

THE GLORIOUS GOSPEL OF THE BLESSED GOD

NO. 758

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 30, 1867
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AT CAMDEN ROAD CHAPEL

*“According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God,
which was committed to my trust.”
1 Timothy 1:11*

THIS verse occurs just after a long list of sins, which the apostle declares to be contrary to sound doctrine. From which we gather that one test of sound doctrine is its opposition to every form of sin. That doctrine which in any way palliates sin may be popular, but is not sound doctrine. Those who talk much of their soundness, but yet by their lives betray the rottenness of their hearts, need far rather to be ashamed of their hypocrisy than to be proud of their orthodoxy.

The apostle offers in the verse before us another standard by which to test the doctrines which we hear. He tells us that sound doctrine is always evangelical—“Sound doctrine according to the glorious gospel.” Any doctrine which sets up the will or the merit of man, any doctrine which exalts priest-craft and ceremonial, any doctrine, in fact, which does not put salvation upon the sole footing of free grace, is unsound.

These two points are absolutely needful in every teaching which professes to come from God. It must commend and foster holiness of life, and at the same time, it must, beyond all question, be a declaration of grace and mercy through the Mediator.

Our apostle was, by the drift of his letter, led incidentally to make mention of the Gospel. And then, in a moment, taking to himself wings of fire, he mounts into a transport of praise, and calls it “The glorious gospel of the blessed God.” Such is his mode of writing generally, that if he comes across a favorite thought, he is away at a tangent from the subject that he was aiming at, and does not return until his ardent spirit cools again.

In this case, or ever he was aware, his soul made him like the chariots of Ammi-nadab. His glowing heart poured forth the warmest eulogium upon that hidden treasure, that pearl of price immense, which he prized beyond all price, and guarded with a sacred jealousy of care. I think I see the radiant countenance of the apostle of the Lord, as with flashing eyes he dictates the words, “The glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.”

Our subject affords us fine sea-room, but our time is short, our boat is small, and the atmosphere is so hot and heavy that scarcely a breath of air is to be had, and therefore I will keep to one straightforward track, and not distract you with many topics.

To open up the text in all its length and breadth would be fit exercise for the loftiest intellect, but we must be content with a few experiential and practical remarks, and may the Lord enable us to weave them into a heart-searching discourse.

I. In the first place, then, Paul praises the Gospel to the utmost by calling it “The glorious gospel of the blessed God.”—HAVE WE EXPERIENCED ITS EXCELLENCE?

It is necessary to ask the question even in this congregation. For even to great multitudes who attend our houses of prayer, the Gospel is a dry, uninteresting subject. They hear the Word because it is their duty. They sit in the pew because custom requires an outward respect to religion, but they never dream of the Gospel having anything glorious in it, anything that can stir the heart or make the pulse beat at a faster rate.

The sermon is slow, the service is dull, the whole affair is a weariness to which nothing but propriety makes men submit. Some people do their religion as a matter of necessity, as a horse drags a wagon. But if that necessity of respectability did not exist, they would be as glad to escape from it as the horse is to leave the shafts and to miss the rumbling of the wheels. It is necessary, then, to ask the question, and I shall put it before you in three or four ways.

Paul calls the sacred message of mercy *the Gospel*. Has it been the Gospel to us? The word is plain, and I hardly need remind you that it means “good news.” Now, has the Gospel been “good news” to us? Has it ever been “news” to you? “We have heard it so often,” says one, “that we cannot expect it to be news to us. We were trained by godly parents. We were taken to Sunday school. We have learned the Gospel from our youth up. It cannot be news to us.”

Let me say to you, then, that you do not know the word of reconciliation unless it has been, and still is, news to you. To every man who is ever saved by the Gospel, it comes as a piece of news as novel, fresh, and startling, as if he had never heard it before. The letter may be old, but the inward meaning is as new as though the ink were not yet dry in the pen of revelation.

I confess to have been tutored in piety, put into my cradle by prayerful hands, and lulled to sleep by songs concerning Jesus. But after having heard the Gospel continually, precept upon precept, here much and there much, yet when the Word of the Lord came to me with His power, it was as new as if I had lived among the unvisited tribes of central Africa and had never heard the tidings of the cleansing fountain filled with blood from the Savior’s veins.

