

Are We Preaching the Gospel?

by K.C. Moser

The gospel is the power of God unto salvation, and it must be preached in order to give knowledge of salvation to those who hear.

Scripture: Genesis 9:6, Proverbs 1:11, Matthew 5:21, Romans 3:15, Galatians 5:21

Topics: "Human Depravity", "Violence And Sin"

Description

The preacher delves into the dual meanings of 'oxus' in the Bible, highlighting its representation of rapid motion and sharpness, particularly in the book of Revelation. This sharpness symbolizes the eagerness and readiness of people to commit violence and shed blood, showcasing the inherent malice and hatred within humanity. The sermon emphasizes the swift nature of men to engage in acts of murder, drawing attention to the prevalence of violence throughout history and the deep-rooted depravity in human hearts.

Transcript

preface

This short message is sent forth as the expression of the author's love for the gospel, of his most cherished wish that the gospel be preserved unmixed with any foreign element that might render it void, and of his wish to see the message of salvation given the emphasis which it deserves. He has heard and read, with deep regret, so-called gospel sermons in which no more than a hint of the gospel was to be found! He has heard definitions of the gospel given in which no mention of the death of Christ for man's sins was made. In too many cases Christ crucified is the "forgotten Man."

This neglect of the gospel must not go unnoticed. Nothing is of so great importance as the gospel. And in some cases nothing has been the gospel. And in some cases nothing has been so much ignored. All so-called gospel sermons that ignore the atonement of Christ for sin is without sense and powerless to save.

For the gospel's sake, then, let every messenger of the Word carefully check his sermons to see whether they justify the title "gospel sermons." Has Christ really been "openly set forth crucified"? Has the cross been preached or merely hinted at? See I Cor. 2:2.

With the very kindest regard for every sincere teacher and preacher of God's Word, and with a profound desire to be helpful, this plea for the gospel of Christ is sent forth by

THE AUTHOR.

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WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

Gospel means literally good tidings. In the New Testament, it usually means the good tidings of salvation through Christ. Paul called God's promise to bless the world through Abraham's seed the gospel (Gal. 3:8). This promise included Christ. In Matt. 4:23, we read of the "gospel of the kingdom," and in Mark 1:14, "the gospel of God." Gospel in these and other similar passages means the good tidings concerning the coming kingdom as the contexts will show.

But what is the gospel of Mark 16:15 and Rom. 1:16, which is to be preached to the whole world, and which is God's power unto salvation? This is a most significant question. Every one who preaches should be certain he knows the answer. Man's salvation depends upon it! Fortunately, we have an INSPIRED answer. Paul says the gospel is "that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that He was buried; and that He hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures: (I Cor. 15:3, 4). In I Cor. 1:17, the same apostle says he was sent to "preach the gospel." But he was to preach "not in wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made void." Hence, the gospel concerns the cross of Christ. In verse 18, the gospel is called "the word of the cross." And in verse 23, Paul further says, "We preach Christ crucified." In the next chapter, verse 2, he writes that he is determined to know nothing "save Jesus Christ and him crucified." / page 3

The gospel, then, is Jesus Christ crucified FOR OUR SINS. This is the gospel of Mark 16:15 and Rom. 1:16.

Note these facts. Man sinned, bringing guilt and condemnation. As long as he is guilty, he is condemned. And nothing man could do could remove the guilt. Hence, left alone, man is eternally lost! But SIN made man guilty. Then, for man to be saved, he must be saved from SIN. Since he could not save himself, he must have a saviour. A saviour must be able to save man from sin, its guilt, and its condemnation. Jesus is such a Saviour. In Him, divinity and humanity meet. His life was sinless. Being divine, He was able to save man from his sins. In order to accomplish this work of salvation, Christ must do two things; namely, bear man's sins and die for them. Christ had no personal sins, but He could and did bear the sins of man.

As Saviour, then, Christ is first man's sin-bearer. Of Him, Isaiah said, "Jehovah hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:6). And again (verse 11), "And He shall bear their iniquities." After the fulfillment of these prophecies, Peter wrote of Christ, "Who His own self bare our sins in His body upon the tree" (I Pet. 2:24). Paul also wrote, "Him who knew no sin He made to be sin on our behalf." Christ was treated as a sinner because He assumed the sins of man. / page 4

In the second place, as Saviour, Christ must become man's SIN-OFFERING. This follows naturally His assumption of man's sins. Isaiah again says, "But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities" (Isa. 53:5). And again (verse 10), "Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin." The Saviour Himself said that He poured out His blood "for many unto the remission of sins" (Matt. 26:28). Redemption is through Christ's blood (Eph. 1:7; I Pet. 1:18, 19). Spiritual cleansing is by His blood (I John

1:7, Rev. 1:5).

