

The Glory of the Gospel.

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May we offer a word to thinking people in this day of testing and distracting questions. Amidst the perplexing difficulties in the rush of modern life the question often comes up, *where, and how is it all to end?* How blessed it is to have God's glorious Gospel! It is a relief surely to have peace, rest and security, which not only steadies us in the din of strife at the moment, but also gives perfect certainty of everlasting life and glory in another order of things when this life is brought to an end.

In the circle of this life many things engage our attention. Education, Science, History, Literature and Philosophy, may be mentioned, each, or all, having their claim upon us, which things, however pleasing, as adding to our

knowledge of natural phenomena, but the progress of civilization cannot reach beyond the span of life here, and consequently do not touch the vital question of our having to say to God as moral agents, and must leave us bereft of soul-salvation, and without the knowledge of God. While such studies may engage, they cannot satisfy. Man has a conscience as well as intellect. Being immortal, and fitted with moral capacities which connect him with God, heaven, and eternity he must have a Centre, an Object outside himself by which he is controlled for his own welfare and the glory of his Creator.

It is here, the *glory of the Gospel* shines out. Standing alone, as belonging to the eternal world, and appealing to the immortal in man, there can be nothing in the circle of terrestrial life to which it will compare. There is much that appeals to us in the temporal order which may give pleasure and indeed may be necessary as in that order, but the Gospel comes from God to meet every desire of the heart as controlled by the conscience. It meets man in relation to his fallen state, producing repentance

for sin and putting him into right relations with God. It then produces a life which contrasts for good with his life in the previous fallen state and in practical result is well-pleasing to God. This is *soul history*, the work of the conscience and while there is nothing in it that is contrary to reason, it goes beyond that and puts man right in his innermost soul having subdued him before God in his conscience.

It is the Gospel of God "*concerning His Son.*" God is its source, Christ its theme, while the Holy Spirit has come down from heaven to publish it abroad. It gives the grand exhibition in the creation of the Godhead, in the fulness of nature and character, in direct relation to the question of good and evil. It meets every moral question and solves every problem raised in a creation of moral and intelligent beings, but beyond all that it is the fruit of the eternal purpose of God.

The Gospel surpasses all other divine dealings and shews (let it be said with reverence) God at His highest and best. It stands alone as fruit of eternal purpose, the necessity of eternal love, and the activity of omnipotent power, and

must result in eternal glory to God—*Father Son and Spirit*. What a transcript of the being, and Nature of the great and glorious Godhead is the Gospel. It stands at the centre of everything. Angels, the honoured servants of God's providence, desire to look into it ; in holy obedience they minister to its subjects but have no part in its blessings. To them is not committed this glorious Evangel. The Son brought it here, making way for its unfolding by His Death and Resurrection and Ascension, and indeed it was out of these glorious fundamental verities it sprang. It had its conception in God in the purpose of eternal love, its birth in Redemption, its glory in meeting lost sinners that had outraged the name and majesty of God and His throne, and will have its triumph in a scene of eternal bliss, where God shall be all in all.

Reflecting the heart of God in goodness, the Gospel contains righteousness for man that he may be at home in the presence of God, and salvation that he may be delivered from every adverse power. It shews the divine predilection in the human race as being the chief

part of the work of His hands. When revealing Himself as portrayed in the Gospel, God passed down by all ranks of creation to become a Man. It is from heaven, with the wide earth its range, the human race its sphere, and the recovery of man, *the fallen creature*, its aim. It may, therefore, be spoken of as *Cosmopolitan* in character, with the world in view ; *Supernatural*, because it reaches us by divine revelation, and *Super-mundane*, because it comes from heaven to fit us for heaven.

It is in the Gospel the sovereignty of Grace is seen alongside of the responsibility of the creature. By this we mean that sovereign Grace stoops down to the weakest and most worthless, however guilty, and thus its stupendous dignity is ever the same. It is not as some think a *religion* nor can it rightly be a subject of debate. It cannot possibly be rivaled, and with nothing else will it compare. It is not a mere mental proposition as men deal with a mathematical proposition ; far less is it sentimental, and being universal in bearing it does not take account of caste. It cannot be bought for money, won by flattery, melted by pity nor

mastered by debate. It courts not the favour, nor fears the frown of any. It is in the truest sense *dogmatic*, since it demands *full unqualified surrender, unconditional acceptance* in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and *unwavering obedience* in every detail. There is nothing like the Gospel !

