

The Effects of the Apostles Preaching.

by Thomas Reade

The sermon explores the profound impact of the Apostles' preaching on spiritual transformation and the urgent need for believers to remain steadfast in their faith amidst challenges.

Scripture: Psalm 139:23, Isaiah 55:6, Matthew 11:28, Mark 9:24, John 8:12, John 14:1, Romans 1:16, 1 Corinthians 1:23, 2 Corinthians 3:6, Colossians 1:27, 1 Thessalonians 2:13, 2 Timothy 2:15, Philemon 1:8

Topics: "Apostolic Preaching", "Gospel Revival"

Description

Thomas Reade preaches about the effects of the apostles' preaching, prophetic warnings of spiritual declensions, glorying in the cross of Christ, tenderness of spirit, and the view of the Law and the Gospel. He emphasizes the stark contrast between Christianity and Paganism, highlighting the love, mercy, and holiness of God in contrast to the terror and bloodshed of idolatry. Reade reflects on the Apostle Paul's powerful preaching that led sinners to immediate repentance and conversion, drawing parallels to the present lukewarmness and declension in the Church. He underscores the importance of preaching the Gospel with the accompanying grace of God, the power of the Holy Spirit, and the need for ministers to humbly rely on God for the increase.

Transcript

THE EFFECTS OF THE APOSTLES PREACHING.

HIS PROPHETIC WARNINGS OF SPIRITUAL DECLENSIONS.

HIS GLORYING IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

HIS TENDERNESS OF SPIRIT.

HIS VIEW OF THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL.

Light and darkness are not more opposed to each other, than Christianity and Paganism. If we look at the sages of antiquity, or at the civilized heathens of modern times, and inquire what all their self-inflicted tortures are intended to effect; the answer is given in the streaming blood and dying groans of human victims, whose mangled bodies are supposed to propitiate their angry deities. Their idols are objects of terror, before whose frightful forms they tremble, and to pacify whose wrath, they blindly rush into the jaws of death. Their idols are 'vices defied', which mark the source from where they spring.

Our God is love- rich in mercy to all who call upon him. Our God is holy- the fountain of blessedness to his people. Love, purity, and mercy are no attributes belonging to heathen deities. As in ancient, so in modern days the peculiar features of idolatry are obscenity and blood. Such is the worship which Satan has established in the earth; for so Paul declares- "The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils and not to God." In obedience to his Savior's command, the Apostle went forth into all lands preaching to the Gentiles the Gospel of his grace, and laboring in His strength to turn them from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God. And wonderful was the effect of his labors among those polluted idolaters, to whom he made known the unsearchable riches of Christ.

When the Gospel was preached in these first ages of the Church, it was revealed to the hearts and consciences of sinners with great power. They deferred not their repentance one day, on account of any worldly considerations. They did not stay until they had set their houses in order. Neither did the fear of losing their estate, pleasures, or even life itself, separate them from Christ. Crowds of sinners who heard the Apostle preach, flocked into the Church as doves to their windows, turning speedily and without reserve to God their Savior; so that Zion, with holy admiration, might well exclaim. "Who has begotten these?"

Luke bears ample testimony to the truth of these remarks. After the Apostle's sermon at Antioch, he tells us, "As Paul and Barnabas left the synagogue that day, the people asked them to return again and speak about these things the next week. Many Jews and godly converts to Judaism who worshiped at the synagogue followed Paul and Barnabas, and the two men urged them, "By God's grace, remain faithful." The following week almost the entire city turned out to hear them preach the word of the Lord. But when the Jewish leaders saw the crowds, they were jealous; so they slandered Paul and argued against whatever he said. Then Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and declared, "It was necessary that this Good News from God be given first to you Jews. But since you have rejected it and judged yourselves unworthy of eternal life--well, we will offer it to Gentiles. For this is as the Lord commanded us when he said, 'I have made you a light to the Gentiles, to bring salvation to the farthest corners of the earth.' When the Gentiles heard this, they were very glad and thanked the Lord for his message; and all who were appointed to eternal life became believers."