The Gospel in its spirit and power always wears the dew of its youth. It glitters with morning’s freshness—its strength and its glory abide forever. Ah! my dear hearer, if you have ever felt your guilt, if you have been burdened under a sense of it, if you have looked into your own heart to find some good thing, and been bitterly disappointed, if you have gone up and down through the world to try this and that scheme of getting relief, and found them all fail you like dry wells in the desert which mock the traveler, it will be a sweet piece of news to your heart that there is here present salvation in the Savior.

It is a most refreshing novelty to hear the voice of Jesus say, “Come unto me and rest.” Though you have heard the invitation outwardly thousands of times, yet Jesus’ own voice, when He speaks to your heart, will be as surprisingly fresh to you as if these dumb walls should suddenly find a tongue, and reveal the mysteries which have been hidden from the foundation of the world. To every believer the Gospel comes as news from the land beyond the river, God’s mind revealed by God’s Spirit to His chosen.

It is *good* news too. Now, has the Gospel ever been experientially *good* to you, my hearer? Good in the best sense, good emphatically, good without any admixture of evil, the Gospel is to those who know it—is it so to you? Have you ever been deeply sensible of your overwhelming debt to the justice of God, and then gladly received the gracious information that your debts are all discharged?

Have you trembled beneath the thunder-charged cloud of JEHOVAH’s wrath, which was ready to pour forth its tempest upon you, and have you heard the gentle voice of mercy saying, “I have blotted out, as a cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud, thy sins”? Have you ever known what it is to be fully absolved, to stand before God without fear, accepted in the Beloved, received as a dear child, covered with the righteousness of Christ? If so, the Gospel has been “*good*” indeed to you. Grasping it by the hand of faith, and feeling the power of it in your soul, you count it to be the best tidings that ever came from God to man.

I shall now ask you earnestly to answer my question as in the sight of God. Let no man escape from this most vital inquiry, Has that which Paul calls the Gospel, proved itself to be Gospel to you? Did it ever make your heart leap, just as some highly gratifying information excites and charms you? Has it ever seemed to you an all-important thing? If not, you know not what the Gospel means. O let my anxious questions tenderly quicken you to be concerned about your soul’s affairs and to seek unto the Lord Jesus for eternal life.

Paul, having called the message of mercy “the Gospel,” then adds an adjective—“*the glorious Gospel*,” and a glorious Gospel it is for a thousand reasons—glorious in its antiquity. For before the beams of the first morning drove away primeval shades, this Gospel of our salvation was ordained in the mind of the Eternal.

It is glorious because it is everlasting—when all things shall have passed away as the hoar frost of the morning dissolves before the rising sun, this Gospel shall still exist in all its power and grace. It is glorious because it reveals the glory of God more fully than all the universe beside. Not all the innumerable worlds that God has ever fashioned, though they speak to us in loftiest eloquence from their celestial spheres, can proclaim to us the character of our heavenly Father as the Gospel does.

“The heavens are telling the glory of God,” but the Gospel which tells of Jesus has a sweeter and a clearer speech. The poet talks of the great and wide sea where the almighty form mirrors itself in tempest. So, indeed, the finger of God may mirror itself, but a thousand oceans could not mirror the Infinite Himself—the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the only molten looking-glass in which JEHOVAH can be seen.

In Jesus we see not only God’s train, such as Moses saw when he beheld the skirts of JEHOVAH’S robe in the cleft of the rock, but the whole of God is revealed in the Gospel of Jesus, so that our Lord could say, “He who hath seen me, hath seen the Father.” If the Lord be glorious in holiness, such the Gospel reveals Him. Is His right hand glorious in power? so the Gospel speaks of Him. Is the Lord the God of love? Is not this the genius of the Gospel? The Gospel is glorious because every attribute of Deity is manifested in it with unrivalled splendor.

But I desire to come home to your consciences by asking, Is the Gospel *to you* a glorious Gospel? Beloved friends, we may know our state very much by what answer we shall give to that question. The Gospel, seen with these eyes and heard with these external ears, will be like the Lord Himself, “A root out of a dry ground, having no form nor comeliness.”

