive name of Jesus. Teacher, leader, master, shepherd, friend, prophet, priest and king are titles worn by other men. But the name Saviour belongs to none but Him, Jesus of Nazareth. Dora Greenwell expresses our thought in these lines:

*He did not come to judge the world,
He did not come to blame;
He did not only come to seek,
it was to save.
And when we call Him Saviour,
we call him by His Name.*

The name Saviour must take precedence over every other name. He must be Saviour before He can be our Shepherd. He must be Saviour if he is to be our friend.

SAVIOURHOOD IMPLIES SINNERSHIP

He is Saviour because there are sinners. People who are not bothered about their sins do not want him as Saviour. Those stuck on themselves are not attracted to Him as Saviour. Where sin is not bitter, Christ is not sweet. Where there is no confession of sin, there will be no real confession of Him. Where there is no sense of sin and feeling of guilt, there can be no faith in Him. When sin is denied He is rejected.

Human nature is terribly deceived. It calls trifles treasures, and true riches are regarded as baubles. Men are so absorbed in buying and selling, planning and spending, that they cannot hear the cry of the soul for salvation. Men are so proud of the achievements of the 20th century that they have no appreciation of what was done on Calvary. Science has wrought wonders and banished many ugly things from the world, but it has not banished sin.

We need to get back to the Biblical conception of sin. Sin is lawlessness; rebellion against the authority of God.

This rebellion is deep-seated in the human heart. And this rebellion calls for punishment. Sin is that which separates men from God and exposes them to His wrath. Sin is that which must be dealt with by a Lawgiver. Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." And there is going to be Pay-Day Some-Day.

Sin is a matter of omission as well as commission. Sin is refusal to do what God has commanded as well as doing what he has forbidden. You can sin without doing anything.

SAVIOURHOOD INVOLVES ATONEMENT

The Saviour must atone for our sins. And this means suffering. Atonement is by blood. Hebrews 9:22, "...and without shedding of blood is no remission." I John 1:7, "...the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Romans 5:9, "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." Our Lord was made perfect through suffering. Hebrews 2:10, "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." Bible salvation is redemption and in Christ we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.

Education is not the answer to the sin question. An educated sinner is the most dangerous sinner. Education will make men clever in covering up sin.

Legislation is not the answer. Legislation is necessary to maintain a semblance of order in human society. Good laws do not make good men.

Amusement is not the answer. Amusement is an asset in keeping the conscience quiet, but it does not make a good conscience. But a quiet conscience is a danger when the soul is threatened by sin. A disturbed conscience is what sinners need. A man needs to have a conscience of sin until the conscience is satisfied with the

blood of Christ. There was a radio entertainer who made the English laugh during the last world war, but the amusement he made did not keep him from putting his head in a gas oven.

There was a Japanese tennis star performing in a London tournament, apparently happy in his victories, but it did not keep him from jumping overboard on an English liner.

Christ is the answer to the sin question. And he answers it by His cross. He put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. In the long ago three crosses were reared against the Judean sky. So far as the wood which made those three crosses was concerned they were just alike. But what took place on those three crosses was not the same. Two of those crosses spoke of the death deserved, and the wood was thrown into a corner of the court yard to be used again. But the cross in the center was different. It had a sequel. What happened there has meant salvation to millions since then. That central cross was God's cross. It cannot be explained in terms of Jewish animosity or Roman officialdom. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, He was not imputing our trespasses unto us, but unto His Son. Romans 5:10, "*For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.*" God was collecting the sin-debt from His Son, who was surety of the better covenant of grace.

The secret of the cross of Christ was not human hatred but divine love.

SAVIOURHOOD IMPLIES OWNERSHIP

Christ not only brought us to God, He bought us for God. I Corinthians 6:19-20, "*What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*" There is a therefore to our redemption; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God's.

Is it any wonder that he claims us? Do not men claim what they have bought?

Nothing is sensible or reasonable for any saved man, but to seek to do God's will. The will of God should be supreme in every redeemed life. It should be the desire of every saved person to be where God wants him and to do what God wills for his life.

