

## POPULAR REFORMED QUOTES

The old truth that Calvin preached, that Augustine preached, that Paul preached, is the truth that I must preach today, or else be false to my conscience and my God. I cannot shape the truth; I know of no such thing as paring off the rough edges of a doctrine. John Knox's gospel is my gospel. That which thundered through Scotland must thunder through England again.

**C.H. Spurgeon "A Defense of Calvinism"**

I suppose there are some persons whose minds naturally incline towards the doctrine of free-will. I can only say that mine inclines as naturally towards the doctrines of sovereign grace.

**C.H. Spurgeon "A Defense of Calvinism"**

There is no soul living who holds more firmly to the doctrines of grace than I do, and if any man asks me whether I am ashamed to be called a Calvinist, I answer – I wish to be called nothing but a Christian; but if you ask me, do I hold the doctrinal views which were held by John Calvin, I reply, I do in the main hold them, and rejoice to avow it. **C.H. Spurgeon "A Defense of Calvinism"**

Almighty God! Just because He is almighty needs no support. The picture of a nervous ingratiating God fawning over men to win their favor is not a pleasant one. Yet if we look at the popular conception of God, that is precisely what we see. Twentieth century Christianity has put God on charity. So lofty is our opinion of ourselves that we find it quite easy, not to say enjoyable, to believe that we are necessary to God. But the truth is, that God is not greater for our being, nor would He be less if we did not exist. That we do exist is altogether of God's free determination not by our desert, nor by Divine necessity.

**A.W. Tozer "The Knowledge of the Holy"**

It is no novelty, then, that I'm preaching; no new doctrine. I love to proclaim those strong old doctrines that are nicknamed Calvinism, but which are surely and verily the revealed truth of God as it is in Christ Jesus. By this truth I make a pilgrimage into the past, and as I go, I see father after father, confessor after confessor, martyr after martyr, standing up to shake hands with me . . . taking these things to be the standard of my faith, I see the land of the ancients peopled with my brethren; I behold multitudes who confess the same as I do, and acknowledge that this is the religion of God's own church." **C.H. Spurgeon**

"Modern evangelicals repudiate unvarnished Pelagianism and frequently Semi-Pelagianism as well. It is insisted that grace is necessary for salvation and that man is fallen. This will is acknowledged to be severely weakened even to the point of being "99 percent" dependant upon grace for its liberation. But that one percent of unaffected moral ability or spiritual power which becomes the decisive difference between salvation and perdition is the link that preserves the chain to Pelagius. We have not broken free from the Pelagian captivity of the church. That one percent is the "little something" Luther sought to demolish because it removes the sola from sola gratia (by grace alone) and ultimately the sola from sola fide (by faith alone). The irony may be that though modern Evangelicalism loudly and repeatedly denounces Humanism as the moral enemy of Christianity, it entertains a Humanistic view of man and of the will at its deepest core. We need an Augustine or a Luther to speak to us anew lest the light of God's grace be not only overshadowed but be obliterated in our time." **R.C. Sproul "Augustine and Pelagius" Tabletalk Magazine, June, 1996.**

"The salvation, and the faith, and the whole gracious work together, are not of ourselves." **C.H. Spurgeon "All of Grace" Sermon, published October 7, 1915.**

“I will go as far as Martin Luther, where he says, ‘If any man ascribes of salvation, even the very least thing, to the free will of man, he knows nothing of grace, and he has not learned Jesus Christ rightly’”.

**C.H. Spurgeon “Sermons” Vol I, p. 395**

“It may seem a harsh sentiment; but he who in his soul believes that man does of his own free-will turn to God, cannot have been taught of God, for that is one of the first principles taught us when God begins with us, that we have neither will nor power, but that he gives both; that he is ‘Alpha and Omega’ in the salvation of men” **C.H. Spurgeon “Free Will; A Slave” Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, Vol. I, No. 52.**

It is fundamentally necessary and wholesome for Christians to know that God foreknows nothing contingently, but that He foresees, purposes, and does all things according to His own immutable, eternal and infallible will. This bombshell knocks free-will flat, and utterly shatters it; so that those who want to assert it must either deny my bombshell, or pretend not to notice it, or find some other way of dodging it. **Martin Luther “Bondage to the Will”**

