

# THE GOSPEL MAGAZINE

"COMFORT YE, COMFORT YE MY PEOPLE, SAITH YOUR GOD."  
"ENDEAVOURING TO KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IN THE BOND OF PEACE."  
"JESUS CHRIST, THE SAME YESTERDAY, AND TO-DAY, AND FOR EVER."

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## The Family Portion :

OR, WORDS OF SPIRITUAL CAUTION, COUNSEL, AND COMFORT.

"Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."—2 CORINTHIANS i. 4.

### CHRIST : A LIGHT AND SALVATION UNTO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

*"For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set Thee to be a Light of the Gentiles, that Thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth."*—ACTS xiii. 47.

PAUL and Barnabas had started out on their first missionary journey. They visited the island of Cyprus and had come to Antioch in Pisidia. On the sabbath day they went into the synagogue in that place. It was the Lord's custom to attend the synagogue on the sabbath day, and both Paul and Barnabas did the same. What a blessing it would be if our Christian synagogues were filled on every sabbath. Sad to say, they are now very largely empty. More than sixty years ago we were privileged to assist in ministering in a Christian church on the sabbath day, at which about eight hundred were present every sabbath morning and about twelve hundred every sabbath evening. At that church all the prayers were said in the natural voice and there was no surpliced choir, no anthems, and no harvest decorations. The sermons were not cut down to ten or fifteen minutes, but generally lasted half-an-hour in the morning and forty minutes in the evening. At the evening service the street was full before the doors opened at 6 o'clock for the

people to enter. Those were days when attendances at places of worship were much larger than they are today. A great change for the worse has taken place since those times. Terrible to realise, we are getting more and more a God-forgetting nation. Despite all the worldly and unscriptural attractions now resorted to, places of worship are becoming more and more empty. We are afraid God is judiciously giving us over to the consequences of rejecting His Gospel, the denying of the truths of His Word, and to the encouragement of sacerdotalism, modernism and worldliness. God's chosen Jewish people are largely judiciously blinded because of the rejection of His prophets, of His truth, and above all for crucifying the Lord of glory. O that we who profess to be His people may tremble more at His Word, and humble ourselves under His mighty hand. Sin abounds in our land, dear friends, and it is thought lightly of by the many.

Well, when Paul and Barnabas entered the synagogue, they sat down. The reading of the law and the prophets followed. There does not seem to have been any elaborate singing to please the flesh. The Word of God was read. Then an opportunity was given to Paul and Barnabas to address the congregation. Paul spoke, and he concluded his sermon by saying, "Through this Man (the crucified and risen Jesus) is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins : and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." Many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas. Evidently they were impressed with the sermon. Hence they followed Paul and Barnabas, "who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God." There was no after meeting and no "decision cards," but there was evidently some blessing. Many who were present besought that these words might be spoken to them the next sabbath. On the next sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the Word of God. A great number of those who came were Gentiles. "But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken unto you : but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set Thee to be a Light of the Gentiles, that Thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this they were glad, and glorified the Word of the Lord : and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed "

(Acts xiii. 45-48). Thus, notwithstanding the opposition, great blessing followed the Gospel testimony of Paul and Barnabas. This record of the visit of Paul and Barnabas to Antioch in Pisidia is full of instruction for us in these days.

1. *First, it teaches us the character of the sermons which Paul, God's servant, preached.*

The record of Paul's first sermon on this occasion shows it was based upon and full of Scripture. He reminded his hearers of the divine power which delivered His chosen people out of Egypt, of their forty years' wandering in the wilderness, of the conquest of the seven nations of Canaan, and the division of the land by lot to the twelve tribes of Israel. He went on to speak of Samuel the prophet, and of the reign of Saul the king. Then he spoke of David's reign, and added, "Of this man's seed hath God, according to His promise, raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus" (v. 23). Then he spoke to his hearers of the salvation which Jesus procured. "To you," he said, "is the word of this salvation sent." Then he proceeded to speak of Christ's death, burial and resurrection, quoting the second and sixteenth Psalms, and the 55th of Isaiah. Thus, having referred to the records of Exodus, and onwards to the books of Samuel, he announced that God had raised up a Saviour Jesus, and that through Him was preached unto his hearers the forgiveness of sins, and that by Christ all that believed were justified from all things.