The ministration of the Gospel had this great effect upon them, because, when it was made known by the voice of men externally to the ear, it was applied inwardly to the heart, through the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus, while the Law was thundering its denunciations of wrath against sin from mount Sinai- The Gospel was proclaiming pardon and peace through the blood of Jesus from the hill of Zion. Then were fulfilled the sweet words of David, "Your people shall be willing in the day of your power, in the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning, you have the dew of your youth." But the still more glorious day is hastening on, when Jesus shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied. His children, begotten to him "through the Gospel, shall then exceed in number, as well as brightness and beauty, the spangles of early dew which the morning discloses to the delighted eye of the beholder." Oh happy period! when believers shall cover the earth as the dew drops of the morning; when they shall appear in the beauties of holiness, adorned with humility, hope, love, and all the graces of the Spirit; when all shall know the Lord from the least to the greatest; when every heart shall be his dwelling place.

The Gospel, being thus preached with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven, was the power of God unto salvation both to Jews and Greeks. And now, as then, it is the word of life, of reconciliation, of salvation, to thousands of wretched sinners, whose hearts are opened, like that of Lydia, to attend to the voice of Mercy. Oh! how can we withstand this Gospel of grace, in which such ample provision is made for every

need. In the greatness of his love, our heavenly Father has revealed an all-sufficient Savior, for the removal of our guilt and for our recovery to his favor; and an all-sufficient Sanctifier, for the renewal of our hearts and for our restoration to the privileges of his children. Being taught by the Spirit, Paul knew full well that he might preach and Apollos water, but that God only could give the increase.

In this Epistle to the Thessalonians, he takes particular notice of this accompanying grace of God, "For when we brought you the Good News, it was not only with words but also with power, for the Holy Spirit gave you full assurance that what we said was true. And you know that the way we lived among you was further proof of the truth of our message. So you received the message with joy from the Holy Spirit in spite of the severe suffering it brought you. In this way, you imitated both us and the Lord. For this cause, we thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard of us, you received it, not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually works in you that believe."

The single-hearted Apostle and his fellow laborers in the Gospel, arrogated no power to themselves. They acknowledged their own weakness; declaring that they possessed this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of man. This he confessed to the Corinthians, when stating the efficacy of his labors among them, "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God, who has made us able ministers of the New Testament."

How harmoniously do the graces of the Spirit blend their excellencies in the experience of Paul, which like the glorious rainbow in the clouds, present to our view the wonderful work of God. Oh! that our admiration may lead us, through grace, to a close imitation of this indefatigable servant of Christ. The faithful minister of the Gospel has joys and sorrows peculiarly his own. Regardless of all personal inconveniences, connected with his pastoral office- his soul can rejoice when, through his labors, sinners are converted unto God. Such delight Paul felt, in the midst of all his conflicts; of this pleasure, John partook when he wrote, "I have no greater joy, than to hear that my children walk in truth;" and in such pure felicity, will every faithful pastor participate, whose heart is in his work, and whose life is devoted to the cause of Truth.

How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things. May their numbers and their success be abundantly increased, until the whole earth be filled with the glory of the Lord. But with sorrow we have to lament, that the Gospel does not exhibit its primitive power among us. Its conquests are few; and the dispensers of it have reason to complain, that they spend their strength to very little purpose. And why is this? Is the Lord's hand shortened that it cannot save? or, is his ear heavy, that it cannot hear? Are the truths of the Gospel less important now than when they were first preached? or the threatenings against those who neglect them; less alarming? By no means. As professing Christians we must seek for the cause of this evil in ourselves. Like those whom our Lord describes in the parable, we are ever ready to frame excuses for not attending to the call of the Gospel. We try to shelter our slothfulness under the plea of inability to do what the Gospel requires; or, from the lack of time to seek after the promised strength. Thus we deceive ourselves, until death reveals to us our fatal error.

O! that we were wise, that we understood this, that we would consider our latter end. May the Spirit awaken us to a sense of our danger. What language can exceed the tenderness of our heavenly Father; "Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the Lord your God which teaches you to profit, which leads you by the way that you should go. O that you had hearkened to my commandments,

then your peace would have been as a river, and your righteousness as the waves of the sea."

