

Not Ashamed of the Gospel

by Aaron Hills

Paul's sermon emphasizes the importance of being unashamed of the Gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation.

Scripture: Romans 1:16, Romans 6:23, Romans 10:11, 1 Corinthians 1:18, 1 Corinthians 1:23, Galatians 1:8, Ephesians 1:7, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, 2 Timothy 1:12, 2 Timothy 2:15

Topics: "Gospel Power", "Sanctification"

Description

Aaron Hills preaches about the unashamed power of the Gospel of Christ, emphasizing the moral sublimity of Paul's assertion amidst the corrupt and decadent Roman world. He highlights the essential elements of the Gospel as revealed by Paul, including the Divine, Atoning, and Crucified Christ, salvation conditioned on faith, and the doctrine of Sanctification. Hills addresses the reasons why some may be ashamed of the Gospel, such as rejecting fundamental doctrines, ignoring Gospel conditions, and seeking to dilute its power with human additions. He stresses the importance of not being ashamed of the Gospel, as it brings assurance of God, reveals the worth and immortality of the human soul, and has the power to reform societies and elevate individuals.

Transcript

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Rom. 1:16: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel; for it is the power of God unto salvation."

In these days of Gospel triumphs, the boldness and full significance of this assertion can scarcely be appreciated. Only as we divest ourselves of nearly everything that has made us what we are, our surroundings, our age, our civilization, the marvelous history of the Christian centuries, and, by an effort of the mind, put ourselves back in Paul's age and in the place of one to whom he wrote, can we take in the moral sublimity of this utterance.

It was the age of a gilded, glorious heathenism, waning in its power and corrupt in its influence. Paul was writing to the Romans, the inhabitants of the capital city of the world -- Rome, the seat of universal empire, the residence of statesmen, poets, philosophers, artists, historians, commanders; the seat of science and literature. It was the abode of men whose thought was philosophy and learning, whose speech was eloquence and song -- men, the splendor of whose genius shed new luster on the city and nation and race, and filled the world with fame.

It was an age and place of enormous wealth existing side by side with the most abject and distressing poverty. Around carved marble palaces, resplendent with purple and silver and gold and gems, wandered hundreds of wretched slaves and troops of naked mendicants who made a trade of their poverty, and lived in discontented idleness and disgusting dependence on the grudging liberality of their patrons.

It was also an age at once of atheism and superstition. The services of religion were performed with most imposing ritualistic splendor; but all heart faith in religion was dead and gone. Gifted poets preferred the favor of rich but contemptible patrons to the smile even of Jupiter, and philosophers openly sneered at the puerile legends of the old mythologies. "The common worship was regarded," says Gibbon, "by the people as equally true, by the philosophers as equally false, and by the magistrates as equally useful." Seneca wrote: "We shall so adore all that ignoble crowd of gods which long superstition has heaped together, as to remember that their worship has more to do with custom than with reality." In short, nearly everything in the realm of religion was a matter of pomp and show, false, hollow and heartless.

It was also an age of intense pleasure-seeking, of boundless luxury, of horrible cruelty, and of sadness and gloom. The rabble that thronged the crowded streets wanted nothing but bread and the sports of the circus and the amphitheatre. But the Roman lords and their women vied with each other in the race of splendor, and plunged headlong into conscienceless extravagance. Ancient Roman simplicity and dignity and self-respect and lofty honor were no more. Fortunes were staked on the throw of a dice. A banquet would cost the price of a vast estate. Fish were brought from far-off shores; birds from Parthia and Ethiopia; single dishes were made of the brains of peacocks and the tongues of nightingales. "Countries were pillaged," says Farrar, and nations were crushed that an Apicius might dissolve pearls in the wine he drank, or that Lollia Paulina might gleam in a second-best dress of emeralds and pearls which had cost forty million sesterces.

And side by side with this zest for pleasure was a heartless cruelty, sickening to contemplate. Whole menageries of beasts and regiments of men fought together in the arena to the delight of the populace. Capital punishments were by public crucifixion. Doomed martyrs were covered with pitch and set fire to, that their shirt of flame might light the public gardens. Masters and mistresses could inflict a death punishment upon their slaves with no one to call them to account; and a wanton and senseless barbarity often converted a household into a pandemonium, resounding with the blows of the scourging, the shrieks of the tortured, and the groans of the dying.