To repeat, the gospel is Christ crucified for man's sins. This is the greatest message earth or heaven has ever heard. It is the message of salvation for lost man! Note: The gospel is not that Christ died, but that He died "for our sins." The gospel is most definite. It must contain so much and no more. It relates to one person only, Jesus Christ. The gospel does not consist in abstract FACTS. It concerns a PERSON. Man is not saved by FACTS, but by a PERSON, JESUS CHRIST. And the gospel is not mere facts regarding the right person. Jesus dwelt in Nazareth, but this fact regarding Christ is not the gospel. Jesus is author of the Sermon on the Mount, but this discourse is not the gospel. /page 5

For the sake of emphasizing this point, let me say that one can preach the conditions of salvation and not preach the gospel in the strictest sense. In fact, the conditions of salvation are not what the Scriptures call the gospel. We have already found the inspired definition of the gospel. The gospel relates to what Christ did for man, not to what man is called upon to do in obedience to Christ. "Preach the gospel----. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Faith and baptism are man's response to the gospel, not the gospel. The gospel is to be BELIEVED. If faith, for example, is the gospel, then faith is to be believed! This does not make sense. Let us illustrate: "Go prepare a meal; he that eateth it shall live." The meal is one thing and eating another. Eating is the means of appropriating or responding to the food. Just so faith and baptism in Mark 16:16 are the means of appropriating the gospel or of responding to the gospel. Certainly the conditions of salvation are to be preached along with the gospel, but not APART from the gospel. First preach the gospel, then name the conditions of salvation. Apart from the gospel, there are no conditions of salvation, just as apart from food there can be no eating. And to preach the conditions of salvation without first having preached the gospel is like asking one to eat without supplying food to eat. The conditions of salvation apart from the gospel become acts of merit. They become works and not faith in Christ. /page 6 They make the cross void. They become a mere "plan" to which man must subscribe. And the Bible knows nothing about a "plan" that saves. Man's Saviour is not a "plan" but the Man, Christ Jesus. Inspired preachers preached "Jesus" not a "plan." They first preached Jesus then the conditions of salvation. Let us not put the cart before the horse, or worse, leave the horse off entirely!

To conclude this point, one who preaches Jesus crucified for man's sin preaches the gospel and one who does not preach this does not preach the gospel.

ARE WE PREACHING THE GOSPEL?

There is no substitute for a GOSPEL SERMON just as certain as there is no substitute for the gospel. If the gospel is not preached or made known it is helpless to save. Hence, no preaching, however excellent or timely, can compensate for a failure to preach the gospel. Preaching upon present-day topics, a masterly handling of other timely themes, or the exposing of religious error, might, regardless of the need, cause us to lose sight of the gospel and forget that it is not being preached. But whatever the cause of causes of a failure to preach the gospel, the mistake is fatal. Through excitement or entertainment one might forget or neglect to eat. But the result is the same as if he deliberately refused to eat. One must eat or die. And one must have the gospel or remain lost. /page 7 It is possible to make proselytes and sectarians without the gospel, but Christians are not made without it.

The Great Commission says, "Go preach the GOSPEL." It does not say "Go lecture on some popular theme," or "Go expose religious error." I do not mean to say that it is wrong to lecture or expose religious error, but I do say that these things must not cause us to neglect to preach the gospel. Christians are not

made by lecturing on popular themes or by exposing religious error. Exposing error may reveal to some that they are not Christians, but the gospel must afterward be preached to them or they cannot become Christians. Are we preaching the GOSPEL?