It should be understood that we speak of the *Gospel of God* as it shines forth to-day. It is there God, the Godhead, is mirrored forth before the eyes of all intelligent creation. He is supreme in Majesty, Almighty in power, Glorious in holiness and fearful in praises. His Omnipotence, Omniscience and Omnipresence are in evidence everywhere, but what is at the heart of all is His love, **THE LOVE OF GOD WHICH PASSETH ALL UNDERSTANDING**. It is thus He shines out in the Gospel, but in doing so, that love controls all that He is in every Attribute of His Being as the Triune God, and blazes forth in the creation for pardon and fullest blessing for the fallen creature and for His own eternal praise.

We are speaking of God's Gospel as coming from Christ the glorified Man at God's right

hand. It must be remembered, however, that Gospel runs through all God's ways and belongs to all time. It is designated "*the everlasting Gospel.*" The terms of it are, "*Fear God and give glory to Him which made heaven and earth.*" This is true, and surely becoming for a creature at any moment, and a time is near when such words will have a peculiar call and application, but the present moment is marked by a Man at God's right hand, and richest blessing offered to all by owning Him as Lord to the glory of God. It is beyond all other dispensations, because it freely offers the richest blessings of God to the guilty, on the principle of faith, which simply means to believe what He says.

As thus before us the Gospel stands related to the three great entities of time, space and matter. In the nature of things these three things are closely linked together. We may at least endeavour to distinguish them, and mark their relation to this glorious scheme of God, which shews His wonderful condescending mercy to a sinful creature like Man upon the earth. Men speak of relativity in connection with the above things, and from an intellectual

point of view much may be learned. We are on moral ground with the Gospel and can speak with reverence of that which presents God in relation to all three.

The Gospel in relation to Time. The moment man fell into sin the Gospel came into view both in type and promise. "*Soon as the reign of sin began our God set forth His wondrous plan.*" The guilty pair were clothed in the skin of a spotless victim, an act that spoke of acceptance in Christ to-day by the Gospel, while the promise of the woman's seed told of the coming Saviour. Later the Gospel was preached to Abraham and also to Israel before they entered Canaan. (Galatians iii, 8. Heb. iv, 2.) The deliverance of Israel from Egypt adumbrates the Gospel and the Tabernacle with its vessels, priests, and service, give a glorious foreshadowing of this wonderful heavenly message.

In His dealings with man in those early days God had ulterior things in mind. Every type, shadow, promise, prophecy and symbol running through the Old Testament had Christ and the Gospel in view. In that way the revenues of the ages have been handed down to us to-day.

Intellectual leaders, moral sages, men of spiritual and prophetic insight, have each in his own line contributed to this glorious scheme. *Wisdom's secrets* (Job. xi, 6), *Wisdom's delights* (Proverbs viii, 30), and *Wisdom's treasures* are all to be found there (Colossians ii, 3). What created being can ever comprehend God's Gospel? It passes thought, it passes words, it passes human ken ; like Him from Whom it comes, it is infinite, and from him to whom it comes, it draws forth richest strains of praise and adoration. It looks back into a past eternity and forward into that unending bliss to come, while it fills up the parenthic gap which we call *time*.

The Gospel in relation to Space. " *The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament His handiwork* " (Psalm xix). " *The unwearied sun from day to day, doth His Creator's power display ; and publishes to every land the work of an Almighty hand.*" As the sun rays itself forth in the expanse, bringing life, warmth and gladness to us in our bodily condition, so the great *Sun and Centre* of the moral universe rays Himself forth in spiritual fulness bringing salva-

tion, life and blessing by the Gospel. Space may be well known, but who can define it? God has planted within its bosom those bodies which are the witness of His wisdom, power and skill that throughout its multiplied distances might be transmitted the story of His love from the counsels of eternity; that He might be known in His innermost nature and Being in a way that creation with all its wonders never could declare. "*Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy God; ask it either in the depth or in the height* (Isaiah vii, 11). Here the Virgin's Son, the Vessel of God's purpose and Man's blessing is before us. The vast extent of God's glory in the universe is before us in Ephesians iii, 18, where the Apostle prays that we may apprehend with all the saints what is the *breadth and length and depth and height and to know the thought surpassing love of Christ*. The whole expanse of glory is thus seen as established *in that love* which is the nature of God and from which all true glory must emanate.