But the Gospel understood by the renewed heart, will be quite a different thing. Oh, it will be a glorious Gospel indeed, if you are raised up in newness of life, to enjoy the blessings which it brings to you. So, I beseech you, answer the question—and to help you, let me remind the people of God how glorious the Gospel has been to them.

Do you recollect the day when the Gospel carried your heart by storm? You never can forget when the great battering-ram of truth began to beat against the gates of Mansoul. You recollect how you strengthened the posts and bars, and stood out against the Gospel, resolving not to yield. You were at times compelled to weep under impressions, but you wiped away your transient tears—your emotion was “as the morning cloud, and as the early dew.”

But eternal love would not relinquish its gracious assaults, for it was determined to save. Providence and grace together besieged the city of your soul, and brought divine artillery to bear upon it. You were straightly shut up till—as it was with Samaria, so it was with you—there was a great famine in your soul.

You recollect how, Sabbath after Sabbath, every sermon was a fresh assault from the hosts of heaven—a new blow from the celestial battering-ram. How often, when the gates of your prejudice were dashed to shivers, did you set up fresh barricades! Your heart trembled beneath the terrible strokes of justice, but by the help of Satan, your depraved heart managed to secure the gates a little longer with iron clamps of pride, and brazen bars of insensibility.

Till at last, one blessed day—do you remember it?—one blessed day, the Gospel battering-ram gave the effectual blow of grace, the gates flew wide open, and in rode the Prince of Peace, Immanuel, like a conqueror, riding in the chariots of salvation.

Our will was subdued, our affections were overcome, our whole soul was brought into subjection to the sway of mercy. Jesus was glorious in our eyes that day, “the chief among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely.” That day of days we have registered upon the tablets of our heart. It was the true coronation day of Jesus in us, and our birthday for eternity.

When our glorious Lord entered into our souls wearing His vesture dipped in blood, pardoning and blessing in the plenitude of His grace, then the bells of our heart rang merry peals. The streamers of our joy floated in the fragrant air. The streets of our soul were strewn with roses. The fountains of our love ran with rich red wine, and our soul was as full of bliss as a heart could be this side of heaven. For salvation had come to our house, and mercy's King had deigned to visit us.

Oh, the sweet perfume of the spikenard, when, for the first time, the King sat at our table to sup with us! how the savor of His presence filled every chamber of our inner man! That day when grace redeemed us from our fears, the Gospel was a glorious Gospel indeed! Ah! dear hearer, you stood in the crowded aisle to hear the sermon, but you did not grow weary, the lips of the preacher refreshed you, for the truth dropped like sweet smelling myrrh.

You could have gone over hedge and ditch to hear the Gospel at that season of first love. No matter how roughly it might have been served up by the preacher, you rolled the bread of heaven under your tongue as a sweet morsel, for it was the Gospel of your salvation.

Christian, I will refresh your memory further. Do not forget the after conquests of that Gospel. If you have made any advance in the divine life, it has been by the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ applied by the Holy Ghost. We make mistakes sometimes, for having begun in the Spirit we hope to be made perfect in the flesh.

I mean that frequently we try to battle with our inbred sins by smiting them with legal reasonings. No believer ever conquered sin by being afraid of the punishment of it—this is a weapon fit only for sons of the bondwoman. It is the blood of Jesus which is the conquering weapon in the holy war against natural corruption. "They overcame by the blood of the Lamb."

Knowing that I am dead to sin and risen with Christ, it is in the power of resurrection life that I wrestle against the old man and overcome him. Beloved, recollect that you are always weak when you get away from the cross, that it is only as a sinner saved by blood that you can hope to make any advance in sanctification.

Do not attempt to flog yourself into grace, the new life must not be touched with the whip of bondage. Go to the cross for motive and energy as to holiness. Look to Jesus in the Gospel as you did in the beginning of your *new* life. Know yourself to be saved in Him, and then go forth to battle with temptation, with the Gospel as the standard of your lifelong warfare.

If any of you have tried to make war with sin apart from the Captain of your salvation, you have either been wounded to your hurt already, or you will be. But if Judah's Lion shall go up before you, and you follow with the Gospel as your war cry, your victory is sure, and you shall have another wreath to lay at the feet of Jesus and His glorious Gospel.