In order to check up on this point, I have gone to considerable pains to read written sermons, to study sermon outlines, and to listen to sermons preached. But this has been done only after I had observed that the gospel was being neglected in many sermons which were supposed to be gospel sermons. Some years ago, I heard every sermon delivered in a three-Sunday meeting. I, as well as others, noticed that the gospel was not being preached. The meeting continued from night to night and from day to day and still the gospel was neglected. True, in his invitations the preacher might have made some statement about the death of Christ, but not one time in all that meeting was any emphasis put on the gospel. It simply was not "preached." / page 8 More recently, I have had a similar experience. It is tragic for one to preach for two weeks and never do more than to make a brief reference to the gospel of Christ. We are told to "preach" the gospel. That is, make the gospel our theme and talk about it. If one proposes to preach on the subject of repentance and makes only a passing reference to it, we say he has failed. Making a brief reference to the gospel is not PREACHING the gospel. Taking for granted that every one knows the gospel is not fulfilling the commission that says PREACH it. When one can preach through a meeting and have no use for the words grace, blood, and cross, except merely to mention them a time or two, there is something fundamentally wrong. A proper estimation of the gospel is lacking. In all probability a misunderstanding of Christianity is responsible. To say that such is never done is to have failed to make a close observation. I KNOW it has been done!

I have in my possession a book containing over fifty sermons. In not one of these sermons does the gospel receive more than a passing notice. Never is the gospel stressed; never is the subject of Jesus Christ really discussed. It would even appear to some that the author of these sermons had intentionally neglected the gospel. The subject of one sermon is John 3:16. Naturally one would expect the gospel to be preached with such a subject. But alas, it was not preached! / page 9 According to the sermon, the death of Christ was merely for the purpose of displaying God's love for man and giving him a "law" to obey that would bring life. Christ is said to save by furnishing man an EXAMPLE. He simply "showed" man how to save himself! In this sermon the word "example" is used seven times, the words grace, cross or blood, not one time! So far as the comments are concerned it is a graceless, crossless, and bloodless sermon. That Christ "bare our sins in His body on the tree," that He is man's "offering for sin" received not even a hint! The emphasis was turned from Christ to man as though obedience apart from the gospel can save.

In another sermon found in this book Christ is represented as a law-giver, ruler, captain, teacher, leader, shepherd, chief, head. But not one time was He represented as a priest offering His blood for man's sins! If Christ is not a priest He is not man's Saviour. Yet this was the exact point wholly overlooked. And so through the book one looks in vain for any emphasis on the gospel of Christ. The emphasis is put on the conditions of salvation as though they sustain no vital relation to the gospel. In all but seven of the more than fifty sermons, regardless of the subject, baptism was at least mentioned and in most cases received emphasis. To this I have no objection. But it is remarkably strange that baptism would receive so much more consideration than the death of Christ. / page 10 And yet baptism is impossible apart from Christ crucified.

I have another book of sermons, a more excellent book in many respects than the one just referred to. Many fine lessons, given in a masterful manner, are found in the book. And the criticism I have to offer is not so much concerning what the book contains as what it does NOT contain. The volume is set forth as a

book of "gospel sermon." But, unless Jesus Christ crucified for man's sins is NOT the gospel, one looks in vain for a strictly gospel sermon. While reading this volume, I am reminded of a criticism of Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick's book, "The Modern Use of The Bible." Mr. Fosdick, as is generally known, is a leading Modernist preacher. He does not believe in the divinity of Christ or that Christ by His blood atoned for man's sins. This popular book has been reviewed by one I. M. Haldeman, D. D., Pastor of the First Baptist Church in New York City. I shall quote a passage from Mr. Haldeman's criticism of Mr. Fosdick:

"Nowhere is there a shadow of a hint that he 'bare our sins in his body on the tree' nor the dynamic declaration that we are 'sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all'; and that 'by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are (thus) sanctified'; no quotation of Paul's immense statement of Christ, the great objective purpose for which he came into the world, that clean, clear-cut statement of Paul in Hebrews 2:9, 'We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death---that by the grace of God he should taste of death for every man'." / page 11

I shall not go so far in my criticism of the book of sermons just referred to and say that no "hint" was made of the gospel. There are several "hints" of the atonement of Christ, but little, if anything, more! Neither am I lining the author of these sermons up with the Modernists. He is not a Modernist. And, furthermore, he believes in the atonement Christ made for the sins of the world. I am saying merely that he fails in his book of sermons to place any emphasis on the cross. In opposing some form of infidelity the author briefly refers to the atonement of Christ, but makes no comment on the subject. In his characteristic way of referring to the church the author connects it with the blood of Christ, but again no comments are made upon the cross. Hebrews 2:9 is once quoted only to show that salvation is universally offered. In the book Rom. 1:16 is quoted one time and then without comment on the passage. And all of Paul's masterful explanation of justification through Christ crucified found in the book of Romans goes unnoticed. One short paragraph is devoted to the subject of grace, not to explain it or to emphasize it, but to show that it does not exclude obedience. The great grace passage of Paul's writings, Eph. 2:8, 9, is not found in the book. / page 12 Such scriptures as Eph. 1:7 are completely wanting, while John 3:16, the "Golden Text" of the Bible, is not once quoted in the entire book! If Mr. Fosdick has REJECTED the gospel, others have NEGLECTED it!