Here is an example for all true preachers today. Their sermons should be based on the inspired Word of God, and the good tidings of justification by faith only should be announced to all the hearers of their message. We need in these degenerate days to get back to Scripture in our teaching, and to make the Gospel of divine grace the tidings of pardon and salvation, through the blood of the Lamb, the great theme of our preaching. Whether we are preaching from the Old Testament or the New, Christ and His salvation should be our regular theme. All Scripture is inspired, and it is all profitable for the proclamation of the Gospel. "Woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel," said Paul (1 Cor. ix. 16). This alone is our message: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."

2. *Secondly, we are taught that Gospel sermons will have varying effects.*

The Old Testament prophets were inspired men. Yet there came a time when the hearers of these prophets "mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words, and misused His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no

remedy" (2 Chron. xxxvi. 16). Speaking of himself and Timothy, the Apostle Paul said, "For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life" (2 Cor. ii. 15, 16). Evidently, then, the true preachers of the Gospel may have among their hearers those who through grace believe and are saved, and, on the other hand, they may have hearers who believe not and are damned. (See Mark xvi. 15, 16). It is clear that much blessing attended the preaching of the Apostles, but it is also clear that a great number rejected their messages. Paul's general experience is summed up in the words, "Now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, *to testify the Gospel of the grace of God*" (Acts xx. 22-24). Persecution characterised the experience of the Apostles, though they had much also to cheer them. This fact needs to be kept in mind. Our Lord taught them that they would be hated and persecuted by the world, and Paul wrote, "All that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. iii. 12). If we experience no persecution at all, it becomes doubtful that we are "living in Christ Jesus." Whatever a true minister of the Gospel suffers from the world, he should still go on "testifying to the Gospel of the grace of God." There is only one Gospel, and that Gospel we are not at any time in history to be ashamed of. It alone is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. (See Rom. i. 16.)

### 3. *Thirdly, we gather that the one Gospel is intended for Jews and GENTILES.*

On the second sabbath Paul and Barnabas had a much larger congregation. Almost the whole city gathered "to hear the Word of God." The Word of God was preached in the first sermon, and it was expected that it would again be preached. Can that be said today in any degree? Is the Word of God the basis of the sermons preached today? If it is, then the Gospel is preached. When Paul preached the Word of God on the first sabbath, he preached the Gospel; and when he and Barnabas preached the Word of God on the second sabbath, they preached the Gospel. The Apostle Peter says, "The Word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the Word by which the Gospel is preached unto you" (1 Peter i. 25). This Gospel, which is revealed to us, not by scientists, but by the

inspired writers of the Scriptures, is intended for Jews and also for Gentiles. On the second sabbath, when the Jews saw the multitudes present, largely consisting of Gentiles, "they were filled with envy and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming." Paul and Barnabas waxed bold and said, "It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing you put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set Thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that Thou shouldst be for salvation unto the end of the earth" (Acts xiii. 45-47; Isaiah xlix. 6).

As far back as the time of Abraham, God's purpose that Gentiles, as well as Jews, should experience the blessings of the Gospel was revealed, and Paul says, "The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen (Greek, *nations*) through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed" (Gal. iii. 8).

Our Lord enjoined that the Gospel should be preached to every creature. He said, "Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." "The uttermost part of the earth," as well as Jerusalem, all Judea, and Samaria, were to hear the good tidings. (See Luke xxiv. 47; Acts i. 8.) The Church of God is failing in obedience to her divine Lord, if she fails to make known the Gospel to the millions in China, India, and Africa, and other nations sunk in idolatry. What an infinite mercy it is to us Gentiles in England, that we have heard the joyful sound of the Gospel of divine grace, and that by divine grace so many have been turned from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God. Can we ever thank God enough if He has said to us, "I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins"? (Isaiah xlv. 22).

