

# TODAY'S SYNTHETIC GOSPEL

A TIMELY CALL TO THE EMPLOYMENT OF TRUE GOSPEL PREACHING

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## A DETHRONED CHRIST

Where is the power of Edwards or Whitefield? Where is a modern day Wesley or Spurgeon? To put it another way, where is the message that these men preached with divine authority? The gospel message that they preached was full of God, throbbing with God, God was the gospel. They preached the character of God, the law of God, repentance towards God, acceptance with God, and dependence on God. Everything in their preaching was Christ Exalting and God honoring. Spurgeon said: "The sermon which does not lead to Christ, or of which Jesus Christ is not the top and the bottom, is a sort of sermon that will make the devils in hell laugh, but might make the angels of God weep." If a gospel message does not begin with the lifting up of God, it then is the lowering of heaven to earth and making what is Holy mundane. George Whitefield said: "The Christian world is in a deep sleep; nothing but a loud

shout can awaken them out of it!” We are preaching a man-centered gospel that denies a Holy God. The gospel begins with God and ends with God, if we miss this we miss the gospel. We are living in an age of synthetic gospel preaching, hence the Church has little power in modern day evangelism. Satan has been successfully employing men in preaching a dethroned Christ and a powerless Gospel.

Walter Chantry said: “On the shallow ground of men’s logic, large numbers have been led to assume they have a right to everlasting life and have been given an assurance which does not belong to them.” again he states, “To please God you must labour as Christ labored. To reach them you must say what our Lord said.” Surely in this day we need true gospel preaching that is the same as the employ of our Lord and the Apostles. William Booth the founder of the Salvation Army prophesied of a false gospel that would be preached in the twentieth century. He warned of a generation that would accept a gospel that preached a faith without repentance, religion without the Holy Spirit, a salvation without Lordship and a Christianity without Christ. Are you preaching a synthetic gospel? Are you believing a synthetic gospel? Paul the apostle speaks plainly of “another gospel” this “other” gospel damns people to eternal suffering apart from Christ and God. May we shudder under the gravity of the thought that a synthetic gospel is so widely preached and believed upon.

## OFFENDING A HOLY GOD

Reverence, respect and solemnity for the character of God must begin and accompany true gospel preaching. The glorifying of God in preaching extols His character, holiness, attributes and draws a large conception of God. The problem with this modern day synthetic gospel is that we preach man’s need and not God’s character with utmost urgency. True gospel preaching tells men that they have offended a holy God who will by no means wink at sin. Walter Chantry said: “Christ’s gospel sends men to beg pardon of the Holy One!” We have to realize that the holiness of God is what we have offended and sinned against and are in active rebellion to this infinitely pure God. A modern day fallacy is to say that all people know of God and His true character, nothing is farther from the truth. People are ready to talk about God in a religious sense but are utterly ignorant of God and His holiness. We are making an awful mistake in taking for granted that sinners know who God is! We lack severely in these two areas: Preaching the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man both of these truths need to be addressed to the hearers conscience directly, not argued but proclaimed.

J.C Ryle gives a forceful picture of our sin against a Holy God: “nevertheless settle it firmly in our minds that sin is ‘the abominable thing that God hateth’ that God ‘is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and cannot look upon that which is evil.’ That the least transgression of God’s law makes us ‘guilty of all’ that ‘the soul that sinneth shall surely die’ that ‘the wages of sin is death’ that God shall ‘judge the secrets of men’ that there is a worm that never dies, and a fire that is not quenched. That ‘the wicked shall be turned into hell’ and ‘shall go away into everlasting punishment’ and that ‘nothing that defiles shall in

any wise enter heaven.’ These are indeed tremendous words when we consider that they are written in the Book of a most merciful God!”

## MONSTERS OF INIQUITY!

Walter Chantry said: “The truth is that God is holy. Thus, He is angry with the sinner at this moment. His sword of wrath already hangs over the head of the guilty and will forever torment him unless he repents and trusts Christ.” We are sinners in the sight of such a Holy God and not only sinners but guilty sinners. We are a criminal before God. Holy Scripture tells us that we are “by nature children of wrath,” and that “the carnal mind is enmity to God.” In light of this we need a repentant heart before God, spurgeon said: “He that never mourned over sin has never rejoiced in the Lord. If I can look back on my past life and say, ‘I have no grief over it,’ then I should do the same again if I had the opportunity. And this shows that my heart is as perverse as ever it was, and I am still unregenerate.” Again spurgeon states: “If you can look on sin without sorrow, then you have never looked on Christ. Try yourself by this test.” Walter Chantry said: “Where are there pulpits clearly showing that God’s pure law makes strict demands upon the soul? The twentieth century church has tried to see how little it can say and still get converts.” Unless true God-exalted preaching ensues there can be no true genuine repentance from sin towards God.