For an unavoidable mistake or mishap, or a venial fault a cough, a sneeze, or the breaking of a dish, a Roman might fall into a frenzy of rage, and order his slave to be thrown to the beasts. Even a matron, for the misplacing of a jewel, or a displeasing arrangement of a tress of hair, might fly into a fury of anger and order her slave to be lashed or crucified. In fashionable society nothing was calm and natural. It was either a deluge of wasting dissipations and turbid pleasure, or a seething cauldron of vices, or a fierce conflagration of malignant passions!

And over the abnormal social life of heartless self-seeking, there hung clouds of gloom and the darkness of despair. Life was so intense that it was unendurable; yet men dreaded death, for their philosophies and religions utterly failed to light the mystery that enveloped the grave. And scarcely ever did a great Roman live out the measure of his days and die in peace. It was either assassination or suicide: If others spared him he fled for refuge from his own crimes or sorrows to a self-inflicted death, with a mock courage which was ill-disguised despair.

Of this age Juvenal exclaimed in a burst of sadness: "Posterity will add nothing to our immorality; our descendants can but do and desire the same crimes as ourselves." And Seneca wrote: "All things are full of iniquity and vice; more crime is committed than can be remedied by restraint. We struggle in a huge contest of criminality; daily the passion for sin is greater, the shame in committing it is less. Wickedness is no longer committed in secret: it flaunts before our eyes, and has been sent forth so openly into public sight, and has prevailed so completely in the breast of all, that innocence is not rare, but non-existent!"

Friends, it was to such a Roman world as this that Paul wrote: "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ." And at the time of writing, remember, Paul was not a verdant youth of visionary expectations, of ardent impulses, of feeble intellect, of slender understanding, and little knowledge of the world. Twenty-five years before he had an enviable reputation among the great lawyers of his nation; and for twenty-two years he had been one of the pillars of the Christian Church, the great apostle to the Gentiles, without a peer in ability and usefulness, blessed beyond all others with visions and revelations of God. It was such a man, sobered by experience, in the zenith of his powers, who calmly proposed to enter Rome the Babylon of iniquity, the huge bayou of reeking corruption, the awful aggregation of all earth's wickedness, and conquer it and purify it with an application of the simple Gospel of Christ. Now let us consider

I. What Paul meant by "the Gospel of Christ."

It will not do for us to theorize here at the outset of this discussion. Paul shall be his own interpreter. He meant a Divine Christ; for to these same Romans he spake of "Christ who is over all God blessed forever." Again he meant an Atoning Christ; for, explaining his preaching to the Corinthians, he wrote: "I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, how that Christ died for our sins."

Again it was the Gospel of a Crucified Christ; for he wrote: "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified." Furthermore, it was a Gospel of salvation that was conditioned on the acceptance and belief of the soul; for he says: "The gospel of Christ was the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth," and "we are saved by faith." Moreover, he preached a gospel of salvation from eternal death; for he wrote: "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction."

Still further; his Gospel did not hint at a second probation for the heathen, for he wrote to these same Romans that the heathen are "without excuse," for "God manifested" his truth even "unto them," and they deliberately "refused to have God in their knowledge;" therefore, "As many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law ... in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men according to my gospel by Jesus Christ." And what is more, he taught the doctrine of Sanctification as a second work of grace, wrought in the heart in this life by the Spirit of God. He wrote to these same Romans about "being sanctified by the Holy Ghost," and prayed for the members of the Church in Thessalonica: "Now the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus." In his epistles to the churches, and his sermons, he has seventy-five verses that teach this second blessing.

To be sure, Paul had not studied Theology at Andover, Mass., and might not have received the latest revelations on these subjects. But he took his theological course during his three years tarrying in Arabia, communing with Jesus and the Holy Ghost; and I am simply pointing out the truths which he calls "my gospel," of which he declares, "I am not ashamed."

And once more, he held up everywhere what some of our modern finical, fastidious, super-refined preachers and teachers are pleased to call "the gross and gory theory of the atonement." Fifteen times in his epistles he lays supreme stress upon "the blood of Christ." "We have peace through the blood of his cross." "We are made nigh by the blood of Jesus." Our "consciences are purged by the blood of Christ." The "Church is purchased with his blood." "God hath set forth Jesus Christ to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." "We have redemption through his blood," and are "now justified by his blood."