WHY PREACH THE GOSPEL?

The gospel should be preached to give the knowledge of salvation. It is God's power unto salvation. Apart from the gospel, nothing can be done or be believed that will bring salvation. The faith that saves is faith in the gospel, faith in Christ crucified. "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Rom. 10:13, 14). Of course the Lord expected the preacher to bring "glad tidings of good things"! Hearing the GOSPEL precedes saving faith. "So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17). The phrase, "word of Christ," without doubt refers to the gospel. John says, the Son of man must be "LIFTED UP; that whosoever believeth in him may have eternal life." Not simply Christ, but Christ crucified, Christ "lifted up" is the object of faith. Paul teaches that Christ was "set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, in his blood" (Rom. 3:25). / page 13 Christ is a propitiation because and only because He shed His blood for us. Paul connects Christ as a propitiation and faith. Faith, trust, must have the blood of Christ as its object. Christ's blood was shed for our salvation and we must have faith or confidence in it (Rom. 3:25).

I ask, then, how can one believe unto the saving of his soul who hears nothing of the cross, nothing of the blood of Christ? When one hears only the conditions of salvation preached APART from the gospel does he possess faith? When one answers the gospel invitation, he should have his whole attention on the "lifted up" Saviour. Jesus said, "Come unto ME," and "I will draw all men unto Himself when He should be "lifted up." The "lifted up" Christ is the drawing power. And no man is drawn to God in the gospel sense until he has been drawn by the preaching or by the knowledge of the crucified Christ. Belief in mere facts is not gospel faith. Christ crucified must be its object. To convince one of some error concerning baptism, for example, and to teach him the truth about it is not necessarily to convert him to Christ. One may know the truth about baptism but be devoid of faith in "Christ crucified." True, he might believe the fact of the death of Christ for his sins, but this is not real faith. He must actually trust in, yield to Christ for salvation. As long as one stays away from Christ he does not have gospel faith. / page 14 Gospel faith is the actual going to Christ for salvation. And this Christ is the crucified One. This is the reason for preaching the gospel to sinners. Study the scripture: "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me and who gave Himself up for me: (Gal. 2:20). PAUL'S UNION WITH THE LORD IS DESCRIBED IN TERMS OF THE CRUCIFIXION! How significant! And Christ LIVED in Paul because Paul had been CRUCIFIED with Him. The Christ in whom Paul's faith rested was the One who had given Himself up for Paul. Paul's consideration of the Lord from the beginning to the end was in connection with the Lord's crucifixion for him. But can this be said of those "before whose eyes Jesus Christ" has never been "openly set forth crucified"? Paul had preached, not merely hinted at, the gospel to the Galatians. They had heard the gospel preached so plainly that it was as if He had been crucified before their eyes! How different from some modern preaching in which the gospel is used merely to embellish an invitation!

Not only is faith impossible apart from the gospel, so are repentance and baptism. Each must be "in the name of Jesus Christ" (See Luke 24:46, 47). "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name." / page 15 The gospel is the "goodness of God" that leads to repentance. One can repent to the fullest extent only out of a consideration for Christ who was crucified because of his sins. True repentance is GOSPEL repentance. How is it possible to cause one genuinely to repent simply by preaching the conditions of salvation to him? Love for Christ, not a mere sense of obligation, leads one to repentance. Here the reason for so much unfaithfulness can be located. Many have never been impressed that Christ loved and died for them PERSONALLY (See Gal. 2:20). They have only been convinced of some doctrinal error. They think they have repented, but the hour of trial reveals a defect in their repentance. Genuine repentance alone can guarantee reformation of life, and this repentance is produced by the preaching of the GOSPEL.

Likewise, baptism is "in the name of Jesus Christ." That is, with reference to or out of regard for the crucified Saviour. Before Peter demanded baptism he preached Christ crucified. And baptism "in the name of Jesus Christ" signified faith in Christ crucified.

