

POWER

“the gospel is the power of God unto salvation” (Romans 1:16)

The Unattractive Christ

by Frank Chesser

In describing Jesus, the prophet declared, "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him" (Isa. 53:2). Jesus has never appealed to the masses. Instead, "He is despised and rejected of men" (Isa. 53:3). He came out of despised Nazareth (John 1:46) and has been held in contempt ever since.

His doctrine is unattractive. There was a multitude in the bread line (John 6:26), but they quickly vanished like darkness before light when Jesus got to the meat of the matter. "This is an hard saying" (John 6:60), they declared, and thus, "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him" (John 6:66).

The doctrine of Christ is too stringent and demanding for most people. They want freedom for overt expression of fleshly desire. They want no restraints on their conduct and no demands on their life. Their propensity for carnal indulgence creates a loathing for divine principles which seek to check their course of life.

His kingdom is unattractive. The Jews were anticipating a physical kingdom and king whose sword would crush the Roman yoke and reinstate the glory of Solomon's era. How disappointed they were to hear Jesus say, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). Premillennialism is Judaism in new dress. The Jews were determined to force a physical scepter into the hand of Christ and man today is still trying to finish what they started. The kingdom of Christ is spiritual. It is the church of the living God, the only ark of safety for souls adrift on a sea of sin.

His way of life is unattractive. Without holiness, "No man shall see God" (Heb. 12:14). The masses have no desire for holiness. They would be happy to go to Heaven if God would allow them to do as they pleased along the way. The world is in love with itself. The flesh is king. Man is determined to sit at the Devil's table and feast on the delicacies of sin. But "What will ye do in the end thereof?" (Jer. 5:31).

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Jesus, The Balanced Teacher

by B.J. Clarke

Jesus was the greatest teacher to ever grace the face of the earth. He was always true to the word, never swerving from the pure truth. He was also the most compassionate and soul-conscious teacher to ever live. The earthly ministry of Jesus presents a vivid picture of how Jesus balanced uncompromising loyalty to the truth and a deep and abiding concern for the lost.

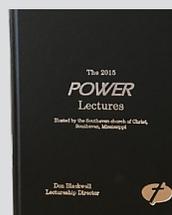
The one-on-one personal teaching done by our Lord is a good example of this balance. When Jesus dealt with the woman at the well in John 4, he displayed compassion. Many Jews bypassed Samaria to avoid being "defiled." Yet Jesus unabashedly marched right into Samaria to talk to a woman who was not even accepted by her own people. The fact that she came to the well alone is indicative of her being an outcast. Jesus realized that this Samaritan woman had a precious soul that needed the living water of salvation.

But notice that while Jesus showed his concern for this lost woman, he did not go so far as to compromise truth. He taught her the truth of God concerning her marital state (Jn. 4:16-18). With reference to her ideas concerning the place of worship, Jesus very plainly told her that she was wrong and the Jews were right. He did not back away from speaking truth for fear of turning her away. He combined compassion and loyalty to truth.

Two chapters later in John's gospel we find Jesus demonstrating his compassion by feeding the multitudes who were hungry. He saw their need and met their need. But he used this as an opportunity to teach the truth about himself. In fact he spoke the truth so clearly and uncompromisingly that many

were offended and decided to quit following him (Jn. 6:60). Please observe that Jesus didn't apologize for preaching the whole truth. He did not scurry after the departing disciples with the promise of toning down his message and making it more palatable. Rather he drove the nail in deeper in an attempt to prick the hearts of his auditors (Jn. 6:61ff). He again combined compassion for souls and loyalty to truth.

Jesus is the best example of what it means to preach the truth in love (Eph. 4:15). We must use him as our role model as we preach and teach. There will be times when we will be called upon to speak to those who will not like or accept our message. We must not give in to the temptation to please the masses by "watering down" the message. On other occasions we will be faced with discussing salvation with those who have been entrenched in sin for longer than we have been preaching the gospel. We must remember to show them the same loving care and interest that we would display to someone who had a very religious upbringing. We must never regard someone as too sinful to waste our time on. Jesus loved sinners enough to take the time to care for their needs. He also loved sinners enough to tell them what they needed to hear rather than what they wanted to hear. As preachers and teachers, let us combine a compassion and love for souls with an unswerving loyalty to truth and pure doctrine.