We might have supposed that the world would have grown more holy and more confirmed in the faith of the Gospel, during the lengthening period of the Christian dispensation; but Paul in his Epistle to Timothy discloses a painful truth, "The Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron." "For the time will come, when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." To the Thessalonians he also writes, "Please don't be so easily shaken and troubled by those who say that the day of the Lord has already begun. Even if they claim to have had a vision, a revelation, or a letter supposedly from us, don't believe them. Don't be fooled by what they say. For that day will not come until there is a great rebellion against God and the man of lawlessness is revealed--the one who brings destruction, whom the Lord Jesus will consume with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming."

Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Peter declares, "But there were also false prophets in Israel, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will cleverly teach their destructive heresies about God and even turn against their Master who bought them. Theirs will be a swift and terrible end. Many will follow their evil teaching and shameful immorality. And because of them, Christ and his true way will be slandered. There shall also come in the last days, scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying; where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were, from the beginning of the creation."

From where arises all this evil in the Christian Church? The springs which supply these bitter waters are clearly revealed in the charges which John was commanded to deliver to the angels of the seven churches. "I have this complaint against you, because you have left your first love. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die. You are neither cold nor hot, I would you were cold or hot; so because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue you out of my mouth." This defection of Christian principle, this declension from the holiness of the Gospel, must be traced to the innate corruption of the heart. A growing insensibility to the evil of lukewarmness, a neglect of closet duties, or a heartless performance of them, a lack of watchfulness and circumspection, a sinful conformity to the world, an over-grasping after earthly things, bespeak a people fallen from that exalted standard of faith and love which so signalized many of the early Christians from the world around them.

But, if in the days of Paul the mystery of iniquity began to work, if John had to rouse the declining churches, and even in the purest age of Christianity had to declare, that many deceivers and antichrists were entered into the world; let us look to ourselves, lest we fall from our own steadfastness; let us daily examine ourselves, whether we be in the faith; and knowing that the end of all things is at hand, let us seek for more grace, that we may be sober, and watch unto prayer, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

If such signs of declension are visible among professing Christians, who still maintain an outward regard to the ordinances of the Gospel; what black marks may we not expect to find upon those who, though called Christians, do not pretend to make any profession of religion at all. These hate the light, and will not come to it. They love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. The world reigns in their hearts, and Satan has the sway over them. They will not part with those sins which the Word of God condemns, nor perform those duties which it enjoins. They may attend a preached Gospel, but they do not

hear it with teachable hearts. Their fastidious minds are soon offended with the matter or manner of the preacher. They criticize the style of his discourse, but overlook, or are offended at its home-directed truths. They, being spiritually healthy in their own estimation, feel no need of the Physician; and would gladly absent themselves altogether from the house of God, did not some secret whisper of conscience, the force of early habit, or a desire to keep up an outward decency of character, restrain their departing steps.

These and other similar causes operate to exclude the light of the Gospel from the hearts of sinners. O! what a wretched being is man, when left to himself! Every evil nestles in his heart, producing a thousand stings to torment him in time and through eternity. Paul directs us to the contemplation of this misery, "If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to those who are lost; in whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of those who believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." David, who was well acquainted with the deceitfulness of the heart, describes the wicked man as flattering himself in his own eyes, until his iniquities be found to be hateful.

It is awful to think what delusions men practice upon themselves. Through the artifices of Satan, and the false reasonings of their own hearts, they are deceived to their own ruin. By comparing themselves with those who are more notoriously wicked; and thus thinking themselves good. By magnifying their supposed virtues, and softening down their vices. By presuming upon the mercy of God, as if he were too benevolent to put his threatenings into execution; or in other words, too good to be true. By depending upon a death-bed repentance, not considering that repentance is the work of the Holy Spirit; and that they cannot turn and prepare themselves by their own natural strength, to faith and calling upon God. By disbelieving the eternity of hell torments, as being a punishment too cruel and severe for the all bounteous Creator to inflict upon his erring creatures. By denying the particular providence of God; esteeming it beneath his glorious Majesty, to inspect their trivial concerns, or to notice each trifling deviation from his Law. By lowering the standard of Christian morality. By supposing the Almighty to be such an one as themselves.