In short, the conditions of salvation must depend for a meaning upon the gospel. Therefore the practice of preaching them apart from the gospel is without justification. The only way to be a GOSPEL preacher is to preach the GOSPEL. / page 16

"THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL"

Mistakes have a way of becoming more serious than one suspects. Religious errors are no exceptions to this rule. A neglect to preach the gospel finally ends in the logical, if not the actual, rejection of the gospel. The apostle Paul was exceedingly careful to guard what he termed "the truth of the gospel." Some "false brethren" were actually violating this principle and were influencing Peter and some other prominent brethren nearly to do the same thing. It is a fundamental doctrine that in Christ there is "neither Jew nor Greek." The cross ended this distinction. This it did because Christ died for every one, both Jew and Gentile. To make a distinction, therefore, between Jew and Greek is to ignore the effect of the cross. But some "false brethren" wishing to bring man back into the bondage of the Law of Moses contended for circumcision as a condition of salvation. This contention really made void the cross of Christ. For, as we have seen, the cross not only ended all distinction between Jews and Gentiles, it relieved every one of the obligation of the Law. By the cross man was made "dead to the Law" (Rom. 7:4, 6). Both Jew and Gentile were considered "under disobedience, that He might have mercy upon all" (Rom. 11:32). But these legalistic teachers desired to bind circumcision upon the people and in such a sense that the obligation to keep the Law of Moses would be renewed. /page 17

This matter was referred to the elders and the apostles at Jerusalem and settled in favor of Christianity and grace as against Judaism and law (Acts 15). This contention was no small matter. It was principle against principle. It was one method of divine administration against another method. It meant law against grace, works against faith, and human righteousness against divine righteousness. The contention of the Judaizers meant a complete repudiation of Christ. For no two things are more unlike than law and grace. Law places the emphasis on MAN, grace places it on CHRIST. Law calls for works of HUMAN MERIT, grace calls for FAITH IN CHRIST, a faith that especially rejects all human merit and looks to Christ alone. The distinguishing characteristics of either law or grace are lacking in the other. They CANNOT mix. Thus man had to be delivered from the law that he might be "joined to another", Christ. The genius of the Law is not the genius of grace. Hence, Paul wrote, "For ye are not under law, but under grace." And to attempt justification by law meant a complete severance from Christ, a falling away from grace (Gal. 5:4).

I have said that Peter and others were tempted to admit the Jewish contention and recognize a distinction between Jews and Gentiles (Read Gal. 2). To have done this would have meant the repudiation of Christianity. Hence Paul "resisted him to the face, because he stood condemned." / page 18 Paul would not submit to the contention of these "false brethren," "no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you." That is, THAT THE GENIUS OF THE GOSPEL MIGHT BE PRESERVED; THAT THE DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF CHRISTIANITY, OF GRACE, MIGHT NOT BE SURRENDERED AND HENCE THE CROSS MADE VOID (Gal. 2:21).

But some one objects, "There is no such danger among us today." Because I sincerely believe this danger is very evident among us is the chief reason for this whole study. Many able brethren share this opinion with me.

Several years of close observation and study have disclosed some significant facts relative to this point. I have observed that those who neglect to give the gospel the proper emphasis are accustomed to speaking of Christianity as LAW and man's response to the gospel as WORKS. The conditions of salvation are thought of as a "plan" or "law" to which man must subscribe. Under Moses the people sought justification by means of law and works. This they were forced to do because they had no sacrifice that could take away sins. And today some speak of Christianity as just another "law" which demands works. Their forms of thought and expression would be entirely appropriate for an administration of pure law. They would need no change if the cross of Christ had never existed. / page 19 I have already referred to

the sermon on John 3:16 in which the atonement of Christ was not once mentioned! Rather we read in it of the "law of salvation," and a "law of life in obedience to which we will be led back to the throne of God." The blood of Christ very naturally received no emphasis because the author of the sermon was not impressed with its importance. His thoughts were those of law under which no place for a meritorious sacrifice can be found. His speech was suitable for law, not grace. He found no need for such words as propitiation, grace, blood, atonement, cross, sacrifice. One's speech will betray him. It betrays his conception of religion.

When the cross is lost sight of one naturally drifts back to the SPIRIT and GENIUS of law. He talks of law and works, not of grace and faith. But the principle of law demanding works of human merit makes void the grace of God. This was the exact point of Paul, in principle, when he wrote, "I do not make void the grace of God: for if righteousness is through the law, then Christ died for naught" (Gal. 2:21). Whether we think of the Law of Moses or some other "law" the principle and result are the same. Law is law as to principle. If Christ brought law (John 1:17), then man is saved upon the principle of works. His death is for naught and grace is made void. "Grace is no more grace." Grace then would be no different from law and faith no different from works. /page 20 But Paul always contrasts law and grace, works and faith. He said, "The law is not of faith" and reminds us that under the law man sought justification on the ground of what HE did (Gal. 3:12).