The Gospel is to be preached, and that not partially and by piece-meal, but the whole of it. The commission runs, "Go forth and preach the Gospel"; the Gospel itself, even all the Gospel, without exception or limitation. So far as the Gospel is maimed or any branch of the evangelical system is suppressed and passed over in silence, so far the Gospel is not preached. Besides there is scarce any other distinguishing doctrine of the Gospel can be preached, in its purity and consistency, without this of predestination. Election is the golden thread that runs through the whole Christian system; it is the leaven that pervades the whole lump. Cicero says of the various parts of human learning: "Omnes artes, quae ad humanitatem pertinent, habent quoddam commune vinculum, et quasi cognatione quadam inter se continentur," i. e., The whole circle of arts have a kind of mutual bond and connection, and by a sort of reciprocal relationship are held together and interwoven with each other. Much the same may be said of this important doctrine: it is the bond which connects and keeps together the whole Christian system, which, without this, is like a system of sand, ever ready to fall to pieces. It is the cement which holds the fabric together; nay, it is the very soul that animates the whole frame. It is so blended and interwoven with the entire scheme of Gospel doctrine that when the former is excluded, the latter bleeds to death. An ambassador is to deliver the whole message with which he is charged. He is to omit no part of it, but must declare the mind of the sovereign he represents, fully and without reserve. He is to say neither more or less than the instructions of his court require, else he comes under displeasure, perhaps loses his head. Let the ministers of Christ weigh this well. **Jerome “Absolute Predestination” 1530**

There are signs today of a new upsurge of interest in the theology of the Bible: a new readiness to test traditions, to search the Scriptures and to think through the faith. It is to those who share this readiness that Owen's treatise is now offered, in the belief that it will help us in one of the most urgent tasks facing evangelical Christendom today - the recovery of the gospel.

This last remark may cause some raising of eyebrows, but it seems to be warranted by the facts.

There is no doubt that evangelicalism today is in a state of perplexity and unsettlement. In such matters as the practice of evangelism, the teaching of holiness, the building up of local church life, the pastor's dealing with souls and the exercise of discipline, there is evidence of widespread dissatisfaction with things as they are and or equally widespread uncertainty as to the road ahead. This is a complex phenomenon, to which many factors have contributed; but, if we go to the root of the matter, we shall find that these perplexities are all ultimately due to our having lost our grip on the biblical gospel. Without realizing it, we have during the past century bartered that gospel for a substitute product which, though it looks similar enough in points of detail, is as a whole a decidedly different thing. Hence our troubles; for the substitute product does not answer the ends for which the authentic gospel has in past days proved itself so mighty. Why?

We would suggest that the reason lies in its own character and content. It fails to make men God-centered in their thoughts and God-fearing in their hearts because this is not primarily what it is trying to do. One way of stating the difference between it and the old gospel is to say that it is too exclusively concerned to be 'helpful' to man - to bring peace, comfort, happiness, satisfaction - and too little concerned to glorify God. The old gospel was 'helpful', too - more so, indeed, than is the new - but (so to speak) incidentally, for its first concern was always to give glory to God. It was always and essentially a proclamation of divine sovereignty in mercy and judgment, a summons to bow down and worship the mighty Lord on whom man depends for all good, both in nature and in grace. Its center of reference was unambiguously God. But in the new gospel the center of reference is man. This is just to say that the old gospel was religious in a way that the new gospel is not. Whereas the chief aim of the old was to teach people to worship God, the concern of the new seems limited to making them feel better. The subject of the old gospel was God and his ways with men; the subject of the new is man and the help God gives him. There is a world of difference. The whole perspective and emphasis of gospel preaching has changed.

From this change of interest has sprung a change of content, for the new gospel has in effect reformulated the biblical message in the supposed interests of 'helpfulness'. Accordingly, the themes of man's natural inability to believe, of God's free election being the ultimate cause of salvation, and of Christ dying specifically for his sheep are not preached. These doctrines, it would be said, are not 'helpful'; they would drive sinners to despair, by suggesting to them that it is not in their own power to be saved through Christ. (The possibility that such despair might be salutary is not considered: it is taken for granted that it cannot be, because it is so shattering to our self-esteem.) However this may be (and we shall say more about it later), the result of these omissions is that part of the biblical gospel is now preached as if it were the whole of that gospel; and a half-truth masquerading as the whole truth becomes a complete untruth. Thus, we appeal to men as if they all had the ability to receive Christ at any time; we speak of his redeeming work as if he had made it possible for us to save ourselves by believing; we speak of God's love as if it were no more than a general willingness to receive any who will turn and trust; and we depict the Father and the Son, not as sovereignly active in drawing sinners to themselves, but as waiting in quiet impotence 'at the door of our hearts' for us to let them in.

It is undeniable that this is how we preach; perhaps this is what we really believe. But it needs to be said with emphasis that this set of twisted half-truths is something other than the biblical gospel. The Bible is against us when we preach in this way; and the fact that such preaching has become almost standard practice among us only shows how urgent it is that we should review this matter. To recover the old, authentic, biblical gospel, and to bring our preaching and practice back into line with it, is perhaps our most pressing present need. And it is at this point that Owen's treatise on redemption can give us help.

**J.I. Packer – Introduction to Death of Death – John Owen**