We, too, in these days, need to say, "Lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us."

4. *Fourthly, this great Gospel teaches us that Christ is set to be "a light of the Gentiles."*

When the Ephesian saints were worshippers of the goddess Diana, they were in spiritual darkness. But when "God, Who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved them," quickened them, and saved them by His grace, they became light in the Lord. The Apostle therefore said to them, "Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord" (Ephes. ii. 4, 5; v. 8). We are all by nature sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death, but

Christ came to give light to them that sit in darkness, and to guide their feet into the way of peace. Has He given light to all who read these lines? Many of the Thessalonian believers were in the darkness of idolatry, but when the Gospel came to them in power and in the Holy Ghost they became "the children of the light, and the children of the day." Hence the day of the Lord could not overtake them as a thief, for God had not appointed them to wrath but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. (See 1 Thess. i. 5, 9, 10; v. 4, 5-9.)

If we are "children of the light," let us not forget the exhortation, "walk as children of light," and "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness" (Ephes. v. 8-11). "Let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation" (1 Thess. v. 8).

5. *Lastly, notice that Christ is set to be God's salvation unto the ends of the earth.*

Why did He come? He "*came into the world to save sinners.*" Do you own yourself to be a sinner? Then there is hope for you. It was for such as you that He came. He came "to seek and to save that which is lost." Oh, the mercy of this great fact! What comfort does it bring to a really convicted sinner! Simeon, when he took the infant Saviour in his arms, said, "Mine eyes have seen Thy salvation . . . a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel." He is God's salvation, and there is no other Saviour. We cannot save ourselves, but He is mighty to save. What a mercy that He is intended to save sinners in the ends of the earth. It is worth while for His servants to go into the most distant corners of the earth if they can be the means of leading people in those parts into the enjoyment of His salvation.

Let us who can rejoice in His salvation, do all we can to be instrumental in making known that Gospel which is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Romans i. 16).

"Salvation! O the joyful sound!  
 'Tis pleasure to our ears!  
 A sovereign balm for every wound,  
 A cordial for our fears.

"Salvation! let the echo fly  
 The spacious earth around;  
 While all the armies of the sky  
 Conspire to raise the sound!

“Salvation! O Thou bleeding Lamb,  
To Thee the praise belongs;  
Salvation shall inspire our hearts,  
And dwell upon our tongues!” (Dr. Watts)

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## Reviews and Notices of Books.

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ACCORDING TO THE BOOK. By the Rev. C. W. Hale Amos, D.D.  
Pp. 32. Price 1s. 1d. post free (The Wickliffe Press, 184, Fleet  
Street, London, E.C.4).

THIS booklet consists of nine weeks' very brief daily meditations on  
the Gospel of Matthew.

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ALL mankind are by nature in the same state of sin and misery. But we are told that at the great day there will be an unspeakable difference in the circumstances between some and others. Many will then stand trembling at His left hand, to whom the King shall say, “Depart.” But those on the right hand will hear those joyful words, “Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” If you ask, To what is this difference primarily owing? the answer is provided: “Jesus loved them, and washed them from their sins in His Own blood; He redeemed them, out of every nation, and people, and language; they came out of great tribulation, and washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb: therefore are they before the throne.” It was for their sakes, who should be hereafter found at the right hand of God, that “God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.”—JOHN NEWTON.

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“Do Evangelical Churchmen hold and teach that the Bible is the only rule of faith and practice? Do they maintain that it is able alone to make a man wise unto salvation, and that even the Creeds are only to be received and believed because they may be proved by most certain warrant of Holy Scripture? So did the Reformers.”  
—BISHOP J. C. RYLE.