

“THE CERTIFIED GOSPEL”

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*“But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man”
(Gal. 1:11).*

We are living in the day of certified things. We demand certified food and certified clothing, and sometimes, certified checks. But I wonder if people think as much of their religion as they do a bottle of milk? Along the highways, we read the billboards, advertising certain products, warnings against substitutes and frauds and such as, “Watch for the trademark” and “take no substitutes.” But in religion the masses yield to the flimsy sentiment that it makes no difference what one believes just so he thinks it is all right. As well say that it makes no difference what one eats or drinks so long as he thinks it is all right. Would it be safe to eat rat poison if one should believe it to be salad dressing or dessert? It is not eating that imparts and sustains life, but what one eats. So it is not believing that saves the soul, but what one believes. The One who knows what it takes to save said: “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” Error cannot be made a substitute for the truth, in the saving plan. My friend, you had better look for the trademark on your religion. Has it ever occurred to you that your religion may not be certified?

The Original Gospel

Let us examine the general features, or characteristics, of this gospel which Paul certified to be not after man, but of God. First of all, it is the original gospel. Paul marveled that some had so soon removed from Christ’s gospel “unto another gospel.” So there are many gospels today, but they are not the original, and they cannot save. The certified gospel is the ancient gospel. Anything in religion that has had its origin this side of the New Testament, or outside of the New Testament, is a human product and is not the certified gospel. Every creed written by man or any set of men falls under this indictment. Men are engaged in a nefarious business who write a substitute creed for the original apostle’s creed—the New Testament. What do these men think they are doing? Do you, my friends, who have subscribed to various creeds, believe in your hearts that these men have improved on the New Testament? But we are living in a world of changes. The world demands something new. No longer do the masses ask, Is it true? But rather, Is it new? Thus the church, so-called, has come to be looked upon as a sort of a cult to keep people attracted by novelties and entertained with innovations. But the true gospel is of necessity the old gospel. It has an unmistakable trademark. Heed my warning, friend, and take no substitute. If already you have had such imposed upon you, cast it away, lest it cost you your soul.

The Pure Gospel

Another mark of the certified gospel is purity—it must be the pure gospel. He who certified it said: “But there be some who trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.” A perverted gospel is an adulterated gospel. It cannot save. Did you ever hear a preacher pray for God to send down Holy Ghost saving power upon sinners? It would be

just as sensible to pray for God to send down power to quell the hunger or quench the thirst. If one so ignorant, should so pray, a child could show him a loaf of bread or a glass of water. And why preachers who pray for direct saving power do not have the plain intelligence to

tell men terms of the gospel which Paul declares to be “the power of God unto salvation” is mighty strange to me. Therein, my friends, you may all at once be instructed in what to do to be saved. But we were speaking of perversion. Power can be perverted. Bread is God’s power to satisfy hunger, but a measure of poison intermixed will destroy its power. Water is God’s power to quench thirst, but a portion of salt will destroy that agency. The gospel is God’s power to save the soul, but when men’s doctrines and human opinions are mixed up with it, the adulteration destroys its agency. It takes the truth preached, the truth heard, the truth believed, the truth obeyed, to make a Christian. Error preached, error heard, error believed, error obeyed, cannot make a Christian. No man can accidentally obey God. And the man who adulterates, the gospel is a far greater enemy to your soul than the man who would pollute a drinking fountain or poison the source of food is to society. Paul said: “Let him be accursed.”

The Adequate Gospel

There is another word that describes the certified gospel. It is the adequate gospel—adequate for all time, every tongue and clime. The inspired man who certified it continues to say: “If any man (though we, or an angel from heaven) preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.” What a curse! This gospel was delivered for all time to come. It was not made subject to alterations and changes. The pattern was perfect. The cloth out of which it was made was divine and Divinity cut it. Human hands dare not change it. The man who does perishes under the curse.

And then—this certified gospel is the glorious gospel. With all his human learning and attainments, Paul was not ashamed to preach it. “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ,” he said. He had preached it in Athens; he was ready to bear its glad news to Rome. He would pit it against the consolidated power and pomp of Rome and Athens. He was unashamed of the message and its Author, and never afraid to preach its rigid but righteous demands. It is said that such cannot be said of all preachers today—even some who profess to be gospel preachers but who halt and hesitate, falter and fail, in preaching all that the gospel demands in the charge “reprove, rebuke and exhort.” To preach truth (part of it) but not the whole truth (all of it) is a poor alibi for men who call themselves preachers. The certified gospel is the saving gospel, friend, and your only hope of salvation lies in obedience to its commands.