This, my brethren, was the system of truth with which Paul proposed to assault the wickedness of the heathen world. He had no confidence in glowing oratory, or brilliant rhetoric, or subtle philosophy, or uncorrupted humanitarian schemes. If he had used the word "Gospel," in the sense in which some use it today, meaning by it gushing philanthropy and goody goody sentimentalism; if he had intended by it merely fine-spun theories about the unity of God, and an overruling providence, and immutable distinctions between right and wrong, and the golden rule of equity, and the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, he would never have dreamed of saying: "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."

It was not at any of these things that the brilliant literati and cultured heathen philosophers scoffed and derided. O, no: he went to them with the story of a Divine Savior, walking the earth in the form of a man, and dying on the cross between two thieves, a sacrifice for the sins of the world, only by whose atoning blood could the most cultured heathen be saved from everlasting death. It was this gospel, to the Jew a stumbling block, to the Greeks foolishness, to the haughty Romans an offense, and revolting to human nature everywhere and always, of which Paul was not ashamed.

With it, as a Christian Hercules, he dared to attempt to cleanse the Augean stables of Rome, to smite the heathen gods, and make the oracles dumb. By its divine power he expected to assault the principalities and powers of the wickedness of this world, and overturn all the powers of darkness, and bring in the universal kingdom of Christ, wherein shall dwell righteousness. And when the unbelieving world lifted its jeers and shouts of derision at this sublime scheme of Paul, in the strength of his heaven born faith he answered back: "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."

II. I call your attention to the fact that unlike Paul, some are ashamed of it.

1. For instance, there are those who reject the fundamental doctrine of the cross. Some of these deny the depravity and utter sinfulness of man that made the cross an awful necessity, and belittle the crucifixion into a mere incident or accident in the earthly life of Jesus, instead of being an event necessary and chosen and predetermined from before the foundation of the world. There are those who deny the Divinity of Jesus, and thus make His death of no more worth or potency than the death of Socrates; who deny that His death was vicarious -- He dying in our stead, and that it was an expiation, removing our guilt (exposure to punishment), and that it was propitiatory, satisfying the awful holiness of God and the public justice of the moral universe; who deny that it was even necessary to preserve the honor and integrity of God's law and government.

Now, men who reject these truths simply cut the very heart out of the Gospel and rob it of its convicting and converting power. It will not do to call these mere theories of men, and so waive them aside as unessential and immaterial. They are the very essence of the truth as it is in Jesus, the very warp and woof of the Gospel. Dr. Henry Smith is clearly right when he says: "The very nature of the sufferings and death of Christ is that they are an expiation for sin. This is the very idea of a sacrifice. It is its exhaustive definition: it is the thing itself, and not a deduction or inference from it. This is the fact, and not a theory

about it," Now when men deliberately set at naught these truths that God has stated over and over again, they are making the cross of Christ of none effect; they are sublimating it into thin air, as powerless as a weak speculation or an idle tale. They are practically putting themselves among the number of those who are ashamed of the Gospel of Christ

2. Again, there are those who ignore the conditions of salvation revealed in the Gospel. Jesus saw men flocking around Him, and said unto them: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me."

Paul declared that his ministry in Ephesus had consisted in teaching publicly and from house to house, "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." To these same Ephesians he wrote that "Christ loved the church, and gave himself up for it that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it ... that he might present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." These hard, sharp, inexorable conditions of eternal life, and descriptions of it, are not agreeable, and never can be pleasing to the carnal heart.

Now when religious teachers or preachers dislike these divinely revealed conditions of life, and hunt around for other and easier terms of salvation that prick the conscience less, and do not humble the proud will, nor break the hard heart, nor lessen the attachment to sin, they are simply preaching another gospel which is not a gospel. Sin is inconceivably wicked, a causeless rebellion, infinitely insulting and offensive to God, and the atoning Savior is the only ground of hope, the only source of life. "The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." The "old man" is the essence of the devil, the spirit of Hell, and the only remedy for it is the sin-killing, heart-cleansing baptism with the Holy Spirit. To adopt any slight, minimizing, apologetic conceptions of sin as a triviality, an infirmity, a necessity, or a negative side of good, "good in the making," and to applaud morality and culture and self-development as any sort of remedy for it, is to belie the whole Gospel. The preacher in the pulpit who does it, or the man in the pew who wants him to do it, is of the number of those who are ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.

