

# RECOVERY OF **THE** GOSPEL



The author is in the pulpit of St. Mary de  
Crypt, Gloucester, England, from which  
George Whitefield preached.

## E. A. JOHNSTON

# **RECOVERY OF THE GOSPEL**

**BY  
E. A. JOHNSTON**

*Recovery of the Gospel*

By Dr. E. A. Johnston

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**COVER PHOTO:**

Regarding the cover photo: The author is in the pulpit of St. Mary de Crypt, Gloucester, England, from which George Whitefield preached his first sermon and sent 15 people mad.

## DEDICATION

The following study on the recovery of the Old Gospel is hereby dedicated to the memory of the mighty Canadian evangelist, Ernest W. Wakefield, who fearlessly preached the Old Gospel to a young, thirteen year-old-boy who attended a Revival Meeting and heard about the ruin of man, his duty of repentance, and his need of a bloodstained Saviour for Sin in the Person of Christ Jesus. And who came to Christ that fateful night in Oak Park, Illinois in the tumultuous year of 1968. All to the grace of the glory of God.

E.A. Johnston  
January 2025



SAMPLE PAGES

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# INTRODUCTION

The title of this work is “The Recovery of the Gospel”; the word “recovery” assumes that the object sought has been lost or misplaced or debased. This indeed is the case in our day of “Easy Believeism” where the modern evangelist has broadened the way of salvation in ways Jesus never did. Jesus said that few are saved and those who are saved with great difficulty; the way is narrow, the gate is straight, one must press through. Yet, the watered-down version of the gospel one hears today speaks of an easy way to heaven—all you have to do is believe. There is no mention of man’s duty of repentance, no mention of man’s utter necessity of regeneration. No talk of salvation being something that God does by performing a work of grace upon the heart. Rather, we have taken salvation out of the hands of God and placed it in the hands of men.

The author has been a student of revival for the last forty years. I have read and re-read sermons from the Great Awakening and the Second Great Awakening in America and noticed a vast dissimilarity between the content of the preaching of that day and our modern day. The Old Gospel that was preached in times of spiritual awakening was a God-centered Gospel of the doctrines of grace that produced reverence for Almighty God, heart-felt

repentance toward a holy God, and deep humility on the part of the sinner in recognition of a beggar receiving undeserved mercy. The new Gospel of our day is a man-centered Gospel that elevates man. It shrinks God down to man's size and places the Creator on the same level as man. Man is now the author of his salvation and not God. Man decides. Man saves himself. This kind of man-centered Gospel is akin to mere humanism and this New Gospel centers on the happiness of man. Whereby the Old Gospel, the God-centered Gospel centered on the glory of God in the salvation of sinful man. This is why there is no fear of God in the land today nor behind our pulpits. Sin is rampant in and out of the church, which is antinomianism.

This dire situation is the reason why we need a recovery of the Gospel in our day. The Apostle Paul stated in Romans: "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher" (Romans 10:14)?

We need preachers who will preach the God-centered gospel of our fathers that sparked revival and spiritual awakenings in former times. This book will provide that proper understanding of what is the unvarnished biblical gospel as compared to the debased variation we have today. May you read this

book for your profit and the good of souls all to the glory of God!

SAMPLE PAGES

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## CHAPTER ONE

### WHY IS A RECOVERY OF THE GOSPEL NEEDED?

*“Men today are more concerned about detailing their automobiles than they are concerned about the details of their eternal destiny.”*

E. A. Johnston

When something is lost it needs to be found. When something is missing there needs to be an awareness that something is missing. Regarding our modern gospel, men have rewritten it, debased it, and diluted it to make it more palatable to sinful man. All the hard sayings of Jesus are removed from the gospel of our day to where all the teeth of the gospel have been extracted to make it easier to gum down and digest. But does the gospel of our day resemble the biblical gospel of the Apostle Paul's day and the early church? Does the gospel of our day resemble the gospel of the Reformers? The Puritans? The Covenanters? Does the gospel of our day have any similarity to the God-centered gospel of Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, and Charles Spurgeon? Or is it the man-centered gospel



of religious humanism? Is the real gospel even preached much anymore?

