

THE GOSPEL WE PREACH

AND

The Beauty of the Christian Faith

BY

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"What to Teach and How to Reach the
Young," "The Spirit-Led Life," etc., etc.



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Introduction

THIS booklet has been written at the request of several persons experienced in Christian service. The reason in each instance being stated thus, "*Our young men are not preaching the Gospel.*"

This is, of course, only true in degree, but to whatever extent it is true, it is to be regretted, for there is *only one power of God unto salvation*, and that is the Gospel.

Let us then inquire: (1) **WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?** (2) **HOW MUST IT BE PREACHED?** (3) **WHAT WILL BE THE RESULT?**

Scripture Proofs are given, so that one can turn them up and verify from the word of God what I have written. They will fire your heart with desire to preach the good news.

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PART I

The Gospel We Preach

CHAPTER I

What is the Gospel?

IT is God's good news to a guilty world. Let the reader stay here, and before proceeding further answer this question concisely and so clearly that no child could misunderstand it:

“WHAT IS THE GOOD NEWS GOD HAS PROCLAIMED TO A GUILTY WORLD?”

Then let him inquire of himself, if he is a preacher: “Is this what I am preaching?”

Notice first that it is *a proclamation*, for preaching is, if rightly understood, God's ambassador announcing the message he brings from his Lord. He does so as though God did beseech men by him. He does it “in Christ's stead” (2 Cor. 5. 20).

It is accompanied by *a command* (Acts 17. 30), which the hearer is called upon to obey. For the Gospel has not only to be heard and believed, but to be obeyed (Rom. 10. 16).

The *proclamation is of certain great facts* (Luke 1. 4), for, unlike all other religions,

our Christian faith rests on mighty historic facts. Other religions are concerned with moral systems, philosophies, and religious observances, but the Gospel is of tremendous and eternal facts, made known by God to men in need of salvation.

Facts are unalterable. Whether a man believes them or not makes no difference to them, only the unbeliever misses the blessing of them. They remain facts (Rom. 3. 3, 4).

This proclamation and command is *addressed to guilty men* (Luke 5. 32). It is essentially good news for bad men. It has no message for the self-righteous as such. All must stand before God alike guilty and hear what He has to say to them (Rom. 3. 19).

It is well to make this clear, so that there may be no mistake. *Man is a sinner*—as such lost and condemned. It was to seek and save such that Christ came (Luke 19. 10; 1 Tim. 1. 15).

This is, of course, not good news, but it is preparatory to the proclamation of the good news. The publican taking the place of one afar off, and in himself hopeless, was justified; he took his true position and assumed the right attitude

before God, that of a sinner seeking mercy (Luke 18. 13).

Those who preach sin and judgment and hell are not preaching good news, but very bad news; they must go on to the good news or they are not preaching the Gospel.

What are then the great facts that are made known to all men in the Gospel? What does the proclamation contain? What does the ambassador announce? What is the good news? (Rom. 16. 25, 26).

1. IT IS THE PROCLAMATION OF A DAY OF GRACE (2 Cor. 5. 19). It announces that Grace reigns. Let us understand this. Had Grace not reigned, then Judgment must have fallen on guilty man, and who could stand?

But in this Day of Grace, this great amnesty, God is not imputing men's trespasses to them. Judgment is restrained and man is spared that he may have opportunity to repent and be saved. God is Love. God loves man, and desires not his death, but delights in mercy (1 John 3. 8 and 16; John 3. 16).

Of the Grace of His heart He has proclaimed this Day of Grace. Judgment waits while the offer of mercy is made.

This is a great part of the Gospel, to

make known God's heart to men (1 John 3. 16; 4. 9), to show His love and concern for men—so that the hearers may know and believe it (1 John 4. 16).

Grace is love shown to the unworthy. God is Love, and He is the God of all grace. He so loved that He gave—not by constraint. Beware, O preacher, of saying "God had to give," or "Christ had to die"; both were purely voluntary, the outcome of love. God *did* give—He chose that way to save man. Christ *did* die, because God, "Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" (Eph. 1. 11), and "according to the good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself," had so decreed that thus man should be saved, and He came to do the Father's will (Heb. 10. 7; John 10. 18).

2. IT IS THE PREACHING OF THE CROSS (1 Cor. 1. 18, 23; 2. 2). Unless the preacher really understands this, he does not know his business, nor can he preach the Gospel.

The great historic fact is this: "*Christ died for our sins*" (1 Cor. 15. 3). Not merely for us, but for our sins. He was the Sin-offering. His death was a sacrificial one. He was "the Lamb of God" (John 1. 29), the world's Sin Bearer. Each of

us may say: "The Son of God loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*" (Gal. 2. 20). It is true, a great fact. He died once for all, and is never to die again, so that His work on the Cross is a finished work (Heb. 9. 25-28; 10. 12 and 14).

What He did on the Cross is described in the following Scriptures.

"He died for the ungodly" (Rom. 5. 6).

"He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Heb. 9. 26).

"He made purification for sins" (or purged our sins) (Heb. 1. 3, R.V.).

"He reconciled us to God by His death" (Rom. 5. 10; 2 Cor. 5. 18, 19).

"He was made a curse for us" (Gal. 3. 13).

"He was made sin for us" (2 Cor. 5. 21).

"He made peace by the Blood of His Cross" (Col. 1. 20).

"He redeemed us with His precious Blood" (1 Peter 1. 19).

"He suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God" (1 Peter 3. 18).

"He made us nigh by His Blood" (Eph. 2. 13).

"He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities . . . by His stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53. 5).

“God laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53. 6). Such is the stupendous fact, not a theory, not a doctrine—a historic fact. He who was God manifest in flesh died for man’s sin, and put it away in dying. It is no longer a barrier to keep the sinner from God.

The wise preacher will meditate over the expressions used in describing the fact, some of which are quoted above, and see that He announces the truth in plain terms to his hearers (2 Cor. 3. 12).

3. IT IS THE PREACHING OF REMISSION OF SINS to all who believe (Acts 13. 38). Here then is another great fact: “*There is forgiveness* (remission—there is only one word for both) *with Thee that Thou mayest be feared*” (Psa. 130. 4). His ambassadors are empowered to proclaim this. This is the power of the keys, given not to Peter alone, but to all who preach the Gospel (Matt. 16. 19 and 18. 18).

This remission is the direct result of the work of Christ on the Cross, as the Lord Jesus said: “This is My Blood of the New Testament which is shed for many *for the remission of sins*” (Matt. 26. 28); and again: “It behoved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, *that repentance*

and remission of sins should be preached in His Name among all nations" (Luke 24. 46, 47).

This is good news to carry to guilty men.

4. IT IS THE PREACHING OF THE RISEN LORD. Paul at Athens "preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection" (Acts 17. 18). The One who died lives (Heb. 1. 3; 10. 12). He is risen and exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on High, Lord and Christ, Prince and Saviour (Acts 2. 36; 5. 31).

His present work is to *save* all who come to God by Him (Heb. 7. 25). So we preach a *present salvation* from Him who *liveth* and was dead (Rev. 1. 18). Note that reconciliation is by His death, and salvation in His life (Rom. 5. 10).

We point to *Him upon the Cross* and tell of remission. We point to *Him upon the Throne* and tell of salvation (full deliverance). We may go on further to speak of *His Coming Again* for our final salvation.

We may state it thus: On the *Cross* for reconciliation. On the *Throne* for deliverance. In the *Clouds* for glory.

Or we may say this: *Peace* by His *Blood* (Col. 1. 20). *Power* by His *Life* (Eph.

1. 19). *Present with Him at His Coming* (1 Thess. 4. 17).

In doing so, let us see that we do not offer salvation (that is deliverance from sins) before reconciliation (peace with God). Guilty man must be *reconciled* to God before he can be saved from his sins. The *guilt* is purged and then the *power* is broken (Mark 2. 9-12). The Passover precedes the passage of the Red Sea (Exod. 12. 23 and 31).

5. IT IS THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (Acts 2. 38). The preacher who does not proclaim as Peter did on the day of Pentecost, "And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost," does not preach all the Gospel.

The Galatians received the Spirit by the hearing of faith (Gal. 3. 1-5) when Christ crucified was preached to them. This was the blessing of Abraham, that we Gentiles "*might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith*" (Gal. 3. 14). For our Gospel includes not only reconciliation and salvation, but *new life* (John 10. 10). "The gift of God is Eternal Life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6. 23), and this is offered in the Gospel (John 3. 15, 16, and 36).

Our Lord laid it down as a great foundation truth, "*Ye must be born again*" (John 3. 3), and this new birth (re-creation and gift of eternal life) is the first work of the Holy Spirit. On believing, the Spirit is given and the dead quickened to newness of life (John 3. 6-8).

So we may state it thus: We have *Remission* by Blood; *Redemption* by Power; *Regeneration* by the Spirit. Such are the blessings we proclaim in the Gospel. Forgiven and freed, the spirit enters into newness of life (Rom. 6. 4).