It is the gracious work of the Spirit to convince the world of unbelief, that radical evil from where grow a thousand branches, each bearing the most deadly fruit. Unbelief threw a shadow over the lovely scenes of paradise, and still shrouds the earth with sadness- it bars the gate of heaven, and opens that of hell. Unbelief blinds the eyes of sinners to the dangers which beset them, and the misery which awaits them. They have eyes and see not, they have ears and hear not. While to their worldly interest they are quick-sighted in the extreme, a thick film covers the eye of their minds when the higher interests of eternity are set before them. The things of eternity, being invisible, are forgotten, or lightly regarded, while those of time, always appealing to the senses, are ever uppermost in their affections. They know that death will come, but he is now, as they fondly hope, at a distance from them. Hence they sport with lightsome heart along the flowery path of pleasure, until the unexpected dart is hurled, which hurries them, in all their unpreparedness, into the presence of their Judge.

"Life, and the scenes that round it rise,

Share in the same uncertainties;

Yet still we hug ourselves with vain presage,

Of future days serene and long,

Of pleasures fresh and ever strong,

An active youth, and slow declining age.
Like a fair prospect still we make
Things future, pleasing forms to take;
First, verdant meads arise, and flowery fields;
Cool groves, and shady copses here,
There brooks and winding streams appear,
While change of objects still new pleasures yields.
Farther, fine castles court the eye,
There, wealth and honors we espy;
Beyond, a huddled mixture fills the stage,
Until the remoter distance shrouds
The plain with hills, those hills with clouds,
There, we place death, behind old shivering age.
When death alas! perhaps too near,
In the next hedge does skulking he,
There plants his engines, thence let fly his dart,
Which, while we ramble without fear,
Will stop us in our full career,
And force us from our airy dreams to part."

Thus, vain man, heedless alike of present danger and future evil, neglects the blessings of the Gospel, and with awful madness rushes into the everlasting fire. Is he warned of his danger? He laughs at the credulity of his advisers. Is he invited to accept the offers of redeeming love? He cannot relinquish the pleasures of the world. He is willing to run all risks, rather than endure the self-denying requirements of Christianity. Heaven presents no charms to his vitiated taste. Being earthly, sensual, devilish, his desires are only carnal, and his every step brings him nearer to the pit of hell. But oh! how great is the change, when the Holy Spirit shines into his heart, and gives him the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ! Evils are then discovered which before lay hidden and unknown. Boasted virtues are found to be rebel sins; and crimes, committed under soft and tender names, are seen in all their blackness. Thus Paul, in his state of darkness, considered it meritorious to ravage the Church of Christ; but when enlightened by the Spirit of Truth, he saw his zeal to be rebellion, and his persecution murder.

In every age, whether barbarous or refined, the preaching of the cross is to those who perish, foolishness. The most learned in human science, cannot, by the unassisted powers of reason, discover the glory of the

cross of Christ. Their lofty minds cannot stoop so low as to receive, in the simplicity of faith, the humiliating truths connected with, and flowing from, the doctrine of the atonement. This is a path which the vulture's eye has not seen. Human philosophy cannot perceive the beauty and sublimity of this consecrated way to glory. But, blessed be God, the poor have the Gospel preached unto them; the poor are made rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom; though never taught to measure distant planets, or to explore with philosophic eye the center of the earth. With humble minds they listen to the truth, receive it in faith and love, and through the power of the Holy Spirit, are made holy and happy by it.

David tuned his harp to this delightful subject- "Happy are those who hear the joyful call to worship, for they will walk in the light of your presence, Lord. They rejoice all day long in your wonderful reputation. They exult in your righteousness. You are their glorious strength. Our power is based on your favor; for the Lord is our defense, the Holy One of Israel is our King. Remember me, too, Lord, when you show favor to your people; come to me with your salvation. Let me share in the prosperity of your chosen ones. Let me rejoice in the joy of your people; let me praise you with those who are your heritage."

How triumphant is the power of the cross, which enabled the Apostle to say, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world." No wonder he was anxious to make known to a ruined world, this mystery of grace, which had filled his heart with joy and peace. It was at the foot of the cross, that he had learned to despise all human greatness, and to desire, above all things, an interest in the righteousness of his crucified Savior. The glory of the cross threw all the glories of the world into the shade. Vanity was inscribed on all its pleasures, its possessions, and its power. Hence, with Christian boldness he assured the Roman converts, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one who believes." He declared also to the believers at Corinth, "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness, but unto those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God, and the wisdom of God."