The Being of God

Having discussed the outward characteristics of the gospel Paul certified, let us now take a look inside its principles. What are its elements? Let Paul define it. It is first, the gospel of God. “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God.” There is the very first principle stated—the Being of God; yes, God versus evolution. Who wants the gospel (?) of evolution? The evolutionist would have us

suppose that life originated in the depth of the sea, a primordial protoplasm, and through millions of years developed (probably) into the sea mammal, which chanced one time to be left out on the shore (perhaps) when tides receded where he was, and in new environment he squirmed for survival (supposedly) in process of which friction developed, four warts in the right places to make probable legs; and while that was being done the sun also (very likely) created a friction on the upper side that started two freckles in just the right spots to make eyes, which supposedly they probably did; and when this animal, after no telling how long, could perhaps see and walk, it had also developed a caudal appendage (known to most of us as a tail) which somehow got twisted around a limb or bough or a tree and the forest became the home of this animal for a millennium or so, and his diet was coconuts (being most likely that kind of an animal); but when the spirit of adventure possessed this animal of the trees, he one day left his forest home, descended to the ground, and in process of time, lost his tail—so we are here! Read the textbooks of evolution, their “outline of history” and their “science of life” and see that their groundless theories are just that wholly unintelligible and, absurd—yet they boast of “knowledge” and sneer at credulity! Who would accept such consummate and unmitigated nonsense as that in exchange for the majestic and sublime first sentence in the Bible—“In the beginning God.” With David we exclaim: “Know ye Jehovah that He is God; it is He that made us and we are His.” Let us have the gospel of God.

The Deity of Jesus

The next element of the certified gospel is the Deity of Christ—Jesus Christ versus Modernism. We have heard much of Jesus of Nazareth, the Galilean, the moralist, the teacher, his methods, ethics, and example—but what is needed is more of Paul’s first sermon as recorded in Acts 9:20: “And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.” And that fact depends on his Virgin Birth, his Vicarious Death, his Victorious Resurrection, his Triumphant Ascension and his Glorious Coronation. The God who created Adam and Eve and placed within the pair the potentiality of reproduction, could transfer that power to one person instead of two—and that is the meaning of the Virgin Birth. It is just a matter of believing that God could send his Son into the world through the instrumentality of human motherhood, without a human father, and that he did. The further fact is that Jesus Christ died for our sins—the innocent for the guilty—He, the Son of God, the unoffending victim of man’s transgression, died to save the race. His Cross declares God’s infinite hatred of sin, and God’s infinite love for the sinner. It took the sinless soul of the Son of God to atone for the sinful soul of fallen man. God so loved the world! Then, there is the mighty arch of Christian faith—is resurrection from the dead. He arose from the dead as a bodily fact—raised for our justification—and by his resurrection “declared to be the Son of God with power.” (Rom. 1:4). He ascended to heaven. There the coronation ceremonies were held and he is King, not to be, but now in act and in fact, and he offers full citizenship in his Kingdom, the church, to all earth’s denizens who will take his yoke (government) and learn of him (obey his will), with all the blessings belonging to such as inherit his kingdom. The certified gospel is the gospel of Christ.

The Unity of The Church

But Christ cannot be separated from the institution purchased with his blood—so the certified gospel is that of Christ and the Church. It is God versus Evolution; Christ versus Modernism; the Church versus Denominationalism. If we have traveled together this far, friends let us not separate now—the church, one church. With me it is the church, or no church. Remember, the one who certified the gospel—Paul, the apostle—said that “there is one body” (Eph. 4:4) and that the body is “the church” (Eph. 1:22) and that there is “but (only) one body.” That is putting it plain enough—one body, but one body; one church, only one church. Why beat the devil around the bush—just beat the Old Scratch over the head, where he needs it! Scripturally considering the matter, I would as soon have one ask me what God I worship, or what Christ I believe in, as to ask me what church I belong to. Considering the fact that Christ built one, died for one, purchased one, and is the head of but one—deep down in your heart, what church do you, yourself, think one should belong to, friend? Leaving out everything but this inside honest question—what is your answer? The certified gospel is the gospel of Christ and the church versus men and their movements.

Salvation Versus Sensation

Finally, the certified gospel is “the gospel of our salvation”—the gospel plan of salvation versus the sensationalism of modern “revivals.” For years, every union evangelist has had his patent method of conversion. Billy Sunday shouted “hit the sawdust trail.” Gipsy Smith pleads “sign a decision card.” But Jesus said: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” and his keynote speaker of Pentecost, who had the keys of the kingdom, imbued with the Spirit, infallible in all his utterances, declared to several thousand inquirers: “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” What preacher today can do better than tell unsaved people to do these things? The divine plan is the same—faith to change the heart, destroying the love of sin; repentance to change the will, destroying the habits of sin; and baptism to change the state (or location), seeing that such a one is baptized into Christ; by baptism translated from without to within and thus destroying the guilt of sin.

Friends, this is the certified gospel. We ask you now if you will not now receive it, promptly obey it, and stand upon its promises.~