CHAPTER II

The Command of the Gospel

WE saw that the proclamation of the Gospel is accompanied by a command (Acts 17. 30). That the Good News has not only to be believed, but obeyed (Rom. 10. 16).

Let us consider then what response God asks of man to the good news He has caused to be proclaimed to all nations?

It is stated by the Apostle Paul thus: "I have taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying both to Jews and also to the Greeks *repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ*" (Acts 20. 20, 21).

The grace of God must not be received in vain (2 Cor. 6. 1). The good news must not be heard as a sweet song and no attention paid to it. Nor is it enough to believe and assent to it, even preach it; it must be obeyed (Matt. 7. 22).

The first obligation put upon those who hear the Gospel is

To Repent

“God commandeth all men everywhere to repent” (Acts 17. 10).

“John the Baptist came preaching repentance” (Matt. 3. 2).

Our Lord’s first public utterance was “Repent” (Matt. 4. 17). He stated clearly, “Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13. 3). He came to call sinners to repentance (Matt. 9. 13).

What then is this that God requires of man?

Repentance is a change of mind leading man to take up an entirely new attitude to God, to Christ, and to sin (Acts 3. 19). He repents (changes his mind) and turns to God (converts) (Acts 26. 20). He changes his mind as to *sin* and renounces it (2 Cor. 4. 2). He changes his mind as to *Christ* and turns to Him as Lord and Saviour (Acts 2. 38).

Previously a rebel against God, he submits to Him (Jas. 4. 7). Previously a Christ-rejecter, he becomes a believer and Christ receiver (John 1. 12). His “I won’t” becomes “I will” and “I do now.”

This altered attitude leads him to receive and “confess Christ as Lord” (Rom. 10. 9).

The other obligation is to

“ Believe on the Lord Jesus ”

(Acts 16. 31), to exercise faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20. 20, 21). As Jesus said, “This is the work of God (that is our first responsibility to Him), that ye believe on Him Whom He hath sent” (John 6. 29).

What then is this faith in Christ that God requires? It is not to believe about Him; I may do this and still remain a rebel. It is not to believe He died for me personally (as is often carelessly said). No; I may believe that and reject Him. It is not *believing facts* that saves. I may profess to believe the whole Bible, and yet definitely set my heart and will to refuse the Lord Jesus and resist the Holy Spirit.

To believe on the Lord Jesus to the saving of the soul is:

- i. To acknowledge His claim as Lord (Rom. 10. 9).
- ii. To yield oneself to Him as such (Psa. 2. 12).
- iii. To respond to Him with the obedience of faith and love (Rom. 1. 5; 16. 26).
- iv. To receive and depend on Him as Saviour, Guide, and Teacher (John 1. 12).

When the Lord gave His threefold invitation it included all this. “*Come* unto

me . . . *Take My yoke . . . Learn of Me*" (Matt. 11. 28-30).

To believe in Christ then, is to come to Him for rest from the guilt and reign of sin, to take His yoke in the obedience of faith, and to learn of Him with a view to becoming like Him.

Faith then involves *submission, confidence, acceptance, and obedience*—not the obedience of law and fear, but that of confidence and love (Rom. 8. 15).

Our Salvation Depends on our Relation to Christ.

If He is received and confessed as Lord and Saviour we shall be saved (Rom. 10. 9, 10; John 1. 12).

To this repentance and receiving of Christ the preacher calls all men, offering them in His Name the blessings preached in the Gospel.

To make this clear, to persuade men, he bends all his powers. He cries: "*Be ye reconciled to God*" (2 Cor. 5. 20).

CHAPTER III

The Titles of the Gospel

WE are helped to understand the true nature of the Gospel by the titles that are given to it. Of these we will consider five.

I. The Gospel of the Glory of the Blessed God (1 Tim. 1. 11, R.V.).

What a wonderful title! It means:

THAT GOD IN IT REVEALS HIS TRUE CHARACTER, for glory is manifested character. He is seen to be *Love* (1 John 4. 16), the Saviour of men—*God our Saviour* (Titus 1. 3; 2. 13).

THAT HE IS GLORIFIED IN IT. His righteousness is vindicated, His grace satisfied, and man delivered and blessed. In this He is well pleased and His holy Name honoured.

THAT MAN IS THEREBY BROUGHT TO GLORY (Rom. 8. 17; 2 Thess. 1. 10). The sinner, graced and forgiven, receives the newness of life in which he walks to the

glory of God, and is changed into His glory (2 Cor. 3. 18).

It is no small joy to know that God is glorified in our salvation (1 Peter 4. 11) and that we are saved “to the praise of His glory” (Eph. 1. 12).

II. The Gospel of the Grace of God (Acts 20. 24).

Here the good news that grace reigns is implied. God acting in grace to guilty man has proclaimed a day of grace. In grace He saves all who receive His grace (Eph. 2. 8).

It is good news of a gratuitous salvation. The sinner is justified freely by grace when he believes (Rom. 3. 24). It is grace abounding even to the chief of sinners (Rom. 5. 20).

III. The Gospel of Peace,

or, as it is called, “The Word of Reconciliation” (Eph. 6. 15; 2 Cor. 5. 19).

It proclaims that the Lord Jesus made peace by the Blood of the Cross, or made reconciliation. So that now the sinner may be at peace with God in Christ through that finished work.

The sinner is not invited to “make his

peace” with God, but to *be at peace* (Job 22. 21) on the ground of peace already made by the Blood of the Cross (Col. 1. 20) and peace preached by Him who made it to all who believe.

This is the Word or preaching of the Cross—foolishness with men, but the power of God to the saved (1 Cor. 1. 18). It is thus we preach Christ crucified (1 Cor. 1. 23; 2. 2). Nothing need keep the sinner from God, since sin has been put away by the sacrifice of Christ (Heb. 9. 21), the offering of that one great and once-for-ever offering (Heb. 10. 12).

IV. The Gospel of the Glory of Christ (2 Cor. 4. 4, R. V.).

The One who died now lives. He “died unto sin” (Rom. 6. 10) once for all. He now lives unto God. He is Lord and Christ at the right hand of the Majesty on High. He is High Priest, merciful and faithful (Heb. 2. 17), living to make intercession and able to save all who come to God by Him (Heb. 7. 25). This is good news indeed. A Living Saviour at God’s right hand, exalted, glorified, crowned with glory and honour (Heb. 2. 9).

Preach then the Good News of the glory

of Christ as Lord and Saviour, ever living at God's right hand.

Sinners need not only remission, but a daily Saviour, and it is Him we proclaim, as did the angels to the shepherds at Bethlehem: "Unto you is born a Saviour which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2. 11).

V. The Gospel of Your Salvation
(Eph. 1. 13).

That is, of course, the Gospel that has brought salvation to us on our believing and obeying it. For the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth (Rom. 1. 16).

Salvation is deliverance. It includes deliverance from the wrath to come (1 Thess. 1. 10), from our sins (Matt. 1. 21), from the law and its curse (Rom. 7. 6; 8. 21); from this present evil age (Gal. 1. 4); from all our enemies (Luke 1. 74). Indeed, deliverance from all that dishonours God and defiles or robs us of that which God would have us enjoy.

Your salvation is your deliverance, and it is good news when one can say with joy, "He has made me free" (Gal. 5. 1). "I obtained mercy" (1. Tim. 1. 18).

CHAPTER IV

Two Pattern Gospel Addresses

IT is natural that we should turn to the Acts of the Apostles to see how the first preachers proclaimed the Gospel. We have ample evidence to go upon, for no less than 22 sermons or speeches are recorded in that Book. Of these nine are by the Apostle Peter, as follows: (1) At the election of Matthias (Acts 1. 15, *et seq.*). (2) On the day of Pentecost (Acts 2. 14, *et seq.*). (3) On the healing of the lame man (Acts 3. 12, *et seq.*). (4) Before the High Priest (Acts 4. 8, *et seq.*). (5) Before the High Priest (Act 5. 29, *et seq.*). (6) To Simon Magus (Acts 8. 20, *et seq.*). (7) In the house of Cornelius (Acts 10. 34, *et seq.*). (8) At the Council at Jerusalem (Acts 11. 4, *et seq.*). (9) Before the apostles and elders (Acts 15. 7, *et seq.*).

Nine are by the Apostle Paul, as follows: (10) At Antioch in Pisidia (Acts 13. 16, *et seq.*). (11) At Antioch in Pisidia (Acts 13. 46, *et seq.*). (12) At Lystra (Acts 14. 13, *et seq.*). (13) At Athens (Acts 17. 16,

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et seq.). (14) At Miletus (Acts 20. 17, *et seq.*). (15) At Jerusalem (Acts 22. 1, *et seq.*). (16) Before Felix (Acts 24. 10, *et seq.*). (17) Before Agrippa (Acts 26. 1, *et seq.*). (18) To the Jews at Rome (Acts 28. 25, *et seq.*).

