



The Glorious Gospel

The adjective is Paul's. He used it in writing to Timothy. Just what was in his mind we may not fully know, but it is plain that to him there was everything in the Gospel message to give him abundant joy in the proclamation thereof. What to you is the chief glory of the Gospel? Does it lie in the knowledge imparted; of yourself, your relation to God, your duty to your fellows, your possible destiny hereafter? Does it consist in the joy it excites within you as you realize your sins forgiven, Satan's rule overthrown, Christ's service welcomed, spirituality developed? Is it in the charm of the future life with all its rapturous delights of eternal rest and reward? Is it in the consummation to which it points for redeemed humanity through the power of the atoning Saviour of men? The questions may be multiplied, but these are sufficient to set you thinking, as the phrase has set us thinking—What is the Gospel to me? Is it glorious? How much of its glory do I know? How much of it am I showing forth to others?

Thankfulness and Courage

Paul had been arrested, tried, imprisoned. As a free-born Roman citizen he had appealed to the Emperor, and after much delay had been sent on his perilous journey to Rome. The voyage had been a very tempestuous one, so much so, indeed, that it was only by a miracle that they escaped with their lives. After wintering at Malta for three months, they took passage in another vessel and in due course landed on the shores of Italy, and then began the long and wearisome tramp to the metropolis. Word had gone on ahead to the Christians there, and in the enthusiasm of their love for the Apostle, a company started off to meet him. Some of the band remained at Three Taverns, a station some thirty miles from Rome, and some pressed on for another twenty miles to Appii Forum, where they met the Apostle and the band of soldiers having him in charge. We are told that when Paul saw the true-hearted company of believers who had come to give him such royal and unexpected greeting, "he thanked God and took courage." And little wonder!

After months of hardship and discomfort it was comforting to meet those of tastes and purposes similar to his own. We have all felt the encouragement and help there is in a hearty, Christian handshake. The heart bounds with gladness as we feel the warm welcome from those we have learned to love, and who love us. So was it with Paul and the Roman Christians.

Just how the Gospel first reached Rome we are not told; but it is certain that some five years before this Paul had written his wonderful letter to the young and growing church there. In this he had expressed his desire to see them, and now the desire was to be fulfilled, though under strange and thrilling circumstances. The greeting was not of strangers, though they were perhaps meeting for the first time; but of persons wishing one another well, and working for one another's interests. So Paul "thanked God and took courage."

You have felt, like Paul, that there are disheartening forces at work about your pathway, and that it is sometimes in the midst of toil and trial that you labor on. It may not be literal shipwreck that you have to encounter, and yet you come sometimes face to face with unexpected difficulty, and it seems that disaster threatens to overwhelm you. In the midst of it all we often feel a great sense of loneliness steal over us and depress our souls so much that we almost despair of success. Then is the time for the exercise of a mighty faith such as he showed when he said

in the midst of the shipwreck, "I believe God." Better times are not far ahead. Fear not!

There is at times such an almost overwhelming sense of failure in our lives, that we can scarcely keep heart. Untoward temporal and material circumstances oppress us, and we groan, "being burdened." But in all and through all hope sings her sweet song of trust, and the day comes when we feel the transport of joy that assures us all is well. We meet others who are one with us, and feel encouraged. So we learn from this incident the great value of hearty and loving Christian greeting. Speak the word of inspiration, of help, of hope. If need be, go out of your way to speak it. How much those Roman Christians must have loved one another and Paul to go so far to meet and accompany him.

Remember that there is room in every Christian's heart for thanksgiving, and abundant cause in every life for praise. "He thanked God." For what? Do you ask? I fancy Paul could recall immediately many reasons why he should give thanks; but the one great reason would be that he was in God's way of work. True, it was not an easy or a comfortable way; but it was God's way, and that was enough. Is it not so still, dear friend? When we feel that we are where God wants us, and where He can use us, it gives a deep gladness that nothing else can equal. And, knowing this, let us, too, "take courage."

There are great unchanging truths for us all as for Paul. God is! God's Word is unfulfilling! God's work is progressing! God's people are our friends. We may meet them everywhere and feel the delightful influence of their love and help. Your lot may seem hard; but examine it well before you conclude that it is hopeless. Thank God! Take courage! Go bravely on doing your best and helping someone else, and you will soon rejoice that the same gladness and abiding peace that came to Paul are in the world to-day. The future from which you shrink will lose its terrors if the Lord and His people are yours. And as the crosses of earth are lovingly borne they lose their weight, and like Paul we can face whatever may come, strong in "courage" to endure to the end and win a crown of life.

Know the Bible

We saw recently the tabulated results of a test paper which in the form of a questionnaire had been sent to a number of people in order to ascertain their general knowledge of the facts recorded in the Bible. The report was not flattering. Generally speaking, we do not place much dependence on this form of investigation, and yet from various evidences which have come directly to our notice, we feel confident that there is not anything like the general knowledge of the Scriptures among the people that there should be. Ours is a generation highly privileged in possible intelligent acquaintance with the Word; but too few of us are making the most of our opportunity. Bibles were never so numerous, facilities for concerted study were never so accessible, "helps" were never so cheap,—and yet Bible knowledge is not so general as it should be. The reasons are doubtless varied, but one only shall we mention here. It is the failure of the home to present attractively the simple narratives of the Scriptures to the little children. A book of Bible stories, retold by some outside person, cannot take the place of the living voice of the parent as the story recorded in the Book is read to the eager, listening child. The best book of Bible stories is the Bible, the best reader of such stories for the child at home is the parent, and none of the events or experiences of after life can ever erase from the memory the indelible impressions made in earliest childhood by such parental instruction. Canada needs, and that right soon, a revival of simple and direct Bible-story-telling in the homes of the people everywhere. Rabbi Judah truly said, "The boy of five ought to apply to the study of the sacred Scriptures." Rabbi Solomon as wisely wrote, "When the boy begins to talk his father ought to converse with him in