This question is more serious with me than ever before in my life. God called me to preach. And He has furnished me with a place to preach. But where shall I preach? God's will is the supreme concern of my life. I am praying constantly for His will to be done. I must not resign under disappointment, or because someone may want me to. I must not stay on because some may want me to. I must not - I dare not have any other ambition than to be in His pleasurable will.

THE WAY TO FORGIVENESS (Continued from page 1)

When an airliner crashed recently, it was reported that a badly injured survivor was heard by the first witnesses at the scene to be crying: "Dear God, forgive me." It might be interesting to know what the survivor's professed theories were prior to the crash. Some theories do not hold up when we confront death and God.

Modernism is a religion that tries to do away with any real danger from sin. It seeks to soothe the mind with the false ideal there is nothing to fear from God. It seeks to help men live tranquil and peaceful lives apart from the atoning death of Christ.

W. R. Maltby in his book, "Christ and His Cross," says: It is clear from the beginning the experience of Christian disciples rested on the faith that 'Christ died for our sins,' and at first they neither needed nor offered any further explanation that it was according to the Scriptures."

And another has said that it was this reading of the meaning of the Cross that made the Cross an offense and a stumbling block to the critical mind of Paul's day. Romans 9:32-33, "*Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.*"

But it is this stumbling block that makes the cross vital and saving.

A story is told of a man who was converted under Moody's preaching the first time he went to Scotland. This man was a fishing tackle maker and an enthusiastic fisherman who had once lost his bait without catching the fish. The explanation was that in some way the barb had been broken from the hook. And the fisherman made the remark that that was exactly what happened when people preached the love of God to men but left out of their gospel the essential truth that it is in Christ on the Cross, the substitute for sinners, in whom that love is revealed.

A Hindu Society was once formed to appropriate all that was good in Christianity without burdening itself with the rest. Among other things this society appropriated, with the omission of only two words, was the answer given in the Catechism to the question: What is repentance unto life? Here is the Catechism:

"Repentance unto life is the saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth with grief and hatred of his sin turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience."

This Hindu Society left out the words, "In Christ." They read simply, "apprehension of the mercy of God." "In Christ" was the barb on the hook and this society did not mean to be caught, that is, they had no idea of becoming Christians.

There are a lot of individuals and groups who talk about the mercy of God, but they leave Christ out. For example, the Jews. And that was once my only hope, the mercy of God. As a sinner with a guilty conscience I thought since God is a God of mercy he would not punish me for my sins; He would show mercy instead. But I did not become a Christian until I saw the mercy of God was in Christ and the Cross was the expression of that love and mercy I needed.

Nobody is or can ever become a Christian without trust in the death of Christ for his sins. Anybody who tries to quiet his conscience and get rid of the feeling of guilt apart from the death of Christ for his sins is on the wrong

track. He will either never have a good conscience or he will have a deceived conscience.

This is why people who believe in salvation by good works or good character never know they are saved; they say one has to wait until he dies to be sure he is saved. He still has a condemning conscience.

The Jews under the ceremonial law never found the basis for a good conscience because of the kind of blood they offered. If the blood of bulls and goats had satisfied them they would have ceased to offer them; for the worshippers once purged should have had had no more conscience of sins. That is when a man finds something that satisfies his accusing conscience, he will not continue to ease it with something else.

Forgiveness is on the basis or ground of Christ dying for our sins. Ephesians 1:7, *“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.”* Galatians 3:13, *“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.”* Forgiveness is through redemption; it is through the redeeming blood of Christ.

Men who may not be bothering about their sins will find that their sins will bother them. You will never get rid of your guilty fears for good until you find hope in the redeeming blood of Christ.

A good conscience is a conscience purged by the blood of Christ. Hebrews 9:9, 14, *“Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience...How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”*

Hebrews 10:2, 22, *“For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins... Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil con-*

science, and our bodies washed with pure water.”

I Peter 3:21, *“The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”*