

Fundamentalism on Trial

By Paris Reidhead*

Now will you turn, please to Matthew, chapter 5 and I shall read from the 17th verse through the 20th verse. The 20th verse will constitute our text of the evening, but we shall read the verses preceding so that you can see it in context.

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

May I reread this last verse. Hear it carefully, “Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no ease enter into the kingdom of heaven.” The theme drawn from this verse is, “Fundamentalism on Trial”. You notice I did not put it ‘Fundamentals on Trial’. They are not on trial. They are above trial. As far as I am concerned, the fundamentals of our faith are absolute. I receive them as such. I have no - it isn’t that I am closed in mind, but I am convinced and convicted in spirit that the Bible is the Word of God, breathed of God, in the autographs infallible, and so received as authoritative. The fact that Jesus Christ is very God, God come in the flesh, is beyond questions as far as this preacher is concerned. There is no reason to even discuss it further, I am convinced, convinced on every possible ground by which I could be convinced, that He is God come in the flesh, very God of very God, very man of very man. That salvation is only through faith in His finished work, His poured-out life, His shed blood, is such a cardinal truth to the one that stands before you, that it is not subject to question. That any other grounds of salvation is to make light of or to destroy His perfect work, is so plain as to need no argument. That Jesus Christ was raised bodily from the dead that He ascended into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God, that there is a Man in the glory tonight, is a truth so patently clear and abundantly proven that I would not labor to that point with you. I believe in the fundamentals of the faith.

But there is a difference between believing in the fundamentals and being fundamentalistic if you might let me coin a word that I do not know has been used previously. To be fundamentalistic is to acquire a spirit, to acquire an attitude. It is to acquire an approach which may or may not be in keeping with the whole of the Word of God, and since there is such a possibility today, and since it is possible that we may be able to identify such a thing today, it seems proper that we should go back and establish a frame of reference; some means by which we can evaluate what we would find today.

I believe that every educated person should have a world view; should have a sufficient acquaintance with history that he is able to relate the experiences through which he passes to experiences of other days. It isn’t necessary for one to have a college education to have this world view, because the fact is that many that do have such college education have not been particularly interested in history and have just taken the bare minimum of courses to succeed in gaining the degree in the field that challenges them. There is no excuse for such, of course. They are beyond possibility of any excuse if they had privilege of getting acquainted with a library, but since there are libraries in proximity to most of us, and the cards are free and the books are plentiful, there is no reason whatever why we should not have gained some perspective of history, be able to look back and see that which has transpired yesterday in order that we can have some means, some standard, some gauge for viewing that which happens around us today. The tragedy of every generation is that it sees itself in the mirror of its own importance. It looks into the mirror of its own interest and says, we are, if they are writing from one point of view, the finest generation that ever lived. None other has reached the heights the pinnacle of achievement that we have. Or if they are thinking of their day from another point of view, they will say, this is the worst generation that has ever lived. Sin has never been so rampant and so vile.

Well, the fact remains that probably neither is true. It is probably not the best, all things being considered, and possibly not the worst. But we tend to look at it in terms of our emotional interest at the time. And so we are prone to judge ourselves among ourselves and compare ourselves by ourselves and reach an erroneous opinion as to either how good we are or how bad we

are. I think of that young fellow who claimed he wasn't egotistical at all. He said, well, the fact of the matter is I am not, I don't think I'm half as good as I really am. And there are some that could apply that well to themselves to the way they approach our day. I don't think this generation is half as bad as it really is or good as the case may be.

Actually, we must go back, we must go back to the Word; we must go back to someone who could appeal to no higher authority than Himself. Did you notice the way that the text began. Isn't it marvelous that in all the writings of men, there is One who needs make no other appeal, One who could begin such a statement such as this by saying, 'For I say unto you'. Here is one who is the final authority, who speaks as no man ever spoke before, and who speaks with all wisdom, all knowledge and all love, and He's facing His day and His generation. He is speaking to a company of people that have spread across society surely in as wide degree as you have here before me. He is speaking to a people that are interested about Eternity, that have come in order that they might hear what He will have to say, and the things that He has said earlier in this sermon are startling. The Beatitudes, for instance, describe the regenerate heart. Now He said nothing about regeneration; He had not spoken of the means by which one acquires this heart; He's simply describing the blessed one. We understand in the light of all the Word that the Beatitudes are the full-length description of the redeemed person. That generation didn't. The only thing they could see in what He said was 'well, we're not like that. We haven't reached that state', and this became the frame of reference in which they could place themselves and see whether they attained or came short. And the fact is, we know, that all of us coming to the Beatitudes, naturally before God has performed His miracle of grace on our hearts, say, who then can be saved. Our Lord Jesus gave it; I am sure, for just that purpose. He describes the blessed one; He describes this one to those who have not so been blessed. Why? So as to stir their hearts with a sense of need and a sense of hunger. He is preparing them for the Power, but our day, of course, we have reversed that.