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century a wealthy Englishman traveled to Scotland in his carriage to hear good preaching. The first preacher he heard proclaimed the majesty and Sovereignty of a high and lifted God in all His glorious attributes, and his text was from Isaiah chapter six on the prophet Isaiah's vision of heaven where he states, *"I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple"* (Isaiah 6:1); and upon hearing this he went away humbled by that vision of a holy God, high and lifted up. The next Scottish preacher he heard preached on the ruin of fallen man and the depravity of his heart because of man's ruined nature he had a poison in his blood and his text was from the Book of Job: *"How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water"* (Job 15:16)? And upon hearing this he went away from the preaching humbled in his heart at how wicked and vile a sinner he really was; how guilty he was before a holy God! The last Scottish preacher he heard proclaimed the beauty of Christ Jesus as the Savior for sin and how powerfully this preacher held up Jesus as the only remedy and refuge for sin! His text was from Matthew's Gospel on the pearl of great price: *"Again the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went*

*and sold all he had, and bought it”* (Matthew 13:45-46). The Englishman went away from that sermon with the picture of Jesus Christ precious as the Great Pearl of inestimable value, who was worth selling all for and losing all for so that He may be gained! On his journey back to England he contemplated all these powerful Biblical truths of the Gospel which he had heard while in Scotland. Finally, he had his carriage driver pull over near a forest, he got out and went into a grove of trees where he knelt on the ground and pondered in his heart those powerful gospel truths. Praying to God for mercy he confessed and repented of his sins and surrendered his heart to God and found salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. He returned to England a new man born from above and washed in the Blood! And the change was due to hearing sound doctrine of the Gospel of the Son of God preached to him under the power of the Holy Spirit!

As a revival scholar I have spent forty years in the study of historical revivals and spiritual awakenings. I have spent countless hours reading the sermons that were preached during the time period in America known as The Great Awakening and The Second Great Awakening. Upon reading those sermons I noticed a vast dissimilarity between what preachers were proclaiming in those times and what preachers are proclaiming in our times. Under the preaching of the gospel of those

former days many souls were converted during glorious periods of revival that spread all over the nation. In our day very few are saved and fewer still preach the real gospel.

The diluted modern gospel of our day has no saving power for it is merely religious humanism. Rather, the gospel of the Apostle Paul had power to save, *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek”* (Romans 1:16). There must be a “recovery” of that gospel. The one that “is the power of God unto salvation”. Perhaps if we preachers began preaching the real biblical gospel again we would begin to see more conversions occur in our midst as the Holy Spirit once again attended our preaching of the gospel of the Son of God!

## CHAPTER TWO

# THE GOSPEL MUST BE PREACHED IN ITS PURITY AND PROPER ORDER

“Modern evangelism hands out Jesus like a free stick of chewing gum and folks take it and chew on it for a while until the flavor goes out of their religion.”

E. A. Johnston

Today in our churches we offer people a Savior for sin before they even feel their need of a remedy for sin. If a man is in good health he feels no need for a physician, so Jesus told His hearers. *“When Jesus heard it, he said unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick; I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance”* (Mark 2:17).

The gospel must be preached in its purity and proper order. This chapter will deal with the “proper order” of the gospel. Through preaching men must be brought to the place where they feel their need of a Savior for sin. We must first get men lost, before they can be saved. Asahel Nettleton, the primary

leader of the Second Great Awakening, often preached that men could not be saved until they first became lost. We preachers today have forgotten that. Instead, we offer Jesus to a people who feel no need of Him, and they accept our little Jesus as a free ticket to heaven when they never believed they were guilty sinners on their way to Hell.

Our confusion today rests in the fact that we preachers do not properly understand what the real gospel is nor the order in which it needs to be preached. Look at Jesus in His dealings with the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:7-31), there is much to be learned in how to present the gospel in its proper order in this biblical narrative. Notice that Jesus first confronts her with her sin: *“The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not...”*(John 4:15). Here she is responding to the truth that Jesus has shared with her that He is the living water—but He does not offer Himself to her before He brings conviction of sin to her heart to have her feel her need of a Savior for sin. He tells her, *“Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband. For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that, saidst thou truly”* (John 4:15-18). Upon hearing this the woman then responds, *“Sir, I*