The Gospel in relation to Matter. The material bodies which stud the vault of heaven stand out in relation to the Gospel. This earth, however

great, is but a speck in comparison to many of the other bodies. While filling its place in relation to the others, in the working out of the Creator's will in the systematic working of the universe with all its laws of unity and variety, it stands as the great centre of all creation with regard to the Gospel and God's purpose in redemption. The birth, life, death of Christ, His ascension, and the coming of the Holy Spirit stand out as the proof that this earth is the centre for the revelation and display of the grace and glory of God. As the material is serviceable to the moral, we can see by faith the whole grand system of the universe becoming translucent with divine glory. The revelation of God has come out here, and every feature of the Godhead which has been revealed will have a corresponding answer in glory in the consummation of God's ways in view of an eternity of bliss.

As we can conceive of nothing existing apart from the will of God a word may be said with regard to the link between the Gospel and the three great circles of nature, science and history. It need only be said that these things are correlated in quite a different way. The second

rises out of the first in a way not quite the same as the third, connects with the other two. The whole range of human history witnesses to the authority of God as the moral Governor of the Creation, while both nature and science bespeak His providential control of all.

Nature in relation to the Gospel. The physical order of creation is spoken of as the book of nature, while the Bible is the book of revelation. The one may be a transcript of the other and both a reflex of God. It is instructive to see in Scripture the many features of creation God uses to enforce great moral lessons when dealing with man in his creature obligations. The sun, moon, stars, mountains, rivers and seas, all become serviceable and as we follow the blessed Lord in His ministry we are delighted at the way He uses these things as well as ravens and lilies, etc., to bring out the *Fulness of the Gospel of God*. Nature, as everything else, bowed at His blessed feet and honoured Him. But nature has given a trustworthy revelation of God so as to leave man without excuse. “*The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the*

things that are made, even His eternal power and divinity " (Romans i, 20). Both the seen and unseen are linked together for us here and since creation's God is Nature's Lord we can understand how the whole created sphere becomes serviceable to Him for the display of His glory by the Gospel. Not a grain of sand, a drop of water, a blade of grass nor forest leaf, but shall yield their meed of praise in the glory of that redemption by which has come the Gospel.

Science in relation to the Gospel. This hangs upon nature and is really the result of its laws arranged into a system as a result of man's research. His insatiable thirst for knowledge impels man to scale the heights, descend the depths, and endeavour to penetrate into the mysteries of nature till he has become acquainted with much of the beauty and harmony of the Creator's works. This spurs him on to yet greater feats so that he has been able to bring into his service material agencies which have brought about great advance in civilisation, both on the side of good and evil. Strange it is, that in gaining knowledge of God's workmanship, man should become proud and attempt to shut

Him out. Could anything prove his fallen condition more forcibly than this? Thank God there are many bright examples of faith among men of science ; men who have found their rest and peace for time and eternity at the feet of *Jesus the sinner's Friend*. They have learned that God or salvation is not to be found in the realm of science but in the work of Christ at Calvary. "*Canst thou by searching find out God? It is as high as heaven ; what canst thou do ! Deeper than sheol ; what canst thou know ?*" (Job xi, 7-8). It is here we get redemption ; this does what nature or science never could, namely, make God known in love and glory in our hearts by the Gospel.

History in relation to the Gospel. This is easily seen as linked up with the ways of God and controlled by His moral government. His sway is perfect over every heart and mind, both in the individual and the aggregate and all is made to work in a way, either causative or permissive for the working out of His great design. We may trace the conditions of society and the varied forms of public opinion right from the time when mankind stood as one

family and follow into their national distinctions, the confusion of tongues, the rise and fall of nations, the extent of their dominions, and the time of their existence, and learn thereby much of the power and wisdom of God. He foretells, because He fore-sees, and does both, because He wills, and His will is right. Egypt, Assyria and Babylon, great and imposing in their day, figure on the page of Scripture because of their relation to Israel, the people of His choice. Rome is prominent as the ruling power under which our Lord was crucified, and as revived at the close of this age, has yet a fearful part to play. Greece had already been pre-eminent as brought in to supply the language, when the time was come, in which God would publish His glorious Gospel. Prophecy in this way can be seen as unfulfilled history. Creative power, Providential goodness, and moral government in sovereign control, may thus all be seen at work in relation to God's glorious Gospel.