We frequently tell people how to be saved before they have the slightest interest in why they need to be saved. Not so our Lord. He worked in accord with the laws of the mind, and He stirred them, He pulled them, He excited them to compare themselves. They always reflected it inwardly. I haven't that, I'm not poor in spirit, I do not mourn. They might say I am not meek and go down the list and say of each of these things, well, the degree of which he speaks and implies, I've not experienced that. What would be the result? Wouldn't it be natural to say then, there's something missing, something that I need, something that either I have to earn by my works or must be given to me by someone in grace.

Then He proceeds to show in verses 10 to 12 that which is the attitude of the world towards these. There might be some that might think of this blessing as being a temporal blessing; a blessing which is going to give them all that they could see or desire from the world around them and He doesn't want any misunderstanding. This blessing, said He, is not one that is going to make you win friends and influence people as much as it should. This is not going to put the world at your feet in adulation. This is not going to be the stepping stone to personal success as far as the world equates it, because when you have the blessing of which I speak, the world is going to misunderstand you, it will revile you, it will persecute you, it will speak all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Now He has made it clear that the blessing, therefore, is one which will be real in the life of the blest, and will be misunderstood by those about who have not experienced the blessing. Then He proceeds to describe the function of the blest one in society. He says he is to be salt, stopping putrefaction and stimulating thirst; Then he said that he is to be Light, revealing uncleanness and guiding to the place of Light in Christ. There is just the possibility that some may feel from what they've heard thus far in the sermon, that He is going to abandon the old Law, that He is going to abrogate the Scripture of the past. There are those that will be happy if it happens. They are rather tired of all the Dos and Don'ts of Moses, the offerings and the sacrifices, the tithes, the feast days, the praying the fasting, all of this is a burden too heavy to be borne. If He were to say, Moses is gone and the Law is gone, many would breathe their first sigh of real relief, because they felt that the only possible way by which they could earn eternal life is by the slavish obedience to the Law. Then there are those that have accepted it and are anticipating that He is going to say something like that and are prepared to club Him with His heresy.

So our Lord makes it absolutely clear - they thought that I am come to destroy the Law. I am not come to destroy it but to fulfill it. All the promises are to be fulfilled in Me. All the ceremonies and types and pictures are to be fulfilled in Me, and more than that, the truth of it, the spirit of it, the heart of it is to be fulfilled in all who follow Me. And of course there is one company of people in this group, one part of the group that lean back and raise their faces in contentment and satisfaction - they have

arrived. The Scribes, the Pharisees. They have kept the Law to the jot and to the tittle; they have kept it perfectly, and surely He is speaking of them. They can now relax and say, well, whatever this young preacher from Nazareth is going to say, He will not step on our toes. That is all they knew. If they only understood Him a little better, they would have been sitting on their feet, for He was aiming at their toes. And so they relaxed and say, 'Well, isn't that nice, here we are. We've kept it. If anyone's kept it, we've kept it. We're the ones,' and our Lord looks probably right at them and picks them out of the audience after saying all of this. "I say unto you that except your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and of the Pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." Do you know what He said first in that, that the Scribes and the Pharisees weren't going to enter into the kingdom of heaven. That's the first thing that you imply from it. That's the first thing that you infer from it. And what does this mean. That the religious leaders that the people had accepted, that were telling them how to get to heaven weren't going to get there themselves. That's a rather disconcerting thing, isn't it? He is breaking up society - a revolutionist is He, coming to the ones that were paid to teach and telling them that they themselves were never going to make it unless something happened to them to put them on the ground of being blest and that those who followed them would have the same tragic end. On the surface it seems a little unkind, it seems as though the Lord was rather angry with the Scribes and Pharisees. I think that we shouldn't infer that. The Lord loved them as He loved you and me, and the only possible way that he could ever help them was to get them to see themselves.