Beloved, let me say that all true saints have found it to be a glorious Gospel from its comforting us in our darkest hours. We are not without our troubles, for which we should be grateful. They are flinty rocks which flow with oil. The roots of our soul might take too firm a hold upon this poor clay soil if they were not roughly loosened by affliction. This is not our rest, it is polluted, and our sorrows are useful because they remind us of this.

But what has such power to calm the troubled spirit as the Gospel? Go you to the Lord Jesus, you daughters of grief. Know and understand once more your union with Him, and your acceptance in Him, and you will repine no more. You will bow your shoulder and cheerfully take up your cross when you have found out in your hour of need that the Gospel has a glorious power to sustain those who are ready to sink.

Did you ever perceive the glory of the Gospel in its power to resist the attacks of the great enemy? The soul has been beleaguered by a thousand temptations. Satan has howled, and all the fiends of hell have joined in horrible chorus, and your own poor distracted thoughts have said, "I shall perish notwithstanding all my high enjoyments and confidence."

Have you never gathered, as John Bunyan would picture it, all your forces to the top of the wall to sling the great stones against the enemy? Have you not felt that the castle would be taken, till, as a last

resort, you ran up the blood-red flag of the cross, seized the sword of the Spirit, and went to the rampart determined to hold the wall against the enemy?

Then when the scaling ladder touched the wall, and the foe leaped on the bulwarks, you dashed him down again in the name of Jesus by the power of the cross, and as often as he came up, so often did you hurl him down again, always overcoming in the power of the Gospel. Keeping your ground against temptation from without, and corruption from within, by the energy which the Gospel of Jesus Christ alone could give you.

One point may help us to see the glory of the Gospel, namely, that it has saved us from tremendous ills. The ills which are to come upon the unbeliever, who shall describe them? If a spirit could cross the bridgeless gulf which parts us from the land of darkness and the shadow of death, if he could tell us what are the unutterable pangs which are endured by guilty souls, then might we say, "Glorious indeed is that Gospel which can lift us from the gates of hell, and preserve us from going down to the pit."

Think, my brethren, of what the joys are for which the Gospel is preparing us! It is by the Holy Ghost, through the preaching of the Word, that we are ripening for those joys which "eye hath not seen," and which "ear hath not heard." Meekness for heaven will not come to us by the law, but by the Gospel. Not so much as one of the celestials came there by the deeds of the flesh, but altogether by the sovereign grace of God revealed to them in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. A glorious Gospel it is, for it brings its disciples to glory!

Let me ask you whether it is glorious to you at this hour? I think I can say it is to me. I wish it were in my power to make it more glorious in my ministry, but it is glorious to my own heart. After some years of experience, the Christian comes to know better than he did at first how much the Gospel suits him.

He finds that its simplicity suits his bewilderment. Its grace suits his sinfulness. Its power is suitable to his weakness. Its comfort is suitable to his despondency. And the older he grows the more he loves the Gospel of the grace of God. Give it up? Ah! never. We will hold Christ the more firmly because men despise Him. To whom or whither should we go if we should turn aside from our Lord Jesus?

Now, dear hearers, before I leave this point, I want to put it to you again, with much loving solicitude. Is the Gospel glorious to you? Remember, if it is not, there can be no hope for you. There is no way of salvation except by the good news that, "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners," and if that news should sound in your ears as a dry, dull thing, rest assured you are not on the way to heaven, for the Gospel to every saved soul is sweeter than the sound of the best earthly music. Is it so to you?

God is pleased today to put up before your eyes the white flag of mercy, calling you to come to Jesus and live. But recollect if you do not yield to it, He will run up the red flag of threatening, and then the black flag of execution will not be far off.

Perhaps some of you have been suffering under bodily disease, take that as a warning. When our vessels of war would stop a suspicious vessel, they fire a shot athwart her bows as a warning. If she does not haul to, perhaps they give another, and if no notice is taken of this, the gunners go to their business in real earnest, and woe to the offender. Your affliction is the Gospel's warning gun. Pause awhile, I beseech you, ask the Lord in mercy to look upon you that you may be saved!

As I think upon some of you here who are not saved, I feel something like the boy I read of yesterday in the newspapers. Last week there were two lads on the great rocks of Lundy Island, in the Bristol Channel, looking for seagull eggs. One of them went far down the cliff, and lost his footing, and when his brother, hearing a faint voice, looked down, he saw him clinging to a jutting crag, and striving in vain to find a place for his feet.