Deeply impressed with the infinite blessings which flow down from heaven through Jesus Christ, the only Mediator between God and man, he labored to impress the hearts of others, that they, like him, might be made partakers of the grace of God. Through the force of Truth, Felix was made to tremble, Agrippa was almost persuaded to be a Christian, and thousands on the day of Pentecost, were pricked to the heart. What effect has the Gospel had on our hearts? Have we been humbled and changed by it? Has it brought us to Christ, the sinners only refuge from the wrath to come? Is the world crucified to us, no longer swaying our affections? Are we crucified to the world, being esteemed worthless for Jesus' sake? The Almighty said to Abraham, "I will bless you, and you shall be a blessing." However much, then, the people of God may be despised, they are the seed which the Lord has blessed.

How expressive are the words of our Savior to his disciples, "You are the salt of the earth." Salt has two properties. By the one it preserves from corruption the substance with which it is mixed; and by the other, it communicates to that substance its own savor. The two-fold benefit is derived to the world from true believers. Through their counteracting influence, the progress of corruption is retarded, and by their example, precept, and prayers, the savor of their spirit is diffused. This blessedness is the work of the Holy Spirit, and is produced through the consistency and persevering labors of the righteous.

The life of the believer is a patient continuance in well-doing, a pressing forward towards the mark, a running the race set before him, a growth in grace. Hence, with much solicitude, Paul wrote to the Colossians to continue in the faith, and not to be moved away from the hope of the Gospel which they had

heard, and which was preached to every creature under heaven. "God has given me the responsibility of serving his church by proclaiming his message in all its fullness to you Gentiles. This message was kept secret for centuries and generations past, but now it has been revealed to his own holy people. For it has pleased God to tell his people that the riches and glory of Christ are for you Gentiles, too. For this is the secret: Christ lives in you, and this is your assurance that you will share in his glory. So everywhere we go, we tell everyone about Christ. We warn them and teach them with all the wisdom God has given us, for we want to present them to God, perfect in their relationship to Christ. I work very hard at this, as I depend on Christ's mighty power that works within me."

As the heart of Paul was large enough to contain a whole world, with respect to his desires and prayers for the conversion of every human being to that state of spiritual happiness which he enjoyed; so, he was full of the tenderest sensibilities towards those to whom he had been made the honored instrument in bringing to the knowledge of Christ. With what parental tenderness does he address his beloved converts at Thessalonica and Philippi, "We were as gentle among you as a mother feeding and caring for her own children. We loved you so much that we gave you not only God's Good News but our own lives, too. And you know that we treated each of you as a father treats his own children. We pleaded with you, encouraged you, and urged you to live your lives in a way that God would consider worthy. For he called you into his Kingdom to share his glory." "God knows how much I love you and long for you with the tender compassion of Christ Jesus."

How exquisitely touching are these appeals to the sympathies of our nature. They speak directly to the heart. We can conceive of nothing more endearing than this tenderness of ministerial affection. The blessed Apostle felt all the father towards his spiritual children- he exhorted- he comforted- he charged each of them, that he might build them up in the faith of the Gospel. His Epistle to Philemon is replete with feelings of Christian friendship; in which, after having expressed his joy in hearing of his faith and love which he had towards the Lord Jesus, and towards all saints, he thus pleads for Onesimus; the runaway servant of Philemon, who, it appears, had robbed his master- "

Therefore, although in Christ I could be bold and order you to do what you ought to do, yet I appeal to you on the basis of love. I then, as Paul--an old man and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus-- I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains. So if you consider me your partner, give him the same welcome you would give me if I were coming. If he has harmed you in any way or stolen anything from you, charge me for it. I, Paul, write this in my own handwriting: "I will repay it." And I won't mention that you owe me your very soul! Yes, dear brother, please do me this favor for the Lord's sake. Give me this encouragement in Christ. I am confident as I write this letter that you will do what I ask and even more!"

Can any thing be more lovingly persuasive, or more humbly solicitous than these appeals to the heart of Philemon. There is throughout the whole Epistle, a delicacy of sentiment and a pathos which strikingly mark the elevated and refined state of the Apostle's mind. When parting with such a father in Christ, the elders of Ephesus might well weep sadly, falling on Paul's neck and kissing him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke, that they should see his face no more!