We have seen that all God's dealings, whether in type, shadow, promise, or prophecy, foreshadowed the Gospel. It is that for which all else exists. As being the grand scheme wherein

God sets Himself before the universe. His moral nature as love, we expect to see Him set forth at the highest and to learn the workings of His heart, not only in relation to the creature, but to learn something of the workings of love, relationships, and counsels, in relation to each glorious Person in the Godhead. To see the Father working in relation to the Son, and the Son glorifying the Father, and the Holy Spirit coming out from the Father and the Son to make all this good in the hearts of men in a subjective power, is an amazing favour.

We repeat then, *there is nothing like the Gospel*. It shews us a divine system of glory, far beyond Creation, Providence or Government ; giving these their true place as serviceable in divine hands for its display. It is concerning God's Son ; His birth, His death, resurrection, ascension, and His coming again in glory. His death, its foundation, His glorious Person, its security, the eternal God its guarantee of stability and the Holy Scriptures its sanctified authority while the illuminating power and credentials of all are wrapt up in the supreme Hands of the Holy Spirit, the sovereign dis-

tributor of divine bounty to men.

The Bible tells us about God in His *Eternity*, *Omnipotence*, *Omnipresence*, *Incorruptibility* and *Immutability*, but for creatures such as we, something more is needed. Greatness, glory and Majesty could but keep sinful men away. It is here, blessed be His name, all that God is in love shines out. The Gospel makes clear the riddle of the universe by solving the sin question, and explaining the mystery of God. O the depth of it ; the marvel of it ; and the grandeur of it for God, and for man. It stakes the dignity of the Being of God in the eyes of the celestial inhabitants of the universe on the blessing of that creature that crucified His well-beloved Son. Man's worst, yea, the darkest crime in the history of eternity is met and answered with God's brightest and best. To those who had forfeited the right to live, it brings life eternal and to those who dishonoured God upon earth, it brings, in sovereign grace, the precious things of heaven.

And now, my reader, have you received this glorious Gospel and are you happy in the joy of God's salvation ? If so, cultivate acquaint-

ance with Christ in the joy of holy communion with Himself. Your birthright, as belonging to the family of God, assures you of this. If you have not tasted God's salvation, *why not?* You are not merely a creature of intellect; you have a soul to be saved, and your conscience warns you of this. The greatest men of the race have found their rest and peace at the Saviour's feet, yea, it is to this they owe all their greatness. *Why not you? Think of it,* do so with God who sent His Son to die that you might be saved. Remember there is a *without*, an *outside place* where all that refuse the Saviour must exist forever with the devil and his host. We have spoken of a scene of life where all the redeemed shall dwell in everlasting bliss with Him who died to save them. There, all that is holy, happy and undefiled, shall ever dwell in heaven's richest and purest delight. Shall you be there as cleansed in the Saviour's blood? Shall you not trust now in that Saviour and be fitted to dwell with Him in those scenes of holy joy? Is it wise to refuse the gracious overtures of divine love and go on with an unbelieving world down to an eternity of woe?

What can it be for those who have heard this story of love, with all its holy charm, to go down in the company of scoffers, blasphemers and all the wicked dead, to the lake which burneth with fire for eternity? Think of it, my reader, and may God give you to make Christ your happy choice for heaven and for glory NOW.

But there is still a higher motive for laying hold of God's glorious Gospel. It is quite true that it saves us from hell and fits us for heaven, but it does far more than this. The Gospel is not a mere passport to heaven when we die. It is not merely a contract with God that obligates Him to take us to heaven when we die if we accept certain terms of His now. It is perfectly certain that every believer goes to be with the Lord when he leaves this scene, but the Gospel of God fills and thrills our souls *now*. It brings into the soul the knowledge of God, Christ, heaven, and all that is holy and divine, in such a way that a person hates that which he loved and loves what he hated. Think, then, my reader, think of the God Who loves you, whose holiness calls for repentance and confession of sin. "*O turn ye. O turn ye, for why*

will ye die." " *The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*" Think of the pathos of it, the stupidity of it, yea, the imbecile folly of refusing God, and going down to an eternity of woe, while Heaven, glory and the Saviour's love may be yours *now and for evermore*. God grant that you may bow down before God with a subdued sense of your sins and sinfulness, and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved.