

The Wednesday Word, November 27, 2019: "Getting in!"

"Behold, thy days approach that thou must die" Deuteronomy 31:14

Many years ago, a preacher, Dr Charles H. Berry, had, at a young age received the highest honours his denomination could confer. His fame as a preacher was as wide as the English-speaking world. But he was a theological liberal. He, at that stage of his life, didn't believe in the fundamentals of grace, the blood and substitutionary atonement. He told the following story of his conversion to his friend, Dr J. H. Jowett.

"One night there came to me, a Lancashire girl, with her shawl over her head, and with clogs on her feet."

'Are you the minister?' she said.

"Yes."

"Then I want you to come and get my mother in."

"Thinking it was some drunken brawl, I said, You must get a policeman."

"Oh, no," said the girl, "my mother is dying, and I want you to get her into salvation."

"Where do you live?"

"I live at so and so, a mile and a half from here."

"Is there no minister nearer than I?"

"Oh, yes, but I want you, and you will have to come."

"I was in my slippers, and I did all I could to get out of it, but it was of no use. That girl was determined, and I had to dress and go. I found the house, and upstairs I found the poor woman dying. I sat down and talked about Jesus as the beautiful example and extolled Him as a Leader and Teacher. I talked about His kindness and how we ought to be kind. She looked at me out of her eyes of death, and said:

"Mister, that's no good for the likes of me. I don't want an example. I'm a sinner."

"Jowett, there I was face to face with a poor soul dying and had nothing to tell her. I had no gospel; but I thought of what my mother had taught me, and I told her the old, old story of God's love in Christ's dying for sinful people, whether I believed it or not."

"Now you are getting at it" said the woman. "That's the story for me."

"And so I got her in, and ... I got myself in. From that night," added Dr. Berry, "I have always had a full gospel of salvation for lost sinners."

What a marvelous little story. The preacher and listener saved by the same message!

Dr. Berry discovered that theological liberalism is not for the sick, the dying and the desperate. It can't "get people in."

Theological liberalism is very ensnaring as it subtly whittles away at the cross. In its teaching, the atonement becomes nothing other than a sublime example of selflessness. Christ is reduced to the status of only a man. There is no saving blood sacrifice. There is no gospel. In theological liberalism, the Bible is torn to shreds! There is no life in that—death, only death.

Let me ask you a personal question. If you were called to a death bed and the dying person was urgently concerned about their salvation, humanly speaking, could you “get them in?” Do you know that although death is like a giant scorpion, for the believer its sting is removed? As William Romaine rightly observed, ‘*Death stung himself to death when he stung Christ!*’

To help those who are dying we need to know that Christ has settled the sin and death problem. Do you know this? Could you tell a dying person this as you urge them to trust in Christ? We need to ask ourselves, therefore, do we believe the gospel or is it just a theory or do we from the depth of our being trust that Christ Jesus is the One who has already, thoroughly, and finally dealt with sin and death? (See Hebrews. 1:3; 9:26; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22).

Christ Jesus alone is the One who is to be trusted and relied upon for salvation.

And that’s the Gospel Truth!