You go to a doctor friend, friend of the family, friend of yours, someone you've known and trusted. You go to him and say, "Doctor, I have a very persistent pain, it causes me great anguish. I know that you are not going to tell me because you are a friend of mine, that it is not one of these horrible diseases that I am reading about. I know that it is not going to be anything like that because you're such a friend of the family that you just wouldn't tell me that." Is that what you do? No. If he is a friend of the family you go to him expecting that he is going to use the utmost of care in diagnosing your condition and testing your symptoms, and then he is going to use the utmost of tenderness in telling you of your condition. If he wasn't interested he might lightly pass it by. You went to him because you expected him to be faithful to you, and if he must tell you that your condition is a malignant one, then you expect him to do it, you anticipate that he will do it and would be greatly grieved if he would not do it.

Our Lord Jesus is more faithful than any physician could ever be, and He loves you infinitely more than the finest friend that your family has known. He is concerned about you, and He was concerned about the Pharisees. They had acquired a great deal, but He knew they had acquired it from their teachers. They hadn't invented it. He knew they were the victims of their education. He knew that they were the victims of their indoctrination. He knew that what they held, they held because they had been taught to hold it. And He loved them, and so He must in some way get to them. What they had isn't adequate, it will not see them safely through to Heaven. Someway He must scare them, even at the expense of hurting their feelings and injuring their pride, and experiencing their anger towards Him. So He speaks in all love, in all simplicity, in all directness, saying to the people, saying to the Pharisees, 'except your righteousness exceeds this that you have held to be the pattern of correctness and exactitude, unless it is beyond this, you will never enter into the kingdom of heaven.'

What was the matter with these people? What was the matter with what they believed? What was wrong with what had their righteousness? What had Christ seen in them to bring this forth? Were they a vile people; were they an immoral people? Were they heretical people? Oh no, no, not so. If you understood the day, and have access to encyclopedias which are so simple in giving it, so direct about it, there is not too much we can learn about the Pharisees and the Sadducees, the other group of the day, but it is easy to obtain - you will see this, that in that day there were two groups; there were the Sadducees, a smaller group usually the well-to-do, those that had profited particularly in their business dealings with the Conqueror, Rome in this case. The Sadducees had escaped from a pricked conscience by saying that the Bible is not inspired. They had escaped from their dereliction in bringing the sacrifices by saying that the sacrifices weren't needed, that this wasn't the time of blood atonement. They had escaped from the possibility of any loss by denying the resurrection. There wasn't to be any resurrection in their theology. They had escaped the possibility of a divine message by denying the existence of angels and supernatural visitation. So here they are, they deny the inspiration of the scriptures, they deny the necessity of blood atonement, they deny resurrection from the dead and the existence of angels. Now this group to which I refer is the Sadducees. Now if the Lord had said, 'except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Sadducees,' we'd have understood that,

because they are heretics, if I may not be accused of being cruel. They are, they're heretics. They deny the Scriptures, but He spoke to the Pharisees who were there. They were just the opposite of the Sadducees, more numerous and comprised more of the common people of Israel.

The Pharisees believe in the inspiration of the Law, that is the Books of Moses, and the Prophets, the Psalms, all of the books of the Old Testament were held by them to be inspired. No question about that. They were committed to that, they accepted that. That was one of the cardinal doctrines in their faith that the Scripture was inspired. But they went even a little bit further than that. They accepted the Talmud as being inspired. You know I have at home, and please don't get angry with me for saying this, but I have at home, that I use regularly, a Scofield reference Bible. This doesn't happen to be it. The one I have at home and use is the only one I have, and I recommend it and give it to all. But I was preaching one day and I didn't happen to agree with the notes. I've done that many, many times without apology. I didn't do it. And when I - a dear brother came to me afterwards and he said, "Now, Brother Reidhead, I just would like to make it clear to you that you didn't agree with the Scofield notes." "Oh," I said, "That's all right, friend. I don't even believe in the inspiration of the Scofield notes." And he was just a little bit perplexed and perturbed by this evidence of rank heresy on my part. There are those, you know, that actually accept. If not that they have some other commentator, some other writer, some other book that they accept as being the final word. I have accumulated all the books I can, and have more that I want to get as soon as possible, but friend, if the Word of God disagrees with any of my commentators, they're just going to have to suffer. I'm going to stick, with the Word. As the dear lady down South said when she was given her first one volume commentary of the Bible, and the daughter came a little while later and said, "Auntie, how do you like it?", and she said, "Well, I liked it fine but the Bible sho does throw a lot of light on that book."