There stood the anxious brother, alarmed and paralyzed with dread, quite unable to help the younger one in so much peril below, who soon relaxed his hold and was dashed to pieces far beneath. I feel somewhat like that alarmed brother, only there is this happy difference—I *can* hope for you and bid you hope for yourselves.

You are clinging now, perhaps, to some false hope, and striving to find a rest where rest is not to be found. But the strong-winged angel of the everlasting Gospel is just underneath you this morning, crying, "Drop now. Simply drop into My arms. I will take you and bear you aloft in safety." That angel is the Angel of the Covenant, the Lord Jesus Christ. You must be dashed to pieces forever unless you rest in Him. But cast yourself upon Him, I pray you, and then, as you are carried in safety far off from every fear, you will magnify the grace of God and extol the glorious Gospel.

I must leave that point, and observe that Paul recognized the Gospel as being *the Gospel of God*. Here arises another inquiry, by which we may know whether we are saved or not. Has the Gospel been the Gospel of God to you, my friends? It is easy to receive the Gospel as the Gospel of "my minister." I am afraid there is a good deal of that sort of thing among us.

We have great faith in our religious teachers, and very properly so, if we have received benefit from them. But if the Gospel only comes to us as the Gospel of such and such a preacher, it will not save us. It must come distinctly and directly as *God's Gospel*, and we must receive it so. It is in solemn silence of the mind our privilege to hear the voice of God speaking to us and to receive the truth in the love of it as coming with divine authority directly from God.

Remember that all religion which is not the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart will have to be unraveled, let it be woven ever so cunningly. We may build, as our little children do on the seashore, our sand houses, and we may pile them up very quickly too, and we may be very pleased with them—but they will all come down as the tide of time advances. Only that which God the Holy Ghost builds upon the foundation of Christ's finished work will stand the test of time and eternity.

How is it with you? If the Spirit of Christ be not in you, you are dead. If the Gospel itself should come to you in a sort of power, but only because of the pathos of the preacher or the eloquent manner of his speech, it has not brought eternal life to you.

If the Gospel be indeed the Gospel of God to us, it will exalt God in our estimation. The Father we shall love and adore, having chosen us to eternal life. The Son we shall love with warmest affection, having redeemed us with His precious blood. The Holy Spirit we shall constantly reverence, and we shall cherish Him as dwelling a welcome guest within these bodies of ours.

By this we may tell whether we have received the truth of God, by its bringing us consciously into connection with God. Does God dwell in you, my hearer? for if not, you will not dwell where God is. You must know the Holy Spirit, not as an influence to be poured out as some pray, but as dwelling within you, resting in your heart.

I put that as a very important question, but I will not pause over it, for I have to close our first head by noticing that the Gospel was to Paul the "*gospel of the blessed God*." I believe William Knibb used to read this passage, "The gospel of the happy God," and it was not a mistake—it is the very gist of the matter. "The gospel of the happy God."

Have you ever considered how happy God must be! how supremely happy? No care, no sorrow can ever pass across His infinite mind. He is serenely blessed evermore. Now, when a man is miserable, and of a miserable turn of mind, he as naturally makes people miserable, as a foul fountain pours out foul water.

But when a good man is superlatively happy, he imparts happiness. A happy face attracts many of us, and a happy temperament, a quiet mind, a serene disposition, why, a man who has these inevitably tries to make others happy. And it is, I suppose, because God is infinitely happy, that He delights in the happiness of His creatures.

The fabled gods of the heathen were vexed with all sorts of ambitions, longings, and cravings, which they could not gratify, or which, when gratified, only made them crave more, consequently they are pictured as revengeful and cruel, delighting in the miseries of men. But our God is so perfectly blessed, that He has no motive for causing needless sorrow to His creatures. He has all perfection within Himself, and consequently, He delights to make us happy.

How much satisfaction God finds in the happiness of creatures that are devoid of intellect? You may have seen sometimes when the sea is going down, a little fringe at the edge of the wave which looks like mist. But if you were carefully to examine it, you would find that there were countless multitudes of very tiny shrimp, all leaping up and casting themselves into all manner of forms of intense delight.

