

Final Addresses

In closing this work, I want to address four sorts of reader.

First, evangelicals who break the principles of Romans 14:1 – 15:7, imposing various traditions, taboos, human laws and regulations upon themselves and others. As I have admitted, we are all prone to it. I hope my book may prove a salutary warning to us all.

Secondly, evangelicals – not excluding the Reformed – who get very close to preaching salvation by works when they are dealing with rewards for the believer. And, of course, funeral eulogies can often amount to little more than salvation by works.¹ The advocates of the prosperity gospel seem to have little compunction in playing with fire in advocating their doctrine that God’s blessing is a direct consequence of the believer’s obedience. Once again, I can only hope that my book may cause such to think again.

Thirdly, the Reformed law-teachers themselves. Except when you are addressing the doctrine of justification (in theory, that is – see the previous category), you are insistent on what you call ‘the moral law’, that it is vital, and must be obeyed. I think it is fair to say that ‘the moral law’ is a lynchpin in your approach to spirituality. Will you not think again?² I urge you to read the many passages which I have used, read them without your Confession or Study Bible in hand, and allow the apostles to speak to you by the Spirit. Although he was writing on a different subject, I appeal to you in the words of Oliver Cromwell:

¹ See my ‘Touching the Untouchable: Observations on Evangelical Response to the Queen’s Death’ on my sermonaudio.com page; see my *Royal; Deceit*.

² The same applies to me, of course.

What About Today?: The Reformed

Is it... infallibly agreeable to the word of God, all that you say? I beseech you, in the bowels of Christ, think it possible you may be mistaken.³

Fourthly, those who have listened to the Reformed law-teachers, or simply been brought up in their doctrine and its outworking. I appeal to you to be prepared to think outside the Reformed box. Why not just take a peep at what lies outside? You might – you never know – be pleasantly surprised. Don't be afraid! Don't let yourself be swayed by any man's name or status, however worthy he may be, or have been. After all, the best of us are men at best, and may we not be mistaken? This applies to me, I freely own. And I am willing to be shown my error from Scripture.⁴ Therefore, I feel I can in all sincerity urge you, on this issue in particular, to adopt the Berean attitude, which I keep repeating:

They received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily [without any Confession or catechism, of course] to see if these things were so (Acts 17:11).

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When error stalks the street, a growing number of believers, I fear, rather than speak out for the truth (even if they know what that truth is, and whether it really matters to them), prefer to keep to their beds, pulling the bedspread over their heads. To justify their (in)action, they might mumble about what they would call 'love', or plead that the 'error' in question – if 'error' it be, they might hint – is only a small one (*cf.* 'Is it not a little one?' (Gen. 19:20)). Spurgeon gave this short shrift. Citing:

O Timothy, guard the deposit entrusted to you. Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called

³ From Oliver Cromwell: 'To the General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland; or, in case of their not sitting, To the Commissioners of the Kirk of Scotland', which he wrote from Musselburgh, on 3rd August, 1650.

⁴ See my 'An Appeal to the Reformed'.

What About Today?: The Reformed

‘knowledge’, for by professing it some have swerved from the faith (1 Tim. 6:20-21)...

...he declared:

The first appearances of error are many times modest. There is a chain of truths; the devil takes out a link here and a link there, that all may fall to pieces.

The argument of ‘love’⁵ is used to screen those who are robbing us of the gospel! We are bidden to be cautious how we condemn those who only differ on small points; whereas the truths which they would take away from us have important bearings upon other truths, and cannot be denied without a serious break-up of the whole doctrinal chain! Let us not give up a single link of the divine system, for if we did so, we would prove traitors to the whole plan of revealed truth...

Satan knows that we would never consent to give up a wheel of the gospel chariot [I hope that’s true today – DG], and therefore in his craftiness he only asks for the lynchpins to be handed over to him.

May God grant wisdom to his servants that none of them may be beguiled by the deceitful cunning of the adversary.

Long ages may have to rue the defalcations of this day if we sell the precious gospel to its foes. Until the Lord shall come, we are entrusted with the gospel. Will we be fraudulent trustees? Can we dare to play fast and loose with that which concerns God’s glory, and the destiny of immortal souls?⁶

A wealthy man wanted to employ a coachman. He asked three candidates the same question: ‘If you were driving my coach across a mountain pass, how close could you get to the edge, and remain safe?’ The first replied to the effect that he could safely drive within a foot (30cms) of the edge; the second said he could halve that distance; the third said he would keep as far away as possible from the edge. Which man would you employ?

⁵ Original ‘charity’.

⁶ C.H. Spurgeon: *Flowers from a Puritan’s Garden*.

What About Today?: The Reformed

Don't flirt with the law! If you are unconverted, trust Christ. No amount of law works will put you right with God. Trust in Christ alone will do that:

A person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified (Gal. 2:16).

And it must be trust in Christ alone. Christ was explicit:

I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me (John 14:6).

And Peter preached it:

There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12).

And if you are trusting Christ, obey the law of Christ by walking with the Spirit, by the Spirit, keeping in step with the Spirit (Gal. 5:16,25). You are living in the new covenant, the age of the Spirit: 'Possess your possessions' (see Obad. 17).

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As I close, I repeat what I said before: we should be undyingly thankful to God for Paul and his stand against the *pseudadelphoi*. Contrary to what some accusers say of him, he did not drag the gospel from its Jewish anchorage into Greek philosophy. That is utter nonsense. Indeed, the responsibility for that lies at the door of the Fathers! They did not only go back to the old covenant, they also adopted pagan principles, and introduced much Greek philosophy. The fact is, by his stance, Paul saved the gospel, and all that goes with it, from old-covenant degeneration at the hands of Judaisers. In so doing, he showed how serious the matter is, and he also laid down, for all time, the definitive answer to law-men of whatever century, or under whatever label, they preach their error.

What About Today?: The Reformed

Those of us who teach, write, preach need to examine ourselves and our ministry, and keep both under constant review. As Paul demanded of Timothy:

Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers (1 Tim. 4:16).

The implication is clear: any adulteration of the gospel spells disaster for those who meet it and succumb to it, and those responsible for it will have to answer for it. Salvation – in its fullest sense – is at stake. As the apostle told the Ephesian elders:

I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all, for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears (Acts 20:26-31).

In light of these warnings, surely at the very least every preacher and teacher should ask himself: ‘Am I putting my Confession before Scripture?’ And that leads to a second question: ‘Am I adulterating gospel? Am I taking away from Christ? Or am I exalting him? Am I maintaining the gospel?’ And every believer should face this: ‘Am I concerned for truth? Do I know the truth as I should? Do I stand up for Christ, for truth, for the gospel?’

Unbeliever, I warn you, there are many gospels on offer, and many Christs out there. But there is only one who can save; namely, the Christ set out by the apostles (John 14:6; Acts 4:12), and the gospel he has established. As you value your soul, settle for no substitutes.