And I discovered that we've got to have an authority. Well, in Israel's case they had accepted the Talmud. As I may have mentioned to you or some congregation recently, if you are suffering from insomnia, secure a copy of the Talmud. There is nothing so guaranteed to put you to sleep in the shortest possible time, as to read it. Rabbi Ben So and So said, and Rabbi Ben So and So said about what Rabbi Ben So and So said, and on it goes, page after page after page. The accumulated quotations from the rabbis across the centuries. And the tragedy of it was, said our Lord, that they had let the traditions of the elders, the Talmud, make the word of God the Torah of none effect. But the Pharisees believed in the inspiration of Scripture, they believed in the necessity of blood atonement; they kept all of the prescribed offerings and feasts and holy days; they brought all the sacrifices that the Word of God indicated were to be brought at the time they were to be brought; they believed that there was but one way by which a person could have his sin washed away and that was through the blood of an offering. They believed in eternal life as the gift from God as the result of their works and their faithfulness in obeying the Law; they believed in the existence of angels; they believed in resurrection from the dead. In other words, the Pharisees were held to all of the cardinal fundamentals of the faith. (They believed them; they held them to be so.) But we mustn't stop there, because as we go further into the study of the Pharisees, we discover that they were not only fundamental in their theology, orthodox in their theology, but they were also evangelistic in their zeal. By that I mean today, that they believed that the only way anyone could get to heaven was through believing in the Scripture and bringing the offerings and putting their faith in the Jehovah of Israel, and so they were diligent in witnessing. So diligent, in fact, that the converts increased to the degree that when they rebuilt the temple when Herod rebuilt it, he had to put in an enlarged court of the proselytes to take care of all these that had been converted to Israel, Romans and Grecians, peoples from Africa, from different countries of the world had come to Jerusalem and the Pharisees would witness to them. They then would be circumcised, baptized, take a Jewish name and come into Israel as a proselyte. They were evangelistic in their zeal. But you can't stop there with these good people. Now is there anything wrong with being fundamental with your theology? I hope you think there is. And is there anything wrong about being a persistent witness and soul winner. No. No.

The next thing you must observe is that they were missionary in their fervor. They took up collections to send their representatives to different lands in order that they could talk with someone that was expressing an interest to being converted to Israel. It was said of them that no trip would be too far, too dangerous, too difficult, too arduous, if at the end they could make one proselyte. They'd encircle the world to make one proselyte. They did it, they did it gladly, and they did it expectantly.

Then there is something else about these people that you mustn't forget. They were premillennial in their hope. Now is there anything wrong with that? No, none at all. You see, they were looking for the personal, imminent, bodily coming of Messiah to establish the kingdom of Israel and give it back the glory that it had under Solomon and David. They were looking for it. That's why, when Christ came, they were prepared Him and believe what He said, because He was the anticipated One, or they were anticipating someone. They accepted His testimony and the evidence He presented. They were anticipating the glory of Israel, restoration to power and influence that she had known in the past. Is there anything wrong with that? I don't think so it was good. I trust you are premillennial in your hope. But that isn't all about these good people.