**POWER LECTURESHIP
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When It's Better To Forget

by Dennis Gullede

A news item reveals that researchers now believe that it is healthier to forget. They say that it is good to forget trivial things of life so as not to overload the brain. That makes me feel better. I thought my forgetfulness was a problem, now I find it's a virtue. N. B. Hardeman once said, "Proper equipment in life demands a good memory, likewise the ability to forget." We sometimes forget those things we should remember, and treasure those things which need to be forgotten.

1. WE SHOULD FORGET PAST INJURIES. If one sins against us and repents, we are obligated to forgive him (Luke 17:3). There is no good to be accomplished by continually dwelling on past injuries. If we carry an accumulation of past sins remembered, is that really forgiveness? In forgiving we must also forget (Heb. 8:112).

2. WE SHOULD FORGET PAST FAILURES (Philips 3:13-14). Paul would not dwell on his past. He had to forget it and press on to new heights. He had to forget his opposition to the church (Acts 26:9-11). He had to forget the fact that he once made havoc of the church and was personally involved in the persecution of many Christians (Acts 8:1-3). We cannot afford to live in the past, dragging ourselves down by mistakes that we have made. Our past failures should help us see what we were and what, by God's grace, we can become.

3. WE SHOULD FORGET PAST ACHIEVEMENTS. This is so that we will not become satisfied with what we once were, or what we now are. When we stop to applaud our past accomplishments, we are at a standstill for the present and likely to die in our steps. It is possible for one to hug his attainments and never go beyond what he has.

In the work of the Lord's church I have heard people boast, "We used to do this, and we used to do that" in response to which I am inclined to say, "That's fine, but what are you doing now, and more importantly, what do you intend to do in the future for the cause of Christ by your involvement and participation?" The Lord's church cannot grow on what we used to do, no matter how great the accomplishments. Others have paved the way for us by their steadfast and tireless service to Christ, but we cannot camp on it today and say our work is done. Former blessings will not suffice for the future. We, like Paul, must press on!

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POWER from the PAST

The archive of POWER is a vast storehouse of sound, doctrinal articles from some of the best writers in the brotherhood, past and present. The POWER from the Past articles will provide another generation of readers the opportunity to read the best of the best from previous POWER issues.

The Blight of Spring

by Frank Chesser

Spring! The very word breathes with life. It exudes with joy, excitement and promise. Spring leaps from the womb of winter with a song of jubilation on its lips. Each day is birthed in a symphony of song. Trees bud and flowers bloom, painting the landscape in variegated color.

The beauty of spring is blighted by the contamination of humanity's touch. The advent of the sun's warm glow commences a disrobing process among men. As a serpent sheds its skin, so man discards his apparel. Various degrees of nudity mar the resplendence of nature. There is no spiritual attractiveness in an ocean of human flesh.

The innocence of Eden is a memory forever buried in the graveyard of the past. Sin stained the public exposure of the body with irrevocable shame (Gen. 2:7). Expected is the world's acceptance of the promenade of the body in a semi-attired state. However, whether felt or not, there is a deep sense of ignominy attached to such public display of the human form.

Revealing dress promotes lust. It creates a civil war in the mind of man struggling to maintain purity of thought. It is a lascivious act that fosters carnality, undermines spirituality and nullifies influence for good. It is an expression of contempt for God's call to "be ye holy in all manner of life" (1 Peter 1:15). It is a grievous sin that bars the gates of heaven and paves the road to hell.

The Christian life is a distinctive life. It is different. Aping the world in modes of dress negates that distinctive element that enables the Christian to serve as a Spiritual lighthouse in a sea of sin. One cannot "adorn the doctrine" (Titus 2:10), with insufficient attire to modestly adorn his own body. There is no "gospel" in a lifestyle that destroys purity and encourages lewdness. An incessant public parade of bare flesh is a loathsome sight. Such conduct is truly the "blight of spring."



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