Others are as follows: (19) Stephen at his stoning (Acts 7. 1, *et seq.*). (20) Philip to the Eunuch (Acts 8. 30, *et seq.*). (21) James at the Council (Acts 15. 13, *et seq.*). (22) Ananias to Saul of Tarsus (Acts 22. 12, *et seq.*).

What a wealth of matter is here that we may learn from it how to preach the Gospel. These men by their testimony turned the world upside down (Acts 17. 6), and saw thousands converted and added to the Lord (Acts 2. 41, and 4. 4).

We cannot of course look at all of them, but we may take that preached on the Day of Pentecost by the Apostle Peter and that preached by the Apostle Paul at Antioch in Pisidia (his first recorded sermon) as examples and examine them.

I. The Sermon on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2. 22-47).

The Holy Spirit had just been poured out from Heaven and the multitude had

run together into the Temple, and Peter, filled with the Spirit, stands up to address them.

He begins by explaining what had occurred (Acts 2. 14-21). It was the fulfilment of God's promise given through the Prophet Joel (Acts 2. 16).

Having given this explanation, he proceeds to preach the Gospel. The rest of the chapter we may divide thus: (1) Verses 22-35, The Address; (2) Verse 36, The Application; (3) Verses 37-40, The After-Meeting; (4) Verses 41-47, The Converts.

THE ADDRESS is a call to the hearers to listen to an announcement concerning Jesus of Nazareth, for it was definitely, as all Gospel should be, a preaching of Christ. It told of His *death* at the hands of wicked men, and yet by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.

It proclaimed *His Resurrection* (v. 24). This was shown to be in accordance with the Old Testament Scriptures, for all Gospel must be based on the Word of God (vv. 25-28). Psalm 16 is quoted and shown to apply, not to David (who was not risen), but to Christ, as promised in Psalm 110.

It announced the *promise of the Holy*

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Ghost, of the coming of which the preachers were themselves witnesses (v. 33). The sermon ends with

THE APPLICATION. All are called upon to know that the crucified Jesus, now risen, is both *Lord and Christ* (v. 36).

Such is the first Gospel sermon ever preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven (1 Peter 1. 12).

THE AFTER-MEETING, or Enquiry Meeting, is next to be noticed (Acts 2. 37-40). The preacher did not press the hearers as many do. They, being convicted by the Spirit, *came to him and asked* what must we do? If our preaching were in the same power, we shall not need to go to and worry our hearers, but they will come to us to enquire further.

The instruction given them was to repent and be baptised for the remission of sins and they should receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (v. 38).

This should be earnestly pondered, for the terms have not altered, and we must see that we do not vary or avoid them.

THE CONVERTS were 3000 in number (Acts 2. 41-47), and we read of a sevenfold action on their part: (1) They were *baptized*. (2) They continued steadfastly in *the*

apostles' doctrine (now found in the New Testament). (3) In *fellowship*, for they knew they were called to this. (4) In *the breaking of bread* in accordance with our Lord's dying wish. (5) In *prayers*, for they felt their need of more grace. (6) In *generous giving*. (7) In *praise and holy joy*.

Let us set before those who believe and turn to the Lord these seven things that they may from the first walk in a way well pleasing to the Lord.

Let us now take the other example.

II. Paul's First Recorded Sermon

at Antioch in Pisidia (Acts 13. 16-41). It was preached in the Synagogue, so that the hearers would be Jews. It began with a short sketch of their national history up to the time of David, and then announces: "Of this man's seed hath God according to promise raised unto Israel *a Saviour Jesus.*"

It is, we see, a preaching of Christ the sinner's Saviour. It witnesses to His death and resurrection (Acts 13. 28-30). It confirms the fact by appeal to the Old Testament and to those who had seen Him (Acts 13. 31-33). It ends with *an announcement and a solemn warning* (Acts 13. 38-41).

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The remission of sins is proclaimed to all believers, judgment threatened on those who despise the Word.

These outlines may help us in the preaching of the Gospel after the Divine pattern. *

*An analysis of the Address of Peter before the High Priest in Acts 5. 29-32 will be found in my tract, "Prince and Saviour." Price 1d.

CHAPTER V

The Appeal of the Gospel

THERE is nothing in which the young preacher errs more readily than in this matter of appeals to his hearers. His earnestness and desire for their salvation leads him to keep on urging them to take the all-important step. But appeals fail of their purpose when they are *re-iterated* so often as to become wearisome and to lose all effect on the conscience; when they are *so mixed* as to cause confusion; when they follow an address in which little or *no instruction is given or Gospel preached*. "How can they believe on Him of whom they have not heard?" (Rom. 10. 14).

All this must be avoided, and an appeal only made when the Spirit has evidently been convicting the hearers, and then in such sober and wise terms as will leave no doubt in the mind of the step to be taken.

But in this matter we are not without precedent in the Scriptures. Let us think

of some. We have already considered the command to repent—we think now of appeals.

Perhaps the appeal *par excellence* of the Gospel is that given in 2 Cor. 5. 20: "We are ambassadors for Christ as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead *be ye reconciled to God.*" Note the majesty and dignity of it, the authority behind it and the urgency, we "beseech," we "pray you." We cannot do better than make this our pattern for the first thing for the sinner is to be reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5. 19) on the ground of the reconciliation made by God in Christ at the Cross.

Then the close of Paul's first recorded sermon quoted above is a fine appeal. "Be it known" (Acts 13. 38-41). "Beware." A solemn announcement and a grave warning.

The end of the instruction given by Peter on the Day of Pentecost is an excellent example of appeal. "With many other words did he testify and exhort," saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation" (Acts 2. 40, R.V.). An appeal seldom heard in the present day.

The instruction given to the Jailor at

Philippi is in the nature both of instruction and appeal. "Believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16. 31). It appeals to the man to put faith in Him Who is both Lord and Saviour, to receive Him as such, that is, with submission to Him as Lord and trust in Him as Saviour.

The most hackneyed of all appeals is that so often urged upon children to "*Come to Jesus.*" We note that this appeal is not used in the sermons in the Acts. It is, of course, based upon the gracious invitations of the Lord Himself, but it never stands alone. It is the separation of it from its context that makes it so confusing to children and so ineffective in the lips of the preacher.

Let us see what the Lord really said. He did not say, "*Come unto Me*" without stating the object of the Coming. To come, must be with a purpose—just as "look" must have an Object ("unto Me") and a purpose ("and be ye saved") (Isa. 45. 22). So the great appeal in Matthew (ch. 11. 28-30) runs thus: "Come unto Me . . . I will give you rest." "Take My yoke," it is easy. "Learn of Me . . . ye shall find rest."

Here is a threefold reason for coming to Christ. For *salvation*, *service*, and *sancti-*

fication. To *rest* from guilt and sin. To *submit* to Him in the obedience of faith; and to *learn* of Him, so as to become like Him.

For God has a threefold aim in our salvation. Our *relief* from guilt and sin; our *obedience* to His will; our *character*, having predestinated us to be conformed to the likeness of His dear Son, from Whom we must learn.

Let then our appeals be intelligent and clear, leaving no question in the minds of the hearers as to what step is to be taken and with what purpose.

CHAPTER VI

The Methods of the Gospel

IT is neither the manner nor the matter that is the most important thing in preaching the Gospel, but the spirit of the man.

An actor can move an audience to tears with unrealities, and many a preacher turns them to stone with solemn truths.

The doctrine may be true, but be wanting in power. And this is not avoided by mannerisms. All attempts at eloquence are artificial fire. We all know most eloquent preachers who never won a soul for Christ. There are many in our land, booming away like great guns with never a breath of life—the dead bones in the valley are not stirred.

First and most important then, the Gospel must be preached with the **Holy Ghost sent down from heaven** (1 Peter 1. 12). This is why such blessing attended the preaching of Peter on the Day of Pentecost. He was filled with the Spirit.

and spoke as the Spirit gave him utterance (Acts 2. 4).

This is true in three ways:

THE PREACHER MUST BE A TRUE MAN. One in Whom the Spirit of God is not grieved. If he is conscious of unjudged sin, of disobedience of heart, of deceit in his life, let him stop preaching. He is a fruitless branch (John 15. 4-6).

THE PREACHER MUST BE "IN THE SPIRIT" WHEN HE PREACHES. To go unprepared in heart lightly and carelessly, without exercise before God, without that true sanctification of himself for the service, is to go and fail. He must get both the message and the grace to deliver it from his Lord.

THE MESSAGE MUST BE THE WORD OF THE SPIRIT. That is to say, the word appropriate and suitable to the occasion, the utterance given by the Spirit. To go about with one's best sermon and give it on any and all occasions, irrespective of the state and condition of the hearers is trifling. The spirit of discernment is needed to speak *a word in season* (Isa. 50. 4); and this can only be as one is led in this as in all things by the Spirit (Rom. 8. 14). It is not the speech that matters, but the power (1 Cor. 4. 19).