3. There are all those who distrust the Gospel as an all-sufficient power to elevate men, and seek to bolster it up by props and helps and additions, hoping thus to add to its efficacy. At the time Paul wrote his epistle to the Romans, heathenism had a most elaborate ritual and highly attractive religious services. All that art could do had been done to redeem paganism from vulgarity, and cover up its deformities, and make it beautiful to the eye, and pleasing to men. There were no less than fifty-one legal religious festivals observed annually at Rome with all conceivable pomp and splendor. There were illustrations, processions, festivals and formal prayers for all occasions of life. As James Freeman Clark has observed, "As the old faith died more ceremonies were added; for as life goes out, forms come in. As the winter of unbelief lowers the stream of piety, the ice of ritualism accumulates along its banks." Religion became more and more a charm, on the exact performance of which the favor of the gods depended; so that ceremonies were sometimes performed thirty times before the essential accuracy was attained.

Now, Christianity had absolutely nothing of form and ceremony with which to displace all this gorgeous ritualism of the heathen world. The worship of the early Christians was simplicity itself. They never thought of a ritualistic service until after the decadence of their piety. The entire religious service of Paul and the disciples of his time consisted of the two sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper, singing and prayer, the expounding of Scripture, and the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ.

It was by this simple instrumentality that Paul proposed to conquer the heathen world, and he declared that he was not ashamed of his means. When I think of the multiplied sacraments, and the attitudinizing of the gorgeously robed priests of the Roman Catholic Church, their tinkling bells and smoking censers and sprinkling of holy water, and crucifixes and candles and positions and man-millinery, and when I see nearly all of this repeated in the Episcopal service, I am filled with sorrow, and feel in my inmost soul that the evidence is painfully abundant that many church dignitaries have gone a long step backward, and have lost confidence in the conquering power of the simple Gospel of Christ.

And when I see ministers and churches resorting to all manner of devices and expedients, and questionable, catch-penny enterprises for the sake of securing patronage and support, I cannot help feeling that it evinces a lack of confidence in the majesty of the Gospel as abundantly able to subdue the world.

4. There are those who rail at all creeds as manmade, unneeded, and out of place in the economy of the church of our day. Many are ready to tell you that they are begotten of bigotry and ignorance, and born in darkness, an inheritance of past years wholly out of place in our glorious era. "Why not," they say, "take the Bible as our declaration of faith and be content?" There is something seemingly so meek and pious and Scriptural, and apparently so clever, in all this clamor, that multitudes are captured by it. I confess I know of no talk more puerile. Accept the Bible as our system of faith! Indeed! But whose interpretation of it? Who does not know that there is an allegorical interpretation of the Bible, and a mystical, and a rationalistic, and a spiritualistic, and a Catholic, and a Unitarian, and a Universalian, as well as an orthodox interpretation, and that some of these are as widely separated as Heaven and earth?

What is a creed, anyway, but a fair and ample statement of the truths of the Gospel as understood by those who adopt it? Any church or body of churches owes it to its membership, owes it to the public, owes it to the age in which it lives, and owes it to God, to distinctly avow its belief. To do otherwise is to shirk duty and to deal dishonestly with men.

Those who sneer at creeds and belittle formulas of faith are taking a position anti-biblical, and anticoinon-sense. The Christian religion deals with the gravest problems of human existence, and human destiny. It is based on the positive revelation of God's will to men. The Bible is the most positive of all books. It is utterly against a "go-as-you-please," believe-what-you-will," "happy-go-lucky," superficial, trifling life. Christ was the most positive of all teachers. His greatest apostle, Paul, in the fervor of his devotion to the truth, exclaims: "Though an angel from heaven should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema."

How utterly unlike them are these theological bantlings who sail on a wild sea of speculation without anchor, chart, or compass -- who advocate a "go-as-you-please," believe-what-you-will" system of doctrine; who are theologically all things to all men, if by any means they can drum up a following! Such teachers have no permanent and lasting influence for good; for abiding influence is born of conviction. Such churches have no element to bind their membership together in lasting union. They are only a social conglomeration of disconnected individuals, called together by an accident, to be scattered when the accident is gone.

