

# "TO GOD FROM IDOLS"

DICK CIMINO

*"For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God." I Thessalonians 1:9.*

I shall never forget that blessed night of January 10, 1929, in the old Williamsburg Rescue Mission, Brooklyn, New York. One icy, drizzling Thursday night about 9:30 P.M. God *"inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God:..." Psalm 40:1-3.*

The story of my life begins on the Island of Sicily. This land of sunshine, and vineyards, of simple Italian people at the toe of the Roman boot, was the place of my birth. At the age of four and a half years I was brought to America by my parents. My family interests and contacts were such that for nineteen years of my life I knew only the Roman Catholic religion.

I spent four years, from the ages of six to ten, in a Catholic home and school in White Plains, New York. All this time I was as ignorant of the free Grace of God and the peace and joy that comes from knowing Christ personally as any heathen in darkest Africa. Although I received a great deal of religious (Roman Catholic) instruction, I never once saw or had a Bible, God's Holy Word, until I saw one in a Public Library at

the age of 15. For the first time I had in my hands the Word of God.

## RELIGION OF WORKS

The religion of my family and of my youth was one of "WORKS" instead of "GRACE." Endowed with deep religious feelings, stamped indelibly with a yearning to know God, I felt hemmed in, circumscribed, limited in capacity to express the inner emotions that poured through my soul. Salvation by WORKS is a terrible system. The idea that one is saved by something he does; the idea that one can earn salvation and heavenly rewards, or that one has something he can give in exchange for personal salvation, produces only spiritual wreckage and chaos.

Every religion in the world outside of historic, New Testament Salvation set forth by the Holy Spirit in God's Word, gives its adherents something to DO. Christianity ONLY is already DONE. It has been said, and correctly so, that in spiritual matters there is a vast difference between D-O and D-O-N-E. Our Lord Jesus Christ said on the Cross atop Calvary, "IT IS FINISHED." Praise the Lord, the time finally came in my life when I discovered that Christianity is a FINISHED WORK: that Christianity was not a System, but a Person--CHRIST--and that CHRIST is Christianity. I discovered that sinners are saved by believing SOMEONE and accepting a PERSON, and not by having something to DO.

## "A GOOD CATHOLIC"

Going back to my experiences in religious adventure: My impressionable young mind was easily molded, and during the time of my religious training, chains of WORKS were literally shackled upon my soul--going to Confession, abstaining from meats on Friday, saying memorized prayers, the doing of penance, the receiving of Holy Communion,

fasting, torturing myself in mind and body--being taught that flesh life and sinful tendencies must be kept in subjection through human effort! I question if a more miserable person ever lived.

I was **DOING** my religion, knowing nothing of the great secret of **FREE GRACE**, namely, that Christ can take possession of a human life and live through it. I had never heard of the Reformation passage in Romans, chapter one, that "*the just shall live by faith..*"

As a young man of eighteen I found employment with the Goodwill Industries of Brooklyn, New York. Each morning, it was their custom to hold chapel services, and I fell into the habit of attending them. These meetings impressed me very much, and later I was invited to go to services in a little rescue mission, presided over by the superintendent of the Goodwill Industries.

I formed the habit of attending this humble place regularly, and each night drank in the simple message that I heard. Although steeped in Roman Catholicism, yet in this mission, I heard the doctrine of **GRACE** proclaimed for the first time. My very soul seemed to tingle under the impact of the message. From the deepest recesses of my nature, there came a feeling of joy, a knowledge that I was in the act of making a discovery--the greatest discovery in the world, namely, that in **THIS** life (for **NO CATHOLIC** from the Pope down knows **FOR CERTAIN** that he or she can go **IMMEDIATELY** into the presence of God and our Lord a second after death) a soul can be set **FREE** from the bondage of sin, and enjoy true liberty in Christ.

## **FOUNDATIONS CRUMBLE**

The foundations of my earlier religious

training, thinking and life crumbled. I began to look away from myself to Himself, from my works to faith in Christ,, from DOING to a FINISHED WORK.

I was learning that through the finished work of the Cross of Christ, I, an unworthy and condemned sinner, stood justified before the highest court of Heaven by accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour and received forgiveness for my sin.

I found that *"as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, BUT OF GOD."* John 1:12-13.

Oh, what a discovery I made in that little rescue mission. When the revelation of these eternal truths burst on my soul, and I accepted them, the Lord Jesus Christ became my personal Saviour, and I *"passed from death unto life"* John 5:24, and found that *"He that hath the Son, HATH life"* -(right now) *I* John 5:12. I found that *"if the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."* John 8:36. I found that it was *"not by WORKS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS which WE have done, but according to HIS MERCY He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."* Titus 3:5.

### A NEW SONG

After the Lord saved me, He led me step by step through the Word under consecrated teachers at the Practical Bible Training School, Binghamton, New York. The millions of sincere Catholic persons congregating in their churches do not sing! (*Just recently the Roman Catholic religion have begun to sing our Baptist Hymns.*) Did you EVER hear a congregation of Roman Catho-

lics SING? There is nothing for the individual Roman Catholic to sing about! I can say that after my conversion to Christ from the religion of Roman Catholicism He literally "put a new song in my mouth" giving me the privilege of writing over 100 songs and Gospel choruses. My spiritual experience can be summed up in the song He gave me:

*It is all because of Calvary,  
I am today set free,  
It is all because of Calvary,  
I'll live eternally.  
The story of His Grace I'll tell,  
His Blood avails for me,  
His love so sweet constraineth me,  
It is all because of Calvary.*

My friend, He can do the same for YOU, whether you are a Baptist, a Protestant, a Jew or a Catholic, "for there is no difference, for ALL have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Romans 3:22-23, "even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." Mark 10:45. "For WHOSOEVER (Baptist, Protestant, Jew, Catholic, or Heathen) shall call upon the Name of the Lord SHALL be saved." Romans 10:13.

Investigate the claims of Jesus Christ upon your soul. READ God's Word and you will find that "THIS is the Way, walk ye in it." Jesus said in John 14:6 "I (--not a Church, Mary, the Apostles, Creeds, rituals, traditions--) am THE WAY, THE TRUTH, and THE LIFE, NO MAN cometh unto the Father but BY ME."

I found that no Pope, Church or group could excommunicate my soul to Hell or Purgatory, but rejecting the LORD JESUS

CHRIST could. *"...if ye believe not that I AM He ye shall die in your sins."* John 8:24. And if a person dies in his or her sins they will go to HELL.

What God has done for me, He can do for every other Roman Catholic. I am not a heretic. How can I be! I was lost in sin but Jesus found me. I was blind but now I see that Jesus died for me. I have not departed from any faith. I have found true faith in Christ.

True, I may have departed from a "Church" but I have found Christ my Saviour. Is that heresy? I have departed from endless WORKS, but now I *"live by the FAITH of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me."* Galatians 2:20. *"I would to God...not only thou but also all (sincere Roman Catholics) that hear me this day were (saved, regenerated, born again) such as I am...."* Acts 26:29-30.

### **LOOK TO CALVARY**

*If your soul aches for peace  
that the world cannot give,  
If your burdens oppress,  
from which you would be free,  
If down deep in your heart  
you would see Him and live  
Then look sinner friend look to Calvary,*

*Oh, look, poor sinner, to Calvary,  
He died that your soul should be free;  
If you take Him today,  
God your sins will not see,  
Oh, look, sinner friend, look to Calvary.*

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