The Apostle says of his own preaching: "My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, *but in demonstration of the spirit and of power*" (1 Cor. 2. 4).

Secondly, the Gospel must be preached with great plainness of speech (2 Cor. 3. 12). This means:

THERE SHOULD BE BOLDNESS AND CANDOUR in preaching the whole truth (1 Thess. 2. 2). To disguise or hide certain truths from fear of criticism or offence is to be an unfaithful steward of the Gospel. Here the preacher who is not "the servant of men" (1 Cor. 7. 23), who is not a paid man, has the great advantage. He can speak fearlessly (John 7. 26).

THERE SHOULD BE SIMPLICITY (2 Cor. 11. 3; 1. 12). One should never use words or terms that one does not really understand and that will not make things clear to the hearer. This is a common sin. Pious or high-sounding phrases are used which mean little or nothing. Strings of platitudes, mixed and muddled, weary the one who really wants to know. See that you know the exact value of a word or phrase before you use it. Practice saying what you mean in simple language.

To try and be clever, to seem profound or learned is soon to be found out as a windbag.

“Tell me the story *simply*,
 In earnest tones and grave;
 Remember I'm the sinner
 Whom Jesus came to save.”

Thirdly, the truth must be unadulterated. “If thou take forth the precious from the vile thou shalt be as My mouth” (Jer. 15. 19). It must be true of us. “We are not as many which corrupt (‘adulterate’ or ‘huxter’) the word of God, but as of sincerity (integrity), but as of God (authority), in the sight of God (responsibility) speak we in Christ (power)” (2 Cor. 2. 17).

Truth fails when mixed with error—the wine is watered down and has no value. What, for example, is the use of one preaching the Gospel to children who has taught them to say from their earliest days that they were “made children of God, members of Christ, and inheritors of the kingdom of Heaven” at their baptism?

Or how does a sacerdotalist attempt to preach a Gospel of grace through the finished work of Christ while he performs “mass” and insists upon an elaborate

ritual and sacraments as the means of salvation and life?

Lastly, the motive must be pure. If I only desire to be a great preacher, to win renown, to have power over others, to see them swayed under me and responding to my appeals, I shall get what I seek perhaps, but God will not be glorified nor souls born from above. The cry for so many professions, so much result, has turned many a preacher from the true aim.

The motive must be:

LOVE TO GOD and a desire that men may know Him.

LOVE TO MEN, and a desire for their eternal salvation and happiness. *He will win souls who loves the souls of men.* Let us ever remember that "he that winneth souls is wise" (Prov. 11. 30).

CHAPTER VII

The Results of the Gospel

WHAT result is to be expected from the preaching of the Gospel? The first result of preaching the Gospel is CONVICTION, or convincement of its truth. The Spirit of God will bear witness in the hearts of the hearers as to the truth of what is preached.

This generally takes the form of *conviction of sin*, but not always. Some have been brought into the light without any deep sense of sin (that came later as they had to do with God and His Word). Conviction is an assurance wrought of the Spirit that these things are so, that the message is true.

This convincement may be more or less shallow. The four soils in the parable of the Sower teach us this. In the first case the word preached *never got below the surface*. In the second it did so, but *had no root*. In the third, it sprang up but *was choked*. Only in the "honest and good"

heart did it find a permanent place and *brought forth fruit* unto life.

One must look then for conviction when preaching. It is often manifested by a concern written upon the face or, as at the Day of Pentecost, by an enquiry, "What must we do?" In other cases it may stir up violent opposition, as when Stephen preached on the day of his death (Acts 7. 54).

Secondly, the Gospel will produce CONVERSION, that is, repentance (or change of mind and will) that leads the man to turn to God. "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3. 19).

Conversion to God will be linked with faith in Christ, when He has been faithfully preached, and salvation will follow, for God mocks no man, and the sinner that comes to Him through Christ is at once blessed.

This we may and should expect. The ordinary use of the term conversion covers both man's part and that of God the Holy Spirit. The man turns to God, and God blesses with remission and regeneration. Life is given by God when the sinner takes

the attitude of repentance and faith toward Him.

The woman who touched the hem of the Lord's dress did her simple part—an act of faith and appeal, and the Lord responded to her faith. *Virtue went out of Him* and healed her (Luke 8. 46). Conversion is then a miracle in each case, not an intellectual change merely, but a new life bestowed by God.

Signs of this new life will soon be manifested. An aged Christian was told that a certain child had professed to turn to Christ. He said nothing for a little, and then gravely asked: "Has he sneezed seven times?" (2 Kings 4. 35). By which he meant, alluding to the raising of the Shunammite's son by Elisha, have any evidences of new life appeared?

The next of these evidences is CONFES-
SION. Much emphasis is put upon the confession of Christ with the mouth in Scripture. It should be the first sign of life (Rom. 10. 9, 10; Matt. 10. 32; Luke 12. 8; 1 John 4. 15). It was done by public baptism at at the first (Acts 2. 41). In these days of shallow and hasty professions it is usual to wait, rightly or wrongly, until the truth of the conversion is apparent.

But it is difficult to believe in the real repentance and genuine faith in Christ of one who refuses his Lord this first simple act of allegiance and obedience. Yet, the confession, while suggested to the convert, must be spontaneous on his part, and not forced, for all obedience must be that of faith and love.

The feeble excuse for not being baptized, that they would rather show their conversion by the life, should be sharply rebuked. They are to obey, and not pick and choose. The life will not show the change if the first act is one of disobedience, and their obedience will in no way hinder, but rather help their new life in which the change will be shown. Moreover, there should be also the *open confession at home* (Mark 5. 19), and at the place of business, etc., since the convert must not sail under false colours.

Timidity and fear are to be overcome by faith and not yielded to. He giveth more and sufficient grace (James 4. 6; 2 Cor. 12. 9).

Lastly, we notice CONTINUANCE. The number of reported conversions that are not followed by a continuance in the truth

is the saddest feature of our Gospel preaching to-day.

It is the result of emotion and pressure, where there has been no work of God, and an over-desire to report results. From which the Good Lord deliver all His true servants.

But where there is a new birth there will be a continuance in the life (1 John 2. 19). The grace of continuance is the hall-mark of a true conversion (Isa. 64. 5; Rom. 2. 7; 1 Cor. 15. 2). Continuance should be followed by progress. The new convert should be directed to the Word of God that he may grow thereby, and exhorted to obey all that he finds therein written (1 Peter 2. 2).

This will lead him to go on in the way of God, in testimony, in spiritual worship, in fellowship with his fellow saints, and in service as the Lord opens the way.

CHAPTER VIII

The Warnings of the Gospel

“**W**ARNING every man and teaching every man” was the Apostle’s practice when he preached Christ (Col. 1. 28). “In meekness instructing those who oppose themselves” (2 Tim. 2. 25) was his instruction to Timothy.

Denunciation is not of much value, it rather stiffens resistance. Nor are *wild threats of Hell*, they over-reach the mark, and men do not believe them. All warning must be with *reasonableness* and with *instruction*.

The more reasonable the more likely to appeal to the conscience. Any representation of punishment that makes God sound harsh or exacting is of course wrong. He is not so, but delights in mercy and is abundant in goodness. He “so loves” (Mich 7. 18; Exod. 34. 6; Eph. 2. 4; John 3. 16). It is an awful crime to misrepresent God to men.

Yet we are to WARN EVERY MAN

Of His Lost Estate

as a sinner under condemnation (Rom. 3. 19). It is not that he may be condemned. He *is* "condemned already" (John 3. 18). He is without excuse in so far as he continues to live without God and without Christ in the world (Rom. 2. 1). It is not only the sins (actual transgressions) that render him guilty, but his *lifelong attitude toward God*—his sin as a rebel against God. Of this he must be meekly instructed and solemnly warned

Of the Danger of Continuing in Sins.

Men who are practising evil are more readily convicted of sins than of sin—that is, of their actions than of their state. They must be reminded that God will judge evil doers, and that by the secrets of men (Heb. 13. 4; Rom. 2. 6, 16), that His holy eyes are in every place beholding the evil and the good. Two dangers await them.

THEIR SIN WILL SURELY FIND THEM OUT (Num. 32. 23); they will surely reap what they sow (Gal. 6. 7), and

THEY WILL DIE IN THEIR SINS. I know of no more terrible warning than this: "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall

die in your sins" (John 8. 24). Often judgment and Hell fail to alarm, but a death-bed in their sins is a fearful prospect.

Of Judgment to Come.

"After death the judgment" (Heb. 9. 27). This "certain fearful looking for of judgment" (Heb. 10. 27; Rev. 10. 11-15) must be earnestly insisted upon, for it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God after a lifetime of rebellion and sins.