But when Christ is preached as man's sin-bearer and sin-offering, and when it is understood that man is saved by "grace through faith" the danger of drifting back to the spirit of law does not exist. When one preaches the gospel he will find need of gospel speech. He will need for blood atonement becomes clearer and clearer. Only through the preaching of the GOSPEL can "the truth of the gospel" continue.

THINGS COMPATIBLE AND INCOMPATIBLE

The principle involved by the expression, "the truth of the gospel" relates directly to the consideration of things agreeable and things disagreeable. The attempt to mix law and grace is an effort to join things incompatible. Law and grace cannot "walk together" because they are not "agreed." To mix them would be to render EACH void. Under the law rewards are bestowed upon the principle of DEBT, while under grace the reward is given upon the principle of UNMERITED FAVOR. Now a reward cannot be both MERITED and UNMERITED. It has to be one or the other. There is no word to express the result of a mixture of debt and favor. In the first place, such an idea is repulsive to good sense. A statement is true or untrue. It cannot be both true and untrue. If an untruth contains an element of truth, it is still an untruth. For what is only PARTLY TRUE is untrue. Just so salvation must be wholly by law or wholly by grace. To say that it is by both law and grace does not make sense. For salvation cannot be both MERITED and UNMERITED. / page 21 Law and grace are, therefore, mutually exclusive. "The son of the handmaid (law) shall not inherit with the son of the freewoman (grace). One must be 'cast out'" (Gal. 4:21, 31).

But not only are law and grace incompatible, their respective ACCOMPANIMENTS are likewise incompatible. That is, the METHOD of attaining blessings under one is opposed to the method of attaining blessings under the other. But what are the accompaniments of law and grace?

Law gives what is DESERVED. Hence the principle of attaining a reward under law is works. No other principle can possibly attain it. If one waits to receive the reward upon the principle of favor or grace, he will never receive it. For law bestows nothing on the principle of favor. The accompaniment of law, therefore, is works. Hence we always read of the "works of the law" (Gal. 3:2). / page 22

Grace means UNMERITED favor. What grace bestows, therefore, must be received as a gift. But how does one possess a gift? Simply by RECEIVING it, by ACCEPTING it. What one WORKS for or PAYS for is not a GIFT, but a DEBT. A gift paid for is no longer a gift. Pay renders a gift VOID. An offer to pay for a gift OFFENDS the giver. For the offer to pay would FRUSTRATE the benevolent purpose of the giver. A more INAPPROPRIATE response to a gift than an offer to pay for it is impossible. Hence we always read "by grace through faith." Faith, as a principle, is the only proper response to grace. The very nature of faith is TO RECEIVE. It is the natural opposite of the principle of works. What, therefore, is offered by GRACE must be accepted by FAITH. The following passages verify the above conclusions.

"Now to him that worketh, the reward is NOT RECKONED AS OF GRACE, but as of DEBT" (Rom. 4:4). "For this cause it is of FAITH, that it may be ACCORDING to grace, it is NO MORE OF MORE GRACE" (Rom. 11:6). "By GRACE have ye been saved through FAITH . . . it is the GIFT of God, NOT OF WORKS" (Eph. 2:8, 9).

The WORKER does not receive his reward by GRACE because it is UTTERLY IMPOSSIBLE to do so. What is not of FAITH cannot be by GRACE, and what is of GRACE, must be by FAITH. / page 23 But God purposed to save the world by grace. Hence, salvation must be conditioned on faith. Reread Rom. 4:16 at this point.

Suppose the above verses are changed thus: "Now to him that worketh, the reward is NOT reckoned as of DEBT, but as of GRACE." "For this cause it is of WORKS, that it may be according to GRACE." "But if it is by GRACE it is no more of FAITH." "By GRACE have ye been saved through WORKS, it is a DEBT of God, not of FAITH."

Such would be utter confusion and without sense. No one outside religion ever talked so foolishly.

