

THE GOSPEL: ITS PURPOSE AND EFFECT

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ARTICLE FIFTEEN

We believe and shall contend, that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; that the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto them that are saved, it is the power of God; that we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us; that no man can preach the gospel only by the power and spirit of the gospel; that there is no power in him that preaches it, nor him that hears it, be he saint or sinner, abstractly considered; and hence, that whatever power there is, must be in the gospel itself, and that whatever is divinely purposed to be accomplished by the preaching of it, must be accomplished by the power that is in the gospel itself, and not by any supposed or implied power either in him that preaches it, or in those who hear it; and therefore that the Arminian on the one hand, who places the efficacy of the gospel in the power and disposition of the sinner to hear and accept, and the Antinomian on the other hand, who places its efficacy exclusively in a power to hear previously lodged in the heart by the quickening energy of the Holy Spirit, are both wrong, and both meet in tarnishing the glory of the gospel, by robbing it of any intrinsic power in itself, and in lodging the sole power to make the preaching of it efficacious, in the subject addressed by it.

We believe that the gospel is to be preached to every creature; that God in His providence brings within the pale of its proclamation, leaving it to God alone, the sole power and prerogative of accomplishing His own blessed purpose in it; that God has inseparably connected His word and the gospel with the ingathering of His own chosen and redeemed people, and that as all these, both Jew and Gentile, must be brought, He has so connected His purpose, power, providence, and grace, that wherever He has a people in this world, His word will go, and His gospel will be proclaimed, in spite of all opposing power, and will not return unto Him void, or fall stillborn on the ears and hearts of men, but will accomplish the thing which He pleases, and prosper in the thing whereunto He sends it. On the other hand we believe that where God has, in His judicial providence, withdrawn His word and gospel from any country, and suffered the people to lapse into idolatry, it is to be regarded as indubitable evidence that He has no people in that country to be called by it, and it would be, and is, heaven-daring presumption on the part of men, to undertake, by means of their own, to send it there again.

We believe that the purpose of God in the gospel is

- 1ST That the gentiles should be fellow-heirs and of the same body, and partakers of God's promise through the gospel (Ephesians 3:6).
- 2ND That the faith of His elect should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God (1 Corinthians 2:5).
- 3RD To call the chosen ones through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thessalonians 2:13, 14).
- 4TH To abolish death and bring life and immortality to light, in those to whom grace was given in Christ Jesus before the world began, as made manifest by experimental appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 1: 9, 10).
- 5TH To open the eyes of the redeemed ones, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in Christ (Acts 26:17, 18).
- 6TH To feed, comfort and instruct, and to reprove, rebuke and warn God's regenerate and living people (John 21:15, 16; Acts 20:23; 2 Timothy 4:1, 2).