Of Hell and Eternal Punishment.

Here great wisdom is needed and much real love for souls lest any cruel words proceed from the lips of the messenger of mercy (Rev. 21. 8; John 3. 36; Matt. 25. 46). The wise way is:

TO KEEP CLOSELY TO THE LANGUAGE OF SCRIPTURE. Read the solemn passages without comment, they have Divine authority and carry conviction with them.

NEITHER TO APOLOGISE FOR, NOR IN ANY WAY TO TURN THE EDGE OF THE TRUTH. In this we must be found faithful witnesses.

NOT TO ATTEMPT TO EXPLAIN EVERYTHING, but to testify to the truth. It is quite obvious that there are deep mys-

teries here, and things far beyond our knowledge, so we do well to preach but not to pretend to justify all we have revealed, or we shall find ourselves out of our depth. Faith does not ask for reasons and explanations, but proclaims God's Word, and the Spirit uses that Word to convict of the truth.

CHAPTER IX

The Changes Wrought by the Gospel

WE hear much to-day of changed lives, and there can be no question that the Gospel is the greatest life changer the world has ever known.

Thousands of millions have proved the Gospel to be the power of God unto salvation that introduces them into a new creation.

Not only is the man changed, but his whole sphere of life. He is brought into the Heavens in Christ, and lives upon an entirely new principle. For to him to live is Christ, Who becomes the centre of his life.

This is far removed from a mere outward change of conduct, a moral cleaning up, introduction into a new set, and a thrilling enthusiasm for propaganda. All these may exist without the work of the Holy Spirit and apart from a personal submission to Christ as Lord and faith in Him as the Saviour and Guide of the life, when the sole desire becomes the glory of

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God and the one aim the doing of the will of God.

Let us consider, then, what is the change wrought by the Gospel in the one who believes and obeys it.

It is Sevenfold.

The first two words we have already discussed.

I. REPENTANCE, *a change of mind*. So radical a change of mind that the outlook is altogether different. What once was loved and indulged is now hated and avoided. What was once disbelieved and rejected becomes the object of faith and desire.

This God-given change of thought and heart is the firstfruit of a man hearing and receiving with meekness the Word of God, the Gospel.

II. CONVERSION, *a change of attitude toward God*. The word is always active, the man "converts," not "is converted." He turns to God.

It is the action of the will in obedience to the truth. The mind being changed, it follows as of course the attitude toward God is altered. So the exhortation is: "*Repent and be converted that your sins may*

be blotted out" (Acts 3. 19). To this God graciously responds with the blessings of salvation.

The Lord's two great "verilies" make this clear. "Verily, I say unto you, *except ye be converted,*" and "Verily, verily, I say unto you, *Except a man be born again*" (Matt. 18. 3; John 3. 3).

Man's part is to convert, God's part is to give the New Birth. They are the two essentials, the great "Excepts."

These first two changes are man's responsibility, the rest are solely and only the work of God.

III. JUSTIFICATION, *a change of standing before God.* We have seen that "All the world is guilty before God" (Rom. 3. 19), that "Judgment came upon all men to condemnation" (Rom. 5. 16), that until there is a saving faith in Christ man is "condemned already" (John 3. 18). Justification is the acquittal of the man from this dread sentence.

Instead of standing before God a condemned sinner, he stands in that Holy Presence with no charge against him. His sin having been purged by blood and his sins remitted in Sovereign grace, he knows that there is therefore now no condemna-

tion to them that are in Christ Jesus.

Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

Four great statements as to justification are given us in the Epistle to the Romans.

1. *God justifies the ungodly* (Rom. 4. 5). Marvellous grace! This is the very essence of the Gospel, that God can be just and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus—even the most ungodly (Rom. 3. 26). It is God's glory to be a just God and a Saviour (Isa. 45. 21).

2. The sinner is *justified by Grace* (Rom. 3. 24), the sovereign unmerited and gratuitous act of the blessed God of all grace.

3. He is *justified by Blood* (Rom. 5. 9). The atoning sacrifice of Christ being the righteous ground upon which God is enabled to act in grace.

4. He is *justified by Faith*, when he believes in Jesus (Rom. 5. 1).

IV. REGENERATION, *a change of nature*. For the Gospel offers not only remission, but regeneration.

As we saw in the sermon at Pentecost: "*Repent and be baptised every one of you, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*" And the work

of the Holy Spirit is to quicken to new life, to bring about the new birth.

The man becomes a "new creature," old things are passed away, all is new.

The evidences of it are manifested, as we see in the first Epistle of John: (1) In doing righteousness (2. 29); (2) In ceasing to sin (3. 9). (3) In loving (2. 15 and 4. 7). (4) In confessing Jesus as the Christ of God (5. 1). (5) In overcoming the world (5. 5).

V. SALVATION, *a change of service*. "Ye were the servants of sin" (Rom. 6. 17). Cursed slavery! but whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin (John 8. 34).

But by the obedience of faith you have been freed from this bondage and become the servants of righteousness (Rom. 6. 18).

So salvation is a change of master. Lord Sin has given place to Lord Christ.

Liberty, deliverance, salvation (they all mean the same) is the happy portion of those who truly confess Jesus as Lord and give Him the place of Lord upon the throne of their heart.

VI. SANCTIFICATION, *a change of character*. The sinner comes to Christ with a bad character, just as he is, but not, thank God, to remain as he is.

This change of character is twofold.

(1) It is a change from being unholy and of the world, *to being holy and separated unto God*. This also is the work of the Cross (Heb. 10. 10; 13. 12). "Know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for Himself" (Psa. 4. 3). He becomes the saint of the Lord.

(2) It is a *progressive change into the likeness of Christ* (2 Cor. 3. 18), for holiness is Christlikeness. It is Christ being formed in you. It is to have the mind of Christ and to walk as He walked.

VII. CONSECRATION, *a change of work*. The word "consecrate" means to have the hands full. It denotes devotion to and delight in a new occupation. The believer realises that he has been redeemed from all iniquity in order that, purified to the Lord, he may become a peculiar man, a man for his Lord's own service, zealous of good works (Titus 2. 14).

So he begins a new life of work for God. He follows his Master "Who went about doing good," and of Whom it is written, "He pleased not Himself."

He is a "devoted" man, and as such presents himself body (Rom. 12. 1), soul and spirit to His Lord to be used of Him.

His language is: Here am I, send me.”
“Use me, O Lord, use even me; just as
Thou wilt and when and where.”

Such is the glorious transformation
wrought by the Gospel wherever it is
received and obeyed.

PART II

**The Beauty of the Christian Faith
without Accretions**

CHAPTER I

Two Scenes in Jerusalem

IN the year A.D. 33 or thereabouts, the Holy City of the Great King, Jerusalem, was the scene of two gatherings.

The stately Temple built by Herod, already 46 years in building, and yet scarcely finished, stood on the Grand Plateau made by Solomon and known now as the Temple Area on the summit of Mount Moriah.

Its elaborate and ornate service was in full swing with its priestly order, its blood sacrifices, its incense, its antiphonal singing, its stately processions and gorgeous vestments.

It was Passover time, and the city was full of worshippers who have come from all parts to attend the great festival. Such was one scene.

The other was in a large upper room. The Lord Jesus had gathered the twelve around Him and was bidding them His tender last farewell e'er He yielded Him-

self into the hands of wicked men intent on slaying Him. In His own person He was about to fulfil all that the Passover stood for.

As He sat with them, He took bread and brake it, and bade them eat it in remembrance of Him, for it stood to them for His body, and also the cup, and bade them all drink of it for it was to be to them the New Covenant in His Blood.

How great the contrast between the two scenes. The one elaborate, the other simple. The one rich in earthly show, the other wanting all display but deep with love and spiritual life.

The Two Scenes are Typical.

They represent the Old Covenant and the New. That which was ready to vanish away, and that which is eternal. The sanctuary on earth and the unseen heavenly things (Heb. 9. 23).

THE EARTHLY SANCTUARY (the holy places made with hands) was but the figure of the true. Every part of it spoke of Christ, and now He had come, and the seen and temporal was to give place to the unseen and the eternal.

That stately order belonged to the first

covenant, which, because of the unprofitableness thereof was already vanishing away (Heb. 8. 13).

THE EARTHLY PRIESTHOOD served only unto the example (type) and shadow of heavenly things. Those priests were not able to continue by reason of death (Heb. 7. 23), they must give place to Him who hath an unchangeable priesthood and ever liveth (Heb. 7. 24).

THEIR SACRIFICES, which did not avail to put away sins (for "*it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins,*" Heb. 10. 4) must cease, for the One Sacrifice once for all, that availed to make full atonement having been offered and having "perfected for ever" them that are sanctified, there remaineth no more offering for sin (Heb. 10. 12-18).