An ample creed, honestly adopted, is a mighty power. It furnishes the basis of a spiritual education of the youth. It builds the individual believer on the everlasting rock. It binds the churches together into a common body of Christ, all alike feeding upon His truth, and animated by His Spirit, and united in the

common work of bringing the world to Christ. To sneer at creeds is only a cowardly way of sneering at the everlasting truths which they represent; and to be ashamed of them is to be ashamed of the Gospel of the Son of God.

5. Those also who favor lowering the standard of admission to the church, who, in the name of the Master, cater to the world and bid for its support, and seek its applause, are simply exhibiting a secret dislike for the Gospel conditions of salvation and the Gospel type of piety. In short, the yoke of the Master has grown irksome to them; His life is no longer their chosen model, and they are ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.

III. Let us consider why Paul was not, and why we should not be, ashamed of the Gospel. "It was," said he, "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Perhaps I can best illustrate how the Gospel was a power, and what kind of a power it was, by a quotation or two. In one of his poems Lucretius declared that faith in the gods had been the curse of the race, and that immortality was a silly delusion. The elder Pliny wrote: "All religion is the offspring of necessity, weakness and fear. What God is, if in truth he be anything distinct from the world, it is beyond the compass of man's understanding to know. But it is a foolish delusion which has sprung from human weakness and human pride, to imagine that such an infinite being would concern himself with the affairs of men. The vanity of man and his insatiable longing after existence have led him also to dream of a life after death. A being full of contradictions, he is the most wretched of creatures. Man is full of desires and wants that reach to infinity, and can never be satisfied. His nature is a lie, uniting the greatest poverty with the greatest pride. Among these so great evils, the best thing God has bestowed on man is the power to take his own life!"

These statements flash a calcium light upon the awful spiritual condition of the Roman world. The masses were sunk in a rayless abyss of moral degradation; and even the cultured, the refined, the truly noble had lost all faith in God, all sense of the dignity of man, and all prospects for the future. They were actually living "without hope and without God in the world."

Now, the first element of power in the Gospel was, that it brought to men an assurance of a God, and the true conception. He was not one of the ignoble rabble of gods that filled Rome; He was not even another heartless Jove whose chief mission was to hurl thunderbolts, and who could look on unmoved while men were swept to death like so many flies. This God was in infinite Father, infinitely wise and good, with a heart of infinite compassion, and mercy, and justice and love. And not only so; He was an atoning God, a self-sacrificing God, carrying the sorrows of the world on His heart, and uniting Himself to man by an incarnation that He might bear our sins, and die in our stead, and open a fountain of mercy for the race, Think you there was no power in such a revelation as that? A morning sun never smote a fog-bank with more power than this truth smote the deism that floated over the Roman world like a malaria of death.

A second element of power in the Gospel was that it taught the grandeur and infinite worth of the human soul. What must be the infinite dignity of a nature for which the infinite God puts forth all the resources of His mighty love, for which the Son of God could die upon the cross? If such a sacrifice were meet and proper, then an inconceivable significance attaches to man. When the Gospel came the heathen world had been so drenched by human gore shed in wars, in the cruel sports of the arena, by assassination, and infanticide and suicide, that all sense of the worth of man as man was becoming extinguished from the human breast. When a Roman babe was born, and the nurse announced it to the father, if he deigned to give it a kindly look, it was understood that the child was welcomed and it was allowed to live. But if he turned away with a look of displeasure, the babe was quietly smothered to death as an unwelcome comer to the world.

Not until the incarnate God crossed the threshold of this earth in the stable at Bethlehem, did the worth of a babe dawn upon the mind of man. Not until the price of man's redemption was paid on Calvary did he have the faintest conception of the value of the soul.

And in Christ men not only found their worth but also their immortality. If their significance was to be estimated by the sorrow of an infinite God, then surely this earthly horizon did not bound their existence. The stage of time on which man was playing his little part had for its background Eternity. Immortality was not a vain conceit and a tantalizing dream, but a blessed reality. In Jesus he saw the surety of life beyond death.

Now, think you, it was a small thing to go to the despairing philosopher with such a Gospel as that? Was it nothing to tell the homesick captive of war that he had a home beyond the skies? Nothing to tell the meanest, downtrodden, half-starved slave in Rome that he was a redeemed child of God! Nothing to tell a wretched gladiator who must die a death of violence tomorrow in the amphitheatre that he was or might be by faith a Son of God and an heir of immortality! There are no words to describe the change wrought in their conception of themselves by this Gospel. It brought inspiration, incentive, joy, courage, betterment, hope. It was like a gale of wind to becalmed mariners; like a morning of peace after a night of anguish on a stormy deep, like awaking in safety after a sleep of horrid nightmare and frightful dreams.