I have said that to offer to pay for a gift would offend the giver and frustrate his benevolent purpose. Not only is this true, but to pay for something begets pride in the purchaser, a spirit wholly incompatible with the spirit of Christianity. "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Pride on the part of sinners is entirely unjustifiable. "For if Abraham was justified by works he hath whereof to glory" (Rom. 4:2). "Not of works that no man should glory" (Eph. 2:9). If one merits salvation he has a right to glory or boast. But he can no more merit justification than he can reasonably boast before God. The legalist cannot grow spiritually because he cannot humble himself. He is a misfit in a spiritual religion. / page 24

TWO ERRORS NOTICED

Two errors have been made by some teachers who stress the doctrine of salvation by grace. I refer to those who teach that since salvation is by grace it is UNCONDITIONAL. That not even faith is a condition of salvation. Others contend that salvation "by grace through faith" excludes baptism as a condition of salvation. Let us notice these positions in the order named.

To make salvation UNCONDITIONAL because it is by grace is as unreasonable as to condition it upon works. For a gift must be ACCEPTED as certainly as it must NOT BE PAID FOR. Something FORCED upon one is not a gift, but an IMPOSITION. But if salvation is unconditional it is something forced. Man's willingness to receive salvation is implied as a necessity on most every page of the New Testament. Jesus said, "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." The gospel invitation is to "Whosoever will" come. Passages too numerous to mention make salvation conditional. Even John 3:16 and Eph. 2:8 make

salvation conditional on faith. And these scriptures are full of GRACE.

Likewise to exclude baptism "in the name of Jesus Christ" manifests a misunderstanding of the MEANING of baptism. Whether or not one can understand the reason, baptism has certainly been associated with both repentance and faith as a condition of salvation. / page 25 See Mark 16:16 and Acts 2:38. Those who exclude baptism as a joint condition with repentance and faith are conscious of a difficulty to explain the above and other scriptures. Much effort on their part proves this.

Not much consideration has been given the MEANING of baptism by either side of the discussion. Let us discover its meaning. Then, and only then, is it possible to UNDERSTAND the place assigned it in the scriptures.

To illustrate, let us study John's baptism. His was a "baptism of repentance." Mark says, "John came . . . and preached the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins" (Mark 1:4). By divine authority baptism and repentance are joined. Thus joined they are said to be "unto remission of sins." They were not to be separated. Every penitent person was to receive baptism, and every one baptized must be penitent. John's baptism was the EMBODIMENT of repentance. It was repentance OUTWARDLY EXPRESSED. And remission was not conditioned on repentance simply, or on baptism alone, or yet on repentance AND baptism simply, but on a "baptism of repentance." "Baptism of repentance" is one idea, not two. No mention is made of one receiving any blessing who had not been baptized but who had repented. Not to be baptized meant impenitence just as certainly as penitence signified baptism. /page 26

Just so, under Christ, baptism is the EMBODIMENT of both repentance and faith. Standing in this relation to FAITH baptism cannot be incompatible with GRACE. Read Mark 16:15, 16, and note these facts: The thing to be preached is the GOSPEL. The gospel is God's power to save the believer; it is the GRACE of God. Along with faith, baptism is named as a condition of salvation. If baptism as to its meaning is incompatible with FAITH and GRACE it would not have been thus associated with faith. The only way to dispose of this passage as favoring baptism as a condition of salvation is to reject it as of canonical authority, and the scholars have already ruled against such an effort. If the passage did NOT contain the word baptism the same persons who now try to prove its lack of canonical authority would be stoutly defending it. Such is the partisan spirit.

"But when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women" (Acts 8:12). It is strongly implied that baptism followed as a consequence of their faith. For they were baptized "when they believed." But they believed the "good tidings" or gospel preached by Philip. Baptism, then, cannot be incompatible with the gospel. Note this fact: If baptism is to be rejected as a condition of salvation because it is incompatible with faith, grace, or gospel, it would neither PRECEDE nor SUCCEED salvation. / page 27 IT SIMPLY WOULD HAVE NEVER BEEN MENTIONED! Works of merit that belong to law are not given a place in Christianity either BEFORE or AFTER salvation. We have shown that law and its accompaniments have no place with grace and its accompaniments. But baptism has not only been assigned a place under Christ, its place is in close association with FAITH, THE NATURAL ACCOMPANIMENT OF GRACE.

Note the next verse: "And Simon also himself believed: and being baptized," etc. It is not difficult to see a relation between Simon's faith and his baptism. One more scripture must suffice on this point.