It must have been with wonder and awe that those first followers of the Lord Jesus, Israel's Messiah, saw the "*Carnal ordinances*" (Heb. 9. 10) pass away and give place to "*heavenly things*" (Heb. 8. 5; 9. 23); to learn that those seen and elementary figures were only imposed for a time, until the Lord came and substituted the substance for the shadow, the real and actual for the insubstantial and

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typical. The heavenly for the earthly, the spiritual for the carnal.

Let us note some of the contrasts more particularly.

1. THE PLACE. Under the Old Covenant the place was all-important. In Deut. 12. 11, we read: "*There shall be A PLACE which the Lord your God shall choose to cause His Name to dwell there; thither shall ye bring all that I command thee. . . . Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest: but in the place which the Lord shall choose.*"

Even to-day the Jews, upon whose heart the veil of unbelief still hangs so heavily, dare not offer Sacrifice in any other place and therefore (since that one place is trodden down of the Gentiles) can offer no sacrifices at all.

But now the hour is come, Jesus tells us (John 4. 21) *when ye shall neither in this place (Samaria) nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father, but the true worshipper shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.*

Places are no longer important, for :

“Where’re men seek Thee Thou are found,
And every place is hallowed ground.”

2. THE BUILDING. “It was a worldly sanctuary (Heb. 9. 1), or “a sanctuary of this world,” as the R. V. has it.

It was “a figure for the time then present” (Heb. 9. 9), or more correctly with the R. V., “a parable for the time now present.”

It was sumptuous and “exceeding magnificent,” but temporary and typical only.

For as Stephen reminded his persecutors: “The Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands” (Acts 7. 48), and Paul told the philosophers of Athens: “God that made the world and all things therein . . . dwelleth not in temples made with hands, neither is worshipped with men’s hands. . . We ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold or silver or stone graven by art and man’s device” (Acts 17. 24-29).

Man in those days of ignorance and carnality needed something visible and tangible, but the spiritual worshipper knows that the Heaven and Heaven of Heavens cannot contain God, that true worship is spiritual and not concerned with buildings.

3. THE CEREMONIAL. "The carnal ordinances," "*which,*" we read (Heb. 9. 10) "*stood only in meats and drinks and divers washings and carnal ordinances imposed on them until the time of reformation,*" or, the time of setting things right, which time, Christ having come, is now present.

So the Apostle Paul, rebuking those who would reduce the Christian faith to a system of ordinances, writes to the Colossians (2. 16-23): "*If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why as though living in the world are ye subject to ordinances?*"

"As though living in the world." Note the expression well! Is the Christian a Jew with a sanctuary in this world, occupied with elementary things as types and shadows, the mere rudiments of the world? Nay, indeed, he is a spiritual man, seated in the heavenlies with Christ (Eph. 2. 6), living, moving, and having his sphere of life in Heaven and occupied with the better things.

To the Galatians the apostle wrote, warning them also not to "*turn again to the weak and beggarly elements wherein ye desire again to be in bondage, ye observe days and months and times and years. I*

am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.”

Let us close with a few terse sentences:

The earthly must give way to the heavenly.

The carnal must become spiritual.

The visible yield to the invisible.

The temporal pass away before the eternal.

Life must have liberty for its full expression and not be in bondage in ceremonial.

CHAPTER II

The New Life and what Suffices

WE have seen that the Christian faith is not an improved or even simplified Judaism, but a **NEW LIFE**. It rests not in the outward display, but in the inward spiritual mind. It is not even assisted, but rather hindered, by forms and ceremonies, by laws and ordinances. It demands freedom, and can only develop its true life and character where there is liberty.

A Christian is a man born from above in whom is the Holy Spirit, and, where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty (2 Cor. 3. 17).

Men have sought to develop trees or plants, and even animals, on rigid, fixed lines, but the result is only monstrosity. An organism must have liberty to develop according to its inherent life, or it is a stunted and warped failure.

Such is much of what passes for Christ-

ianity to-day. Its deformity is apparent to all.

The Holy Spirit is the life of the believer, and under His guidance, and His alone, can true life and character be developed. "Life that is life indeed," "life more abundant," "eternal life."

What then shall Suffice?

Three things are all sufficient.

1. CHRIST AS LORD AND SAVIOUR. Personally received, known, and rejoiced in.

The eyes of the true child of God are not on laws, but on the Lord. He is "not under law" but "enlawed to Christ." For to him to live is Christ. The life he now lives in the flesh he lives by faith in the Son of God, of whom he can say: "He loved me and gave Himself for me."

He seeks ever *to sanctify Christ as Lord* in his heart. There He is allowed to rule as Master. To Him are the reins of the life yielded. He is called by that endearing term, "Rabboni Master!" And is Saviour as well as Master, for He will not allow His people to be overcome of sin and shame. He saves His people from their sins (Matt. 1. 21).

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The lines of John Newton express it nobly:

“By various maxims, forms and rules,
That part of wisdom in the schools,
I sought my passions to restrain,
But all my efforts proved in vain.
But since the Saviour I have known,
My rules are all reduced to one—
To keep my Lord by faith in view
This strength supplies and motive too.”

2. THE SCRIPTURES AS THE SOLE AND SUFFICIENT STANDARD OF TRUTH. These are received as the Word of God, which effectually works in them that believe (1 Thess. 2. 13).

They are proved not only, *to have been* inspired, but *to be* inspired, that is, God-breathed (2 Tim. 3. 16), to be “living and powerful” (Heb. 4. 12). They are a lamp to the feet and a light to the path.

Nothing else is needed, for they contain “all things that pertain unto life and godliness” to those who walk in them.

These Sacred Writings are as to all essentials easy to be understood. There is, moreover, no question as to what is written. Questions and differences only arise when men depart from them, or seek to twist or wrest them to suit precon-

ceptions or religious creeds. It is a wise and safe maxim: "*What is vital is clear, what is not clear is not vital.*"

Let the child of God insist upon plain and easily understood Scripture for all his conduct, and he will walk at liberty.

A well-known teacher, much harassed by enthusiasts for this cult or that new creed used to meet them all thus:

"Give me a list of those Scriptures which you suggest I have not considered or am not practising and I will carefully and prayerfully consider them."

Needless to say, the cranks made no headway when thus met, for the Scriptures never mislead when taken simply and honestly. It is the propaganda tract that causes all the sorrow.

"I will walk at liberty for I seek Thy precepts" (Psa. 119. 45).

3. THE HOLY SPIRIT indwelling the body of the believer, enlightening and enabling, is the third all sufficient essential to the Christian life.

Through the Scriptures (which are described as His Sword, "The Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God") He reveals Christ to faith, and makes known the will of God, at the same time energizing

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the believer so that he is able to walk in all the will of God. He is in the believer as a Living Spring of Water springing up into Eternal Life.

These three suffice for life and godliness to the believer.

The Lord, The Word, The Spirit.

And these three agree in one. The believer runs his race, looking unto Jesus, listening to His Word, and led by His Spirit.

He responds to His Lord in the obedience of faith and love, since the Holy Spirit has wrought in him that change of heart and mind that enables him to love the Word of God and understand it, and to delight to do the will of God. His one simple object being, "That I may please Him."

CHAPTER III

The Aim of the Christian Life

RELIGION is not the aim of the Christian life, nor is salvation alone. These are but means to an end.

The Lord saves us for a purpose. The salvation being incidental and preliminary. He chooses and cleanses the vessel that He may use it for His glory.

Those who make religion an end in itself, "the religious," as they are sometimes called, are therefore mistaken, as also are those who are occupied alone with their own salvation.

One should not be content until they know God's salvation, that is their justification and acceptance in Christ, deliverance from the reign of sin and assurance of eternal life, they should know peace with God and the power of God, and these may be known and enjoyed by every believer.

But they are not ends in themselves, they are necessary precedents to the true end in view.

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What then is the true end or aim of the Christian life? Why are we saved and so fitted to live? To what purpose?

This aim may be summed up in three words:

Holiness, Fellowship, Service,

or for those who love alliteration let us say: *Sanctification, Society, Service.*

Let us consider them briefly.

1. YE ARE CALLED UNTO "HOLINESS."

"This is the will of God even your *sanctification.*" Now holiness is not an ex-per-i-en-ce, but character. It is far more important what we are than what we feel, enjoy, or even do.

Holiness is the likeness of Christ seen in and upon us. It is to be like Him. It is to have *the mind of Christ* so that we think as He does, love what He loves, and hate what He hates.

It is to *walk as He walked.* So that the outward conduct agrees with the inward disposition.

Perhaps the two Scriptures (one from the O.T. and the other from the N.T.) that express holiness most simply are the following:

"Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us," and

"We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ."

The first aim then of the Christian is to be holy, that is, like his Lord. He desires that Christ may be formed in Him and that he may grow up into Christ in all things.

The means are those already referred to. Sanctification is through the Word of God, as Jesus prayed: "Sanctify them through Thy truth, Thy Word is Truth" (John 17. 17). As the Spirit who indwells the believer reveals Christ and His glory in the Word, so he is changed from glory to glory as by the Lord the Spirit. (2 Cor. 3. 18).