Nor was this all. This Gospel had in it the power to reform Roman society. If God was the common Father of all, and Christ died for all, then all are brothers of equal privilege and common destiny. Send such a truth as that to Rome in the glowing heart of Paul, and see how it would humble the haughty oppressor and bring the proud master low; while it would give dignity and importance to the meanest slave, and lift the downtrodden and lowly incalculably in the scale of being.

This Gospel helped every man to find himself. Each could see his sin as blacker, and feel his burden of guilt as heavier than ever before. But over against his ill-desert was set an offer of pardon and a door of hope. Each could, for the first time, find in Christ, at once an interpreter and an ideal, a condemnation and an inspiration.

Just as the young Roman painter did not know his own genius until he gazed, entranced, upon the great masterpiece which revealed all the power of the pencil, when he cried out in a glow of emotion, "I, too, am a painter," so a human soul may touch all other heroes, sound the depths of philosophies, try all other religions; but until it stands face to face with the Lord of the race, the Savior of the lost, it knows not, it cannot know, it feels not, it cannot feel, either its own unworthiness, its own boundless capacities, or its own supreme destiny. The hour when Christ is revealed to the mind and heart, is the hour when the soul realizes what it is, and what it may become. Here are felt the woes of sin; here are found the highest motives; here are received the holiest inspirations.

Paul realized all this. He had seen the gospel tried. He knew that it had a Divine power, universal in its application and permanent in its results. And, therefore, he exclaimed with a courage born of certain knowledge, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

What lessons shall we draw from this theme appropriate to the hour? We know that Paul made no mistake. His Gospel did go to Rome and it did win. It captured the city and the empire; regenerated society from top to bottom. It ended polygamy and slavery. It tore down the amphitheatres and stopped the debasing gladiatorial shows. It saved for coming generations the civilization of the world. His Gospel was

vital with Divine power.

The doctrines of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, of actual sin and inherited depravity, of an ample atonement made for it by a Divine Savior, who justifies those who repent and believe, and the Holy Spirit who sanctifies those who receive the baptism with the Holy Ghost, and eternal retribution for those who will not be saved -- these are truths that never can be eliminated and have any power left. They are as lasting as the love of God, as enduring as the needs of the soul. To try other means than these is to go back to instrumentalities that had utterly failed two thousand years ago. To attempt to lift the world by any other method is as futile as it would be to try to pry up Pike's Peak with a rye straw.

And this Gospel is not only efficient; it is sufficient even today. You may point me to the injustices of our times, to the labor-troubles, to communism, to the corruptions of our cities, the wickedness of Philadelphia, and Chicago, and New York; you may even cite me to the Pall Mall Gazette in modern London, and question the adequacy of the Gospel. But remember that even London, with all her reeking leprousy of guilt, is white compared with the moral blackness of that Rome to which Paul preached his Gospel.

Preach the full Gospel of justification for sinners, and sanctification and a life of holiness for believers. It would cure the selfishness and avarice and lust from which spring all our social troubles. Nothing more is needed than the real religion of Jesus, with men to preach it faithfully with the fervor of the great apostle, and such persons to help them as those men and women who labored with him in the Gospel. It can cleanse our cities, settle our labor difficulties, evangelize the nations, and conquer the world for Christ.

Lastly, we need not be ashamed of this religion of Jesus as a source of personal hope. The wonderful life Paul lived, he lived by faith in the Son of God. The love of Christ constrained him. It was his meat and drink to do the will of Jesus. For him to live was Christ. He knew no will, formed no plan, cherished no desire apart from his Lord. To him, Christ was the object of all longing, the reward of all toiling, the end of all hope. And when his hour came, he was ready to be offered up, knowing that to depart was to be forever with his Lord.

Only yesterday I stood by a poor widow, dying in poverty. When her eyes were closed to all earthly scenes and she no longer saw her human attendants, she stretched up her thin arms and said: "I am waiting, waiting, waiting for Jesus." Let us love this old Gospel, enshrine it more completely in our hearts, walk by it in life, pillow our heads upon it in death. We shall then sweep through the gates exclaiming: "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation!"

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