Is this Saul of Tarsus, the murderer of Stephen, the blasphemer of Jesus, the persecutor of the sheep of Christ? What cannot grace effect! Well might Jehovah say, "Behold I am the Lord, the God of all flesh, is there anything too hard for me?" The Gospel is truly a revelation of love and mercy; and those who dispense its blessings, and would wish to see them received by the world, must, with Paul, exhibit in their

own spirit, the loveliness and loving-kindness of the Prince of Peace.

This Apostle of Jesus Christ was well instructed in the mysteries of the kingdom. Though his heart was full of the tenderest feelings of compassion, yet he knew how to use the terrors of the Law, as well as the persuasives of the Gospel. With a masterly hand he drew the contrast between the Law and the Gospel, showing with admirable precision the effects produced by each. The Law is the ministry that brought death and of condemnation. The Gospel is the ministry of the Spirit and of righteousness. The Law is the letter which kills. The Gospel is the spirit which gives life. The Law, as a covenant of works, though glorious, was done away with. The Gospel, as a covenant of grace, by reason of the glory that excels, is of perpetual duration. By the Law comes the knowledge of sin. Through the Gospel is the knowledge of salvation. The Law works wrath. The Gospel imparts peace. The Law exhibits God as a consuming fire. The Gospel reveals him as a reconciled Father.

What the Holy Spirit has joined together, let not vain man pretend to separate. The Spirit makes use of the Law and the Gospel in working faith, and it must be the work of preachers to join the Law and the Gospel together. They must awaken and wound by the Law, and they must comfort and heal by the Gospel. By the Law they must strike with terror those who are insensible, and rouse such as are sleepy; and by the Gospel they must pour the soft healing oil of the covenant into the wounds of those who are broken in spirit, and are sinking under the weight of their misery. This is rightly to divide the Word of Truth, according to the charge given by the Apostle to Timothy, "Study to show yourself approved of God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth;" that is, dispensing it suitably and agreeably to the state and temper of the hearers.

The promises of the Gospel are not to be laid open to sinners, who are slumbering on beds of sloth, but they must be awakened by the threatenings of the Law. On the other hand, the corroding medicines of the Law are not to be applied to such as are ready to be swallowed up with excess of sorrow, but to them must be administered the strengthening, reviving cordials of the Gospel. By the Law, sinners must be led to the brink of Jordan; but by the Gospel, they must be carried over Jordan into the promised land of spiritual rest, the pledge and foretaste of heavenly bliss.

It is delightful to observe the wisdom of our Lord; how exactly he suited his counsel to the various states of mankind. The secure and presumptuous he sent to the Law, that they might be humbled. To the contrite and penitent, he preached the Gospel, that they might be comforted. When the rich Pharisee, full of self-conceit, said, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" The answer was, "If you will enter into life, keep the commandments." When the broken-hearted woman fell at his feet, and spoke in tears the guilt of her life, and the anguish of her soul- "Your sins are forgiven," was the gracious reply.

Thus the wisdom of God shines forth in all his dispensations. The Law gives us the shadow of good things to come; the Gospel reflects their image more distinctly; while in heaven they will be viewed in the perfection of beauty, and be revealed in the saints, in all their fullness of glory.

"Ground of my hope, the cross appears;

I see the man of sorrows bleed

I bid adieu to guilty fears,

And in his death my pardon read.
And could you, O my Savior die,
To rescue me from endless woe!
Enough! there's none more blest than I,
Since you could love a sinner so.
I leave the world its boasted store,
Of pleasures that must quickly end;
I prize its vanities no more,
Since I have found the sinner's friend.
I care not if the world revile,
The world that hates my master's cause;
The world, I know would quickly smile,
Were I again what once I was.
Then farewell world, and farewell all
That emulates a Savior's claims;
I'll bear him and obey his call,
Regardless who approves or blames.
I'll praise him while he gives me breath,
Nor then will cease to sing his love;
For when my voice is lost in death,
I hope to join the choirs above."

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/thomas-reade/the-effects-of-the-apostles-preaching/>

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