Glory is manifested character, and by communion with his Lord over the Word the believer is transformed from stage to stage, his character ever developing into the likeness, the same image, of his Lord.

This is the aim of the Christian life—to be like Christ. To this we are called and predestinated (Rom. 8. 29), and this we shall be when the work is complete (1 John 3. 2).

2. BUT WE ARE CALLED ALSO TO "FELLOWSHIP," to the society of our fellow-saints.

No believer is ever perfected in isolation.

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Separation is not isolation. He is called to come out and be separate from sin and from the world, the present evil age, to touch not the unclean thing, but never to separate from his fellow-believer.

On the contrary, he is called to fellowship, to love all who call upon the Lord out of a true heart. He is bidden to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace and to avoid those who make divisions.

We shall see later when we come to consider the accretions, how the varied organizations, denominations, sects, and circles prevent the realisation of this unity, and have been the cause of endless sorrow.

It is the will of God that His people should be one. It was the thrice repeated prayer of our Lord in the upper room that night in which He was betrayed. And the prayer was answered. *They are one* (see 1 Cor. 12. 13 and 10. 17).

This oneness is realised when Christ is alone the centre, the One around Whom His people gather. The Creeds of Christendom divide and cause strife, but those who truly and in fact confess Christ as the One Lord, His Word as the One Faith, and

the Holy Spirit as their One Guide, find no difficulty in walking in fellowship and unity, without judging one another or insisting upon conformity to man-made ordinances, or "teaching for doctrines, the commandments of men."

3. THEN THE BELIEVER IS CALLED TO "SERVICE." He turns to God from idols to serve the Living and True God.

The nature of his service is varied and very wide. Each receives gifts and grace that he may serve God acceptably.

But the true end of the service of the believer is the same as that of His Lord, whose life work is summed up in the five weighty yet simple words: "*Who went about doing good.*"

As we have opportunity, then, let us do good unto all men.

CHAPTER IV

The Beauty of the Christian Life

HAVING looked at the nature of the new life in Christ, the means that suffice for its development and the aims or ends set before it, we may now contemplate its beauty. For the Christian life when lived and developed according to its nature is exceedingly beautiful.

All unspoilt life is beautiful. The healthy development of a plant or animal or a child is delightful to watch. Only when some outside hindrance or disease or limitation is imposed upon it does it lose that charm.

It is so with Spiritual life. Nothing is more beautiful with true grace and charm than a Christian life developed upon true lines, without any distortion or accretion.

The life of Christ on earth is the perfect example, unspoiled by the traditions of men, untrammelled by the doctrine of the Pharisees, unmarred by legal niceties. He lived and moved in an atmosphere of

liberty and love. John describes it thus: "*We beheld His glory* (that is, His moral character) *full of grace and truth.*"

The two most beautiful things in the moral and spiritual sphere, Grace and Truth, were seen in perfect balance in the walk and words and works of the Holy One of God.

Such may be the disciple's walk too, for He lived as He desires us to live. He lived by faith in the Father, as we may live by Him (John 6. 57). He took the Word of God as His sole and sufficient guide. "It is written," was the end of controversy for Him, and He was led by and energized with the Holy Spirit. These sufficed for His path on earth as they may for ours.

Let us then ponder the beauty of the Christian life free from accretions. It lies in seven things.

The Sevenfold Beauty of Life.

1. IN ITS "SIMPLICITY." We state this first, for it is its chief charm.

The Apostle spoke of his rejoicing being this, the testimony of his conscience that in "*simplicity and godly sincerity,*" not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God he had lived his life.

The anxiety of the Apostle for the

Corinthians was lest, as the Serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, their minds should be corrupted from *the simplicity that is in Christ*.

Directly the Christian loses his simplicity toward Christ and becomes involved in the thousand entanglements of Christendom the beauty of his life is destroyed.

2. IN ITS "LIBERTY." We are expressly told that where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty. The Law of the Spirit is the perfect law of liberty. To this we are called and are bidden to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has set us free. The true beauty of the Christian life lies in freedom from constraint and compression. It develops according to its true character in liberty.

Not in license, which is lawlessness, but in liberty, which, so far from being lawless, is enslaved to Christ, and consists in being *set absolutely free from all that would hinder a loving obedience to Him*.

The Christian life is unaffected and perfectly natural (that is, according to its true nature). All that is forced or assumed or mere outward conformity is false. A true Christian life is as lithe and

free in its movements as a healthy child. It lives, breathes, and moves, unconscious that it is doing either. Self-occupation or affectation is foreign to it.

Just as a fish is only free in water, its natural element, and a bird is only free in the air, its true sphere of life, so the believer is only free while living in the Spirit and walking in Christ. To restrain or restrict him by ordinances or legal obligations is to limit his life, as a bird is confined when in a cage.

This liberty is largely taught in Galatians, where deliverance from the law is emphasized, and in Colossians where liberty from man (Col. 2. 8, 16. 18), with his traditions, commandments, doctrines, philosophy, and fleshly worship, is taught at length, for these things mar the beauty of the life in Christ.

3. IN ITS "UNIVERSALITY." Like all that God has provided for the happiness of man, the Christian life is universal.

The sunshine and the rain are needed and supplied in every land and they are free to all.

The relief of night and day, the joy of fruitful seasons, all are universal. In all nations, we are told (Acts 14. 17) God "*did*

us good and gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."

So the blessing of life in Christ suits all men alike. Let a true child of God from England meet another from China or the far away islands of the seas, and at once he recognises that he shares the same eternal life, is blessed with the like joy and peace.

Only where men attempt to impose their own particular form of civilization or church organisation is the beauty of this universality marred.

In Christ men find a common salvation, life, and joy.

4. IN ITS "INDIVIDUALITY." Though universal yet the individuality of the life is not spoilt or hindered in the least.

The conversions in the Acts reveal this. The five outstanding cases recorded are of such different persons that one cannot but be struck by the facts. The eunuch from Ethiopia, a black prince; Saul of Tarsus, a Doctor of Law and Pharisee of the Pharisees; Cornelius, a Roman soldier a Centurion; Lydia, a gentle woman; and the Jailor of Philippi, a rough, cruel

man. Yet each found new life in Christ. Their hearts were changed in each case and the Spirit indwelt them, and Christ became their Lord and Saviour. Yet their individuality had neither any hindrance, nor was it affected, only it was directed into new life and service.

5. IN ITS "ADAPTABILITY." There is no lawful calling in life which Christianity does not beautify.

The merchant, the doctor, the servant, the workman, the lawyer, the student, all are dignified and enriched by the grace of Christ. Any tendency to dishonesty, to unfair dealing is corrected. What was dark before is lit up with the radiancy of Christ.

It is not a matter of becoming religious or of changing creeds, but of new life, of grace and truth in every department of life. There is no honest calling in which a man may not abide with Christ.

6. IN IS "JOY." Nothing is so lovely as pure joy, the result of a holy peace within.

Anyone who has once known "the joy of the Lord" will know that all the pleasures of earth, the happiness that comes from mere things are not to be compared with it.

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It is joy unspeakable and full of glory.
It is the most beautiful thing on earth.

Oh, the shame that religion, which should be the expression of an inner life, has become a morbid and depressing thing; so that often to become religious is to be robbed of the joy of life.

A round of wearying ceremonial, a system of prayer-saying all enforced, denial of the blessings of life given richly to enjoy, such is the false religion that is perhaps the chief enemy of the life and liberty that are found in Christ.

It was the religious who persecuted and slew the Lord—the common people heard Him gladly. It is so to-day; the chief opponents of the Gospel are those who have substituted for it a man-made religion.

7. IN ITS "LOVE." Such as is described in 1 Cor. 13, in one aspect the most beautiful chapter in the Bible.

Read it, and mark its beauty, and remember that the Christian is taught of God to love, that the very love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost.

PART III
The Accretions

CHAPTER I

A Sad Fact

I STOOD once in the Roman Catholic Cathedral in Vienna. Mass was being celebrated. The altar was ablaze with candles, and at it knelt a priest in gorgeous robes; before him on the altar was a wafer of bread which he adored on his knees with every gesture of zealous devotion. As he did so he repeated some Latin sentences while the people stood or sat around in an irregular group and chanted a dirge-like hymn. In other parts of the building some knelt and told their beads before the images of the Virgin or of their favourite saint, only indirectly interested in what was going on.

As I contemplated the scene the question rose in me: *Is this Christianity?* Is this in accord with the new life and the simplicity that is in Christ?

No, it bore no resemblance to it. Whatever may be said for it, one could not but recognise that it breathed an

entirely different spirit from that in which one lives and moves and has his being when he opens the New Testament. There was something radically different, the growth of years of perversion and accretion.