They also were devout in their practice. You may realize that when I say devout, that you have never reached or approximated such devotion. I'm not afraid to say that. I have no hesitancy about it. They prayed three times a day. Their shortest prayer was about 8 or 10 minutes and their longest prayer about 22 minutes depending upon the speed with which they repeated it. Do you pray 3 times a day? regularly, anytime, anyplace, in business, on the street corner, wherever you may be. Do you? I don't think so. I'd recommend that you do it, but I must say that I was terribly impressed with the Mohammedans in Africa. At sundown the train would stop out in the desert and hundreds of them would pile off the train and the engineer and the conductor would spread their little prayer mat out on the sand and bow towards Mecca, and they would go through the entire prayer. Such devotion you don't find in America. Why, it was Dr. Ironside¹ that used to twit his companions about their irreverence when they'd go to a restaurant together. Good Dr. Ironsides would say, "Now which one of you will scratch your eyebrow before we eat," because he'd been there and they'd say their blessing like this, you know, and so that's the way he spoke of it. We scratch our eyebrows before we eat, but the Muslims pray, right out on the ground. And I will admit that it is said of some of the Pharisees that they arranged to be on the street corners at prayer time. But be that as it may, the fact is that they prayed when the time came, or they said their prayers three times a day. Then they fasted two days a week. Do you do that? Don't ask me if I do that, but do you do that, do you? I suspicion it, I just don't think you do. If you were to tell me you did, I'd question it, but you may. And if so, you haven't done any more than the Pharisees did. Two days a week they would neither drink water, swallow their spittle or eat food from sunup til sundown. They tithed everything they possessed. You know why your Income Tax permits you to deduct 20% this year or some years 30% of your giving for benevolence. Do you know why? I'll tell you why. Back when the Income Tax became so general when it touched everyone, they were beginning to take up collections for Israel, for the new State of Israel, and so the scholars and the rabbis began to study the Scripture, and they saw to it and could prove conclusively that if a faithful Jew were to give all that the Scripture commands, it would be at least 20%, so that it went down to the Bureau of Internal Revenue with this and to their congressman, and you have the happy result today that you are permitted to have a 20% deduction, 30% deduction for your giving, because they discovered that the Jew would give, not a tithe as you know it. He gave the tithe, but by the time he brought all the offering, it would occupy at least another 10% of his income, so he tithed, and so that was pressed to absurdity to the mint, the anise and the cummin, down to the point where it was ridiculous was the tithing. Someone was to give them a handful of mint to flavor their tea and they would divide it into 10 piles, so it would grow like a shrub around the house.

Then we discovered that they observed all of Pharisaical laws of dishes and separate set of dishes for milk and for meat. All of this was in effect at that time. They observed all of the holy days all of the sacred festivals and feasts were assiduously regarded by the Pharisees. Our Lord Jesus looked upon this company of people, and He said, 'your fundamentalism, your theology being orthodox, it's good, but it's not enough. Your evangelistic zeal is commendable, but not enough; your missionary fervor profitable, but not good enough; your premillennial hope is splendid, but not good enough; your devotion, not to be criticized, but not good enough.' That's what He said.

And thus we find that Fundamentalism is on trial by our Lord Jesus Christ. Here they had all this. What more could anyone ask for? Well, there's only one thing that our Lord would say of such, and that is, that you can have all of this and not be blest. Now He did make it abundantly clear, He didn't say how much theology you had to know, but He did say, "Blest are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God" (Mat. 5:3). He didn't say how evangelistic you should be, but He did say, "Blest are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted" (Mat. 5:4). He had described the blest ones, the person that was on the ground of

1 Henry (Harry) Allan Ironside (1876-1951) American Bible Teacher, Pastor, and Author. For 18 years he was pastor of Moody Memorial Church in Chicago.

blessing. But what's the difference? No law obtains to this which is set forth in the Beatitudes by works or by effort. That is a supernatural impartation. But all that the Pharisees had could be experienced and obtained without God entering into it at all.

Now He didn't say that it was bad, He simply said that it was not enough, not enough. It isn't enough today. We know full well that multitudes of people in our churches today give no Bible evidence of regeneration. In one of the most profitable books that I have read in the last couple of years, "Contemporary Evangelical Thought"², Andrew Blackwood³ in the last chapter states that the comments by two men he cites as authorities, that they hold that one 15% and the other about 20% of the members of the finest evangelical churches, only that small proportion give Bible evidence of regeneration. And I have heard others make other statements.