"For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ" (Gal. 3:26, 27). Sonship is through FAITH in Christ. Confirmatory of this fact is that all

who were "baptized into Christ did put on Christ." Note the words, "baptized into Christ." "Into" signifies some kind of RELATIONSHIP. This much must be admitted. Right now I am not concerned about just what relation is expressed by the preposition. That it does express relation is enough. But the relationship is between BAPTISM and CHRIST. The MEANING of baptism, therefore, cannot be antagonistic to or incompatible with Christ. If not incompatible with Christ, then it certainly cannot be so with GRACE and FAITH. / page 28 Can WORKS OF MERIT possibly sustain an AGREEABLE RELATIONSHIP to Christ? Not while the world stands! They are natural opposites to Christ and His work of redemption. Can, therefore, baptism be a work of righteousness in the legalistic sense? It cannot be! If baptism, then, is found to be AGREEABLE to GRACE and FAITH it can be named as a condition of salvation along with faith. The significant fact is, it HAS BEEN SO NAMED. Since it is without doubt named along with faith as a condition of salvation and since it is, as to meaning, agreeable to faith, what serious objection can be offered against it? I leave the question with the HONEST and CAPABLE student to answer.

In conclusion, baptism being the embodiment of repentance and faith, it has no meaning or place APART FROM THEM BOTH. But having such a mission it can be left to fill the place assigned it in the scriptures without doing any violence to "the truth of the gospel." Baptism is no intruder from the ranks of legalism.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Simply to preach SOMETHING is not to fulfill our obligation. Every preacher should feel as did Paul, who said, "For woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel." To preach "another gospel" or to "pervert the gospel of Christ" means condemnation. Hence it should be our aim to preach the gospel and to keep it pure; to keep it free of all foreign doctrines and ideas; to preach it as grace and not as law; to be exceedingly zealous to preserve undisturbed every characteristic. / page 29

To this end great care should be taken in presenting the conditions of salvation. Man is naturally inclined toward legalism, and it is easy to leave the impression that the conditions of salvation are merely something to be done in exchange for which one will be saved. Their RELATION TO CHRIST CRUCIFIED should be constantly called to the attention of the people. To give the MEANING of faith, repentance, confession, and baptism is as important as simply to name them.

For example, in order to preserve the purity of the gospel it is necessary to explain the MEANING of faith. Faith, of course, has Christ as man's sin-bearer and sin-offering as its object. But unless one's attitude toward this Saviour is the correct one, he does not really have faith in Him. Faith in Christ means, negatively, the renunciation of self and of any claim to human merit. Faith in Christ can only follow a conviction of sin and a sense of condemnation. Faith, positively, is the expression of a lost soul, conscious of its condemnation, reaching out for a Saviour (Rom. 7:24). And though to believe is something for man to do, yet this doing, this believing, means that man has no merit, and that merely doing good cannot earn salvation. / page 30 In other words, what one DOES to be saved really means that as a mere man he can DO nothing to be saved. Believing on Christ as Saviour is a confession of UTTER HELPLESSNESS on man's part to earn salvation and an acknowledgement that all the merit is in Christ crucified.

And so with all the other conditions. They are expressions of one's renunciation of self and a recognition of Christ as an all-sufficient Saviour. Yes, let us preach obedience to Christ, but let us be as careful NOT to preach mere obedience APART FROM THE BLOOD OF CHRIST, as we are to preach obedience. Preaching mere obedience is not loyalty to the gospel. The obedience must be the "obedience of faith," a faith that means trust in, dependence upon, the blood of Christ for salvation. The obedience required is so

inseparably connected with the gospel that Paul speaks of OBEYING the gospel (II Thes. 1:7). Or again, according to the Revised Version, hearkening to the "glad tidings" (Rom. 10:16). The primary idea of GOSPEL obedience is A YIELDING TO, SURRENDERING TO, RELYING UPON, or TRUSTING IN. Hence obeying the gospel would signify A SURRENDERING TO or A TRUSTING IN CHRIST CRUCIFIED for salvation. One thus obedient has his eye on the BLOOD OF CHRIST and is expecting pardon BECAUSE OF ITS MERIT. In other words, the obedience required in order to be saved is one that relates to Christ crucified, and is of value FOR NO OTHER REASON. / page 31 The same obedience APART FROM CHRIST CRUCIFIED would fall to the level of obedience to MERE LAW and amount to nothing. So then, the MEANING of the conditions of salvation is the chief point in them. And apart from Christ crucified, they have no meaning. So, let us preach the gospel. / page 32

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