The original thing of beauty, simplicity, and liberty had entirely disappeared. What remains is "*another Gospel*," which is not another (Gal. 1. 8; 2 Cor. 11. 4). One feels that the "Jesus" who is supposed to be present in the wafer adored is "*another Jesus*" (2 Cor. 11. 4) whom the apostles have not preached, so that the whole is permeated with "*another spirit*," and not with that Holy Spirit of Truth which the true Christian has received.

That all this priestcraft should be presented to the onlookers instead of "the truth which is in Jesus," is lamentable. It is giving those who ask for bread a stone.

I once asked a priest who had come into the light of the Gospel if those who did such things in the name of Christ did not hold the doctrines of grace of free and full salvation by faith in Jesus? Were they ignorant of them, or did they not believe them. His reply was suggestive.

"Yes," he said, "we professed to hold

them all, but they were *buried in rubbish.*" Alas, that it should be so!

One searches the New Testament in vain for any evidence or suggestion of the gorgeous organization of Rome, of its prelates and priests, its clerics and its ritual and ordinances. Yet these are the prominent things that have obscured the truth and darkened the true light that shines in the Gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.

And what is true of the sad apostasy of Rome is also true in measure of her daughters, for she is "the mother of harlots."

The doctrines and commandments of men are substituted for the truth of God. A visible organization of man is given the place of the invisible Church, the Body of Christ, and claims a monopoly of ministry never accorded by Scripture, and this *sad but true fact* is the consequence—

The people, instinctively recognising the difference between the true and the false, *are abandoning the places of worship and turning a deaf ear to those who claim a monopoly of teaching and ministry.* Something unreal and artificial appears in

oft repeated forms and there is a weariness in the performance of mere ceremony.

Yet most are not entirely regardless of the things of God. When they meet the real thing they are willing to listen, but they do not believe they can find the truth in the organized religion of to-day.

There is no doubt a measure of truth to be found there, but it is usually so mixed with unreality that the uninstructed cannot discover it. They are lost in platitudes and words without life in an endless routine of unprofitable things. The simplicity, beauty, liberty, and life are wanting.

CHAPTER II

The Accretions

I. Visible Organisations.

PERHAPS the greatest sorrow that has fallen upon Christianity is the substitution of man-made institutions or visible organizations for the *Invisible and Universal Church*. It is obvious to any thinker that there is no institution on earth that can claim to be "*The Church which is the Body of Christ*" (Eph. 1. 22, 23). That mystic body has an unseen Head in Christ, is knit together by an unseen indwelling Holy Spirit, includes every truly regenerate soul and contains no unsaved person, and is an invisible organism, having one common life from the Head.

The great man-made organizations, some of which blasphemously claim to be "The Church," cannot be said to be constituted thus, since most of them are full of unsaved and evil men.

That there are gatherings of believers meeting in the name of the Lord Jesus for

worship, ministry, and service known in the Bible as "*the Churches (or assemblies) of the saints*" (1 Cor. 14. 33) is true, but none of these and no amalgamation of them can claim to be "The Church which is the Body of Christ."

To tens of thousands of uninstructed Christians it comes as a complete surprise to be told that this or that great institution with which they are associated, as, for example, the "Church of Rome" or "of the East" or "of England" is not "*The Church,*" and bears little if any resemblance to it.

In each such organization there are no doubt individuals who, having been joined to the Lord by a personal faith in Him, are members of the Body of Christ, having by the One Spirit been baptized into the One Body (see 1 Cor. 12. 13; Eph. 4. 4).

There may be among them gatherings in various places where true believers meet and are rightly called "churches of the saints," but the great organizations themselves are neither "The Church" nor truly called "Churches," since they have no warrant in Scripture.

Let the reader study history and consider the persecution, oppression, and cruelty

that the true children of God have suffered at the hands of these institutions and they will appreciate how the beauty and simplicity of the Divine pattern has been departed from.

Not that the Divine pattern and simplicity has ever been wholly departed from. Let any who desire to confirm this read "The Pilgrim Church," by E. Hamer Broadbent, and they will rejoice to learn that through all the darkness of the ages God has had His faithful witnesses.

II. Priests.

A Christian minister is never in the New Testament called a priest. The Church which is the Body of Christ knows no caste of men calling themselves by that name. The distinction, clergy and laity, is unknown in the New Testament, and is foreign to the very spirit of it.

But, alas, how the true children of God have groaned and suffered under the usurped authority of these men, many of whom can rightly be described as human parasites preying upon the people.

One thing is clear from Scripture. It is the priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2. 5 and 9), and that gifts and grace are

given to all in measure that the body may edify itself in love by that which every joint supplieth, "*according to the effectual working in measure of every part*" (Eph. 4. 16).

The claim to a monopoly of ministry by a class has proved to be one of the saddest accretions from which the Christian faith has suffered.

Often the monopoly is given to an unsaved and even immoral man who is supposed alone to have the "cure of souls."

An Anglican bishop was asked recently by an acquaintance of mine if, in view of the promise of Matt. 18. 20, he was prepared to say that a company of simple devout believers meeting in the Name of the Lord could not claim His Presence and remember Him in the breaking of bread unless a priest were present to officiate.

He replied that he could not pledge himself to such a proposition, but asked that his name should not be mentioned!

In the days of Wycliffe, the morning star of the Reformation, the Truth had become so obscured that it was universally believed by the common people that no one could approach God in Christ directly without some medium in the shape of a

priest, church virgin, or saint, or other mediator.

It was this truth that Wycliffe and his preachers heralded throughout England: *“The secret of the immediate dependence of the individual Christian upon God, a relation which needs no mediation of any priest, and to which the sacraments of the Church, however desirable, are not essentially necessary”* (Encyclo. Britt., under heading “Wycliffe”).

That truth, thank God, has never again been lost in our land; but, alas! another Wycliffe is needed to announce the equally valuable truth that even two or three gathered in the Name of the Lord Jesus may remember Him in the breaking of bread without intervention of prelate or priest and may edify one another from the Scriptures according as each one has received the gift (1 Peter 4. 10).

Only when these priests stand out of the way will the churches of God enjoy the liberty, simplicity, and beauty of the Christian faith with Christ as only Lord, the Word of God as only Creed, and the Spirit of God as the Author of Order and Peace in all the gatherings (1 Cor. 14. 33).

III. Commandments and Doctrines of Men (Col. 2. 22).

On the ruins of Jerusalem the Prophet Jeremiah wept, saying: "How is the gold become dim! How is the most fine gold changed!" (Lam. 4. 1).

The words are appropriate to the present day. The doctrine of Christ is dimmed by the doctrines of men, the Word of God made of none effect by tradition.

Our Lord Jesus told Nicodemus: "Ye must be born again." The doctrine of Christendom has substituted for this the sprinkling of an unconscious child with water and taught that this is the new birth.

How better could the enemy of the truth have turned the edge of our Lord's solemn warning? In consequence millions live and die unregenerate and unsaved, since they are told that that ceremony was all the Lord intended.

Again the Apostle bore witness: "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ He is none of His;" and again a ceremony is substituted unknown in Scripture in which the youth is confirmed and told that he thereby receives the Holy Spirit, although

no evidence of the alleged fact appears in the after life.

The saints of God are bidden worship by the Spirit of God, for the Father seeks such to worship Him in spirit and in truth (Phil. 3. 3; John 4. 24). Again a ceremony takes the place of spirit-led worship. A priest reads a form to a mixed multitude of saints and sinners who take no other part than that of allowing the familiar words to pass over the mind and receive their assent, thus again all exercise of heart as to individual responsibility for the edification of the body of Christ by that which every joint supplieth is avoided, while the pleasing phrases act as a sedative to the conscience.

These are examples of the fatal effect of the substitution of the commandments and doctrines of men for the liberty of the Spirit and the Word of God.

Yet the people love to have it so. Only among those who read this, there may be found some who desire to please God and refuse thus to be brought into servitude to such "beggarly elements" (Gal. 4. 9; Col. 2. 8, 18 and 20) "and yoke of bondage" (Gal. 5. 1).

IV. Conclusion.

“If thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as My mouth: let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them” (Jer. 15. 19). Such were the words of the Prophet in a decadent age and to a nation heading fast for ruin.

They indicate to us also the way out of the present confusion.

Let us rejoice in Christ our Lord and Saviour, refusing all other lordships.

Let the Word of Christ dwell in us richly, refusing the commandments and doctrines of men.

Let the Holy Spirit be our Guide; as He hath sought us, so let us abide in Him, needing no man to teach us (1 John 2. 27), but recognising that our responsibility is to seek for ourselves the truth in the Scriptures with the enlightenment of the Spirit (the unction and anointing of 1 John 2. 20 and 27) and that He will guide us into all truth.

Then, as He shall give us light, let us walk in the light and in liberty, for where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty.

ANTICIPATION

When the next Revival comes to England from God, the Faith will burst the shackles and regain its pristine liberty.