Paris Reidhead in his famous sermon ‘ten shekels and a shirt’ talks about the crimes of humanity against the law of God and the character of God: “What about you? Why did you repent? I'd like to see some people repent on Biblical terms again. George Whitefield knew it. He stood on Boston Commons speaking to twenty thousand people and he said, ‘Listen sinners, you're monsters, monsters of iniquity! You deserve Hell! And the worst of your crimes is that criminals though you've been, you haven't had the good grace to see it!’ He said, ‘If you will not weep for your sins and your crimes against a Holy God, George Whitefield will weep for you!’ That man would put his head back and he would sob like a baby. Why? Because they were in danger of Hell? No! But because they were monsters of iniquity, that didn't even see their sin or care about their crimes. You see the difference? You see the difference? The difference is, here's somebody trembling because he is going to be hurt in Hell. And he has no sense of the enormity of his guilt! and no sense of the enormity of his crime! and no sense of his insult against deity!”

Reidhead continues in his sermon: “This is the difference between twentieth century preaching and the preaching of John Wesley. Wesley was a preacher of righteousness that exalted the holiness of God. When he would stand there with the two to three hour sermons that he was accustomed to deliver in the open air and he would exalt the holiness of God, and the law of God, and the righteousness of God, and the justice of God, and the wisdom of His requirements! and the justice of his wrath and his anger! Then he would turn to sinners and tell them of the enormity of their crimes and their open rebellion

and their treason, and their anarchy, and the power of God would so descend upon the company, that on one occasion it is reliably reported that when the people dispersed there were 1800 people lying on the ground, utterly unconscious! Because they had a revelation of the holiness of God and in the light of that they'd seen the enormity of their sins and God had so penetrated their minds and hearts that they had fallen to the ground! But there was a difference! It wasn't trying to convince a good man that he was in trouble with a bad God! But that it was to convince bad men that they had deserved the wrath and anger of a good God! And the consequences were repentance, that lead to faith, and lead to life. Dear friends, there's only one reason, one reason for a sinner to repent and that's because Jesus Christ deserves the worship and adoration and the love and the obedience of his heart. Not because he'll go to heaven.”

## RECOVERY OF THE GOSPEL

The most urgent task facing the evangelical Church in our day is the recovering of the gospel. J.I. Packer speaking of the synthetic gospel compared to the old true gospel said: “It fails to make men God-centered in their thoughts and God-fearing in their hearts because this is not primarily what it is trying to do. One way of stating the difference between it and the old gospel is to say that it is too exclusively concerned with being 'helpful' to man - to bring peace, comfort, happiness, satisfaction - and too little concerned to glorify God.” This new gospel comes at a bargain price only costing the sinner a hour an week to be secured forever in heaven. While the old gospel requires the life of the sinner and this life to be transformed into a life that worships and glorifies God. The Bible is against us when we preach in such a manner. Let us aim at nothing less then to preach the full counsel of God. We are in dire need in our day of preaching that speaks of God as He is and men as they are, unholy! Let us not grow weary in exalting the great holy God in our preaching or else we find ourselves distributing a false, spurious, synthetic gospel that is of no power. Hear the admonition of Richard Baxter: “Screw the truth into men's minds.” Let us at all cost hold onto and proclaim this true gospel and leave alone any substitute. Without a clear proclamation of the majesty of God and the Law of God there cannot be a true receiving of the gospel of grace. Preach Christ and Him Crucified. Notice the order, first preach “Christ” then the “Cross” of Christ, this is the divine order of preaching the message of the gospel. I leave you dear reader with some quotes from the mighty Whitefield: “Various are the pleas and arguments which men of corrupt minds frequently urge against yielding obedience to the just and holy commands of God.” And another quote: “Although believers by nature, are far from God, and children of wrath, even as others, yet it is amazing to think how nigh they are brought to him again by the blood of Jesus Christ.” As Leonard Ravenhill pleaded so we agree: “God of Whitefield, give us today men like Whitefield who can stand as giants in the pulpit, men with burdened hearts, burning lips, and brimming eyes, and Lord, please do it soon!”