Look again at the gnats, as you walk in your gardens in the summer's evenings—how they dance up and down—these little mirthful beings are all exhibiting to us the perfect blessedness that God would have to be manifested by all His creatures. He would have His people supremely blest, He would have every vessel of mercy full to the brim with the oil of joy, and the way to make us so is to give us the Gospel.

The Gospel is sent, to use our Savior's words, "that His joy may be in us, and that our joy may be full." We enjoy heaven upon earth as we sit at the feast of fat things on earth—what will be our glory when the Gospel of the blessed God shall have turned out all our sin, when we shall swim in the Gospel as the fish swims in the sea, when the Gospel shall become our element in the next world. Oh! the happiness of the creatures that are full of the Gospel spirit before the throne of God!

Dear hearer, did the Gospel ever come to you in that shape? I am afraid that to most people the Gospel is a bondage, because they do not know it in very deed. I am afraid that to many, Gospel emotion is a sort of spasm. They are satisfied with the truth sometimes, but at other times, when they feel they must have a treat, they go into the world for it. Where you get your treats there your heart is. Whatever it is that gives you the most happiness, that is the master of your spirit.

The Christian feels that he can sing with old Mason—

*"I need not go abroad for joys, I have a feast at home;
My sighs are tamed into songs, my heart has ceased to roam."*

*"Down from above the bless'd Dove is come into my breast,
To witness God's eternal love, and give my spirit rest."*

*"My God, I'll praise Thee while I live, and praise Thee when I die;
And praise Thee when I rise again, and to eternity."*

The religion of the genuine Christian is calculated to impart perfect delight. The truly regenerated man desires to have more and more of it, that his soul may be baptized in heavenly joy.

"The gospel of the happy God," also means the Gospel of the God whom we must bless in return. As being happy, He makes us happy. So we, being happy, desire to ascribe to Him all the glory of our happiness.

Now, is the Gospel to you, my dear young friend over there, the Gospel of a God whom you bless with all your heart, because He has sent it to you, and made you willing to receive it? If so, you are saved. But if not, if no emotions of sincere gratitude stir the deeps of your soul, then the Gospel has been to you no more than a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.

II. The apostle says, "The glorious gospel of the blessed God, which is committed to my trust." DO YOU RECOGNIZE YOUR RESPONSIBILITY?

Paul speaks not here of himself alone. He might have said, "which is committed to the trust of every believer in Christ." The Gospel is a priceless treasure and the saints are the bankers of it. It is committed to our trust as men commit business to their agents.

First, we are bound *to believe it all*. Take heed of receiving a divided and maimed Gospel. It has been said that "Only half the truth is a lie," and so it is. Most of the ill reports which distress the world have truth at the foundation of them, but they become false through the exaggeration of one part and the omission of the next.

It should be the duty of every enlightened Christian to labor to master the whole compass of truth so far as possible. I suppose none but the Infinite mind can know all the lengths and breadths of truth, but

still we should not be warped by education, nor be kept from receiving truth by prejudice. We should strive against all partiality, and it should be, whenever we open this Book, one of our prayers, “Open thou my eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.”

To have a mind like molten metal, ready to be run into the mold of the truth, to have a soul like the photographer’s sensitive plate, ready to receive the light-writing of God at once, so that the truth may be there in its entirety, to be willing to give up the most cherished dogma, the most flesh-pleasing form of teaching, when we find it to be contrary to Scripture, this is to be a true disciple. To sit at Jesus’ feet and learn of Him, is the life-business of the Christian in this house of his pilgrimage. The Gospel is in this sense, committed to our trust, for we are to lay it up in our hearts.

But some one demands, “How am I to know which is the Gospel?” You may know it by searching the Scriptures. “But one sect says this, and another sect says the opposite.” What have you to do with the sects? Read the Book of God for yourself. “But some men do read it and arrive at one opinion, and some maintain the opposite, and thus they contradict themselves, and yet are equally right.”

Who told you that? That is impossible. Men cannot be equally right when they contradict each other. There is a truth and there is a falsehood. If *yes* be true, *no* is false. It may be true that good men have held different opinions, but are you responsible for what they may have held, or are you to gather that because they were good personally, therefore everything they believed was true?