It was R. G. Lee down in Spartanburg, S.C. in 1950 addressing the South Carolina Baptist Convention who said, in the presence of 4 friends of mine who independently reported to me the same statement, that in his estimation, based on 40 years observation, probably no more than 1 out of 10 of the Southern Baptist people had experienced regeneration. And the pastors let out a sigh of amazement, and he went on, saying, "Brethren, if I have erred at this, it's probably less than 10% if all were known." And our own Dr. Tozer⁴ in Pittsburgh two years ago stated that in his estimation possibly no larger percentage than 20 of the membership of the evangelical churches gave evidence of regeneration. Now I say, I'm not here to challenge or to question their figures. Maybe they are entirely wrong. But I have cited to you four men that are recognized in their day and generation as having a modicum of perception and intelligence, and these men say there's something wrong that can fill the memberships of our fundamental churches with people that are fundamental in theology, evangelistic in zeal, missionary in fervor, premillennial in hope, devout to a measure in practice but miss something that is absolutely essential.

And therefore I say to you, that essential as fundamentalism is, the fundamentals of the truth and your loyalty to that truth, to those truths, it is clear that the fact that you hold certain things to be so, does not necessarily mean that you have been put onto the ground of blessing. The fact that you are evangelistic in your zeal, does not mean that you are only humanitarian in attitude, desiring that none of your fellows should go to Hell. It may not mean that you have been born of God at all. You may be doing your witnessing primarily for the sinner's sake and not for the Savior's sake. The fact that you're missionary in fervor does not mean that you've been born of God, it may only mean that you have a humanitarian hobby of getting the message out to people that haven't heard. The fact that you are premillennial in hope may not mean that you've been born of God; it may only mean that you are looking for some means of deliverance from the horrible dilemma that threatens us today. The fact that you are devout in practice may not mean that you are born of God any more than the Mohammedans and the Hindus who have a devotion that far surpasses ours, as Christians.

Therefore, the challenge that I bring to my generation was the same challenge that our Lord Jesus brought to His generation, and it is this, unless God has added to you supernaturally by divine operation something that you could not acquire by your natural processes, it may be that you've not been born of God. That's what He is saying. Your righteousness must exceed, it must go beyond. It will have this, it will be part of it, but it will come from above, it will be alive, it will be vital, it will be powerful, it will be imparted by God To you it will result in these things, but the practice of these things and the acceptance of these things cannot be equated with possessing eternal life. Therefore, my challenge to the day in which I live, and to which I bear responsibility and bear a part is this, that we may have thought that fundamentalism is enough. It isn't. It isn't enough. It is enough without which, but it is not enough. There must be life from above supernaturally imparted by God the Holy Ghost.

Now we live in a day when there is going to be a conflict. I believe there's going to be a conflict, the same kind that there was between Christ and the Pharisees. You know, for a long time the Pharisees thought they could do business with Christ because they listened to Him preach and they found that He was as orthodox as they, so they thought that they might retain Him as sort of Conference Evangelist, and I think that that's the reason they invited Him to that luncheon that we read about in Luke 14. They were going to present the proposition to Him and see if they couldn't get Him to preach for them and cooperate with

² "Contemporary Evangelical Thought" Edited by Carl F. H. Henry, 1957.

³ Andrew Watterson Blackwood (1882-1966) was a pastor, professor, and prolific author, in the service of Jesus Christ

⁴ Aiden Wilson Tozer (1897-1963) Pastor and Author. Christian and Missionary Alliance

them, and our Lord Jesus, of course, couldn't do that, and when they found that He couldn't and wouldn't do it, and then they had to do something about it.

May I remind you that it was the Pharisees that engineered the betrayal of Christ and the crucifixion of Christ. May I remind you that it was the Pharisees that hooted and howled and called for His death. May I remind you that it was the group there that was the nearest to Him that found themselves the farthest from Him. It was so you know. Now why? My dear, when the Pharisees found out that Jesus Christ had something that they didn't have; they had one or two alternatives. They either had to seek it or kill Him. Do you see why? They either had to seek what Christ had that they didn't have, or they had to kill Him, because as long as He existed, as long as He was free to disseminate this doctrine, He was sowing a seed of doubt in the long adherence of the Pharisaical system. No, they had to do something about it, had to do something about it, get rid of Him.