No, but this Book is plain enough. It is no nose of wax that everybody may shape to what form he likes. There is something taught here plainly and positively, and if a man will but give his mind to it, by God’s grace he may find it out. I do not believe that this Book is so dark and mysterious as some suppose or if it were, the Holy Spirit who wrote it still lives, and the Author always knows His own meaning—you have only to go to Him in prayer and He will tell you what it means.

You will not become infallible, I trust you will not think yourself to be so, but you will learn doctrines which are infallibly true, and upon which you may put down your foot and say, “Now I know this, and am not to be duped out of it.” It is a grand thing to have the truth burnt into you, as with a hot iron, so that there is no getting it out of you.

The priest, when he took away the Testament from the boy, thought he had done the work. “But,” said the boy, “sir, what will you do with the six-and- twenty chapters which I learned by heart? You cannot take them away.” Yet memory might fail, and as the lad grew into an old man, he might forget the six-and-twenty chapters. But suppose they changed his heart and made him a new creature in Christ—there would be no getting that away, even though Satan himself should attempt the task.

Seek to carry out the sacred trust committed to you by believing it, and believing it all. Search the Word to find out what the Gospel is, and endeavor to receive it into your inmost heart that it may be in your heart’s core forever.

Next, as good stewards we must *maintain the cause of truth* against all comers. “Never get into religious controversies,” says one—that is to say, being interpreted, be a Christian soldier, but let your sword rust in its scabbard and sneak into heaven like a coward. Such advice I cannot endorse. If God has called you by the truth, maintain the truth which has been the means of your salvation.

We are not to be pugnacious, always contending for every crotchet of our own, but wherein we have learned the truth of the Holy Spirit, we are not tamely to see that standard torn down which our fathers upheld at peril of their blood. This is an age in which the truth must be maintained zealously, vehemently, continually.

Playing fast and loose as many do, believing this today and that tomorrow, is the sure mark of children of wrath. But having received the truth, to hold fast to the very form of it, as Paul bids Timothy to do, is one of the duties of heirs of heaven. Stand fast for truth, and may God give the victory to the faithful.

We must believe the Gospel and maintain it, for it is committed to our trust. It seems to me, however, that the most of us may best fulfill our responsibility to the Gospel by *adorning it* in our lives,

Men give jewels to those whom they love, and so, if we love the Gospel, let our virtues be the jewels which shall display our love.

A servant girl may adorn the Gospel. She goes to a place of worship, and perhaps her irreligious mistress may object to her going. I remember Mr. Jay telling a story of such a case, where the master and mistress had forbidden the girl to attend a Dissenting place of worship. She pleaded very hard, and at last determined to leave the house.

The master said to his wife, "Well, you see our servant is a very excellent servant. We never had such an industrious girl as she is. Everything in the house is kept so orderly, and she is so obedient, and so on. Now, she does not interfere with our consciences, it is a pity we should interfere with hers. Wherever she goes, it certainly does her no hurt—why not let her go?"

In the next conversation the wife said, "I really think, husband, that our servant gets so much good where she goes, that we had better go and hear for ourselves." And they were soon members of the very same church which they had thought so lightly of at the first.

Now we can each of us in our station do that. We are not all called to preach in these boxes called pulpits, but we may preach more conveniently and much more powerfully behind the counter or in the drawing room, or in the parlor, or in the field, or wherever else providence may have placed us. Let us endeavor to make men mark what kind of Gospel we believe.

Only a few weeks ago, a missionary in China took his gun to go up one of the rivers of the interior to shoot wild ducks. And as he went along in the boat, he shot at some ducks and down they fell. Unfortunately they did not happen to be wild fowl, but tame ducks belonging to some of the neighbors. The owner was miles away, but the boat was drawn up to the side of the river, and the missionary went about carefully endeavoring to find out the owner of the ducks, for he could not rest until he had paid for the damage he had ignorantly done.

The owner was much surprised, he had been so accustomed to have people shoot his ducks and never saying a word about it, that he could not understand the honesty of the man of God, and he told others, until crowds of Chinese gathered round and stared at the missionary as if he had dropped from the moon—a man so extremely honest as not to be willing to take away ducks when he had killed them!