And it isn't different today. There are those that are still in the pale of orthodoxy and fundamentalism that have a determined hatred against several things, for instance, they focus on what they call discipleship, Salvation. I've been teaching and shall continue to teach as long as God is lends me breath, there's no difference between being a disciple, that is it is not a synonym of being saved, it simple means learner, has nothing to do essentially with salvation, and that the prescriptions that are given for being a disciple are the basic requirements for even getting on the ground to understand how to be born again. But there are those today that say that this is discipleship salvation and salvation by works. I believe it isn't. No it isn't, but it is just a matter of presenting the grounds of real Bible repentance. Then there are those in the company of fundamentalists that hold that all subjective experience is of the Devil.

I recall hearing a preacher say in my presence, 'there are some people around here that are teaching, the only way a person will know he's saved is by the witness of the Spirit' and he went on to say the witness of the Spirit is a scratching under the 5th rib. He said that's a lie of the Devil. He went on, the only witness of the Spirit is the written Word of God, and the only way anyone will know he's saved is because he takes a verse of Scripture and he stands on it. Now, there's a wide gulf between the two. Both fundamentalists, but one says if what's true in the Scripture must be made real in your hearts by the Holy Ghost, and it isn't yours to claim until God has made it inwardly real, subjectively real. The other one says, there's no such thing as subjective reality, it's only the written Scripture. Then there are those that say, yes, the Bible is inspired but all of the supernatural ceased. Some say it ceased at the destruction of Jerusalem and others say that it ceased at the completion of the canon. But all the supernatural, the gifts of the Spirit, the manifestation of the Risen Christ in the midst of His people are said to have stopped by some of these dear brethren in the pale of fundamentalism. But are these others that say there's nothing changed, that Jesus Christ is the same today, that the only reason we do not see His power manifest is because of our disobedience and unbelief, and that when we meet the conditions of His Word and fulfill the prescriptions of His truth, He will manifest Himself again in the midst of His people, that we are still living in the dispensation of the Holy Ghost and He still wants to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that worketh in us.

And so we find that fundamentalism isn't all that some have thought it to be. So there are two errors. There is one group that say the fruit of the Spirit isn't important. It doesn't make any difference how you live; it doesn't make any difference how you behave. Because you're saved, therefore you just go ahead and live as you want. Nobody is perfect, everybody lives with sin, and they have thus been able to tolerate biting victory, biting, tearing at one another.

There is another group that says, No. Herein is my Father glorified that you bear much fruit. That He is not only to be glorified by the ends we design, but by the means we employ; not only by what we attempt to do, but by what we are. That there must be something as well as say something, know something and do something. So we find that there is even today the same sort of thing developing, and as time goes on, you are going to find, unfortunately, that it will spread a little farther, a little further apart. You must understand that you have to stand on one of two grounds. You either have to stand on the ground of Phariseeism with its literalism, with its absolutely containment within the letter, or you must stand on the ground of the truth of the Scripture with the supernatural presence of Christ making it real in your heart and in your life. And that same issue faces us today, and so consequently we come right back to the fact that what our Lord Jesus saw then, we see now. The Lord Jesus wasn't saying that orthodoxy, evangelistic zeal, missionary fervor, premillennial hope were that not important. He was saying that they were important only when they're the evidence of the supernatural work of God in the heart. But they can be

reproduced by human energy and effort. When they are, they're dead and they're sterile, and they're powerless. But, said He, when that righteousness, that righteousness which is going to make it possible for you to enter into the kingdom of heaven is in you, this will be the hall mark of genuineness. What will it be? There will be poverty of spirit; there will be mourning of heart; there will be meekness of mind; there will be hunger and thirst after righteousness; there will be mercy in attitude; there will be purity in heart; there will be peace makers instead of warmongers. This is the righteousness that comes down from above. This that He's described is fundamentalism on fire with the Holy Ghost. Has this been made real in your life? Where are you? Do you have the reality of His presence or do you just have the form of godliness.

Let us pray.

There are several questions that you must ask yourself now. You'll never have a better opportunity or a quieter place to ask these questions. Have you, my dear, received the Word of God as true, that Jesus Christ is God come in the flesh, that He died for you and was raised from the dead. Do you hold these things to be true? (The reminder of the sermon is indistinct on the audio tape, which is not available)

* Reference such as: Delivered at The Gospel Tabernacle Church, New York City on Sunday Evening, December 7, 1958 by Paris W. Reidhead, Pastor.

©PRBTMI 1958