They listened to the Gospel with attention, and observed that the teaching must be good which made people so conscientious as the missionary had been. I should not wonder but what that little incident did more for the Gospel than the preaching of twenty sermons might have done without it. So let it be with us. Let us so act in every position that we shall adorn the Gospel which is committed to our trust.

Lastly, it is committed to our trust if we have received it that we may *spread it*—spread it personally by telling it abroad. If more could preach the Gospel it would be well. We have in all our congregations young men who are hard at work—at this very moment I do not doubt but what we have a hundred preaching in the street—perhaps more.

But I have sometimes regretted that so few of the wealthier men enter into such labor. We wish to see the men of ten talents preaching—the men of large abilities consecrating themselves to Christ. Many of our young members are more useful at literary institutions than in the church. Other useful occupations are all very well in their way, but I wish we could get the strength of our men spent more in the preaching of the Gospel.

The first business of a Christian is his Christianity, all the rest, his patriotism even, must be kept subservient to that, for heaven is more his country than England is, and Jesus Christ is rather his King than any of the kings of earth. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness."

I would ask young men now present who love the Lord, whether they really are doing for the cause of God what they ought to do? Whether they could not do something more by way of making manifest in every place the savor of Jesus Christ's name?

My Sisters, your voices are exceedingly sweet, but we like to hear them better anywhere than from a pulpit. But still you have your sphere—do you occupy it for Christ? The Christian woman's first call is to serve Jesus in the family, next to that to serve Christ in her neighborhood. Are we doing so? The

“glorious gospel of the blessed God” is as much committed to your trust, Christian woman, as if there were not another Christian under heaven—how would it fare if it were so? If all other Christians died, would you have done by the Gospel what it might demand of you? All the zeal and industry of ten thousand others cannot touch your personal responsibility as a Christian.

I have to ask you, this morning, to help me to spread the glorious Gospel. Some years ago, having done my utmost to preach the Word with my own mouth, finding that running up and down throughout the country, preaching ten or twelve times a week, I was still able to do but very little. I thought if I found other tongues, and set them talking, found other brains and set them thinking, I might, perhaps, do more for the cause of my blessed Master.

One young man was thrown in my way who was educated for me by an esteemed brother for the Christian ministry. And when he was greatly owned of God as preacher, the desire to assist students grew within my heart, and that one young man gave place to ten, then twenty, then thirty, then fifty, then ninety, as at the present.

The Pastor’s College, for which I ask your contributions this morning, has grown to be a power for good. We have had for some successive years between eighty and ninety brethren in training for the ministry. The whole of the support for them is found by the gifts of God’s people which they voluntarily send, without being waited upon by any collector, or asked for annual subscriptions. I have nothing to depend upon but the providence of God which directs the generosity of His people.

Sometimes my funds run rather short, but never so short that I am really in need, for when the treasury is scantily furnished, we call the young men together and pray about it, and many a time we have had as distinct answers to prayer as though God had stretched his hand out of heaven to give the needful money.

Some five thousand pounds a year are spent in this way, which God always sends when it is wanted. We have built several places of worship. We have formed and founded several fresh churches. We have evangelized the darkest districts of London and the country—and our men are now to be found in Australia, on the rock of St. Helena, in Southern Africa, in America, and all quarters of the earth. God has been pleased to bless them, and has given them souls for their hire, and we shall be glad if you feel moved to give towards their maintenance.

Before I dismiss you, I would like to press home to each one the question, “Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? Has the Gospel become a glorious Gospel to you?” I do not know you as I know my own people, but when I look along my galleries I mourn over those who have been hearing the word ten years, and are the same as if they never heard it.

I suppose there are some of you in the like case, and my esteemed brother, Mr. Tucker, must cast his eye around the gallery, and the area, and see many who have grown Gospel-hardened. It is a horrible thing to think of! The same sun that melts wax hardens clay, and to some hearts the Gospel becomes the savor of death unto death.

If nothing comes of this morning’s service but making every one inquire how it is with his own soul, if it shall only constrain you to go to your solitary chamber and shut the door and pray, “O Lord, let me know this glorious Gospel. I have not understood it up till now, for it has not been glorious to me. Do make it so to me this day, that I may be saved!” My heart will be very glad if such shall be the case.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—1 TIMOTHY 1

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