

The fading light of lifes last day is slowly slipping into the shadows. The mightiest man who ever spoke for God in this world is sitting on death row. The sand in the hour glass is about <sup>to run out</sup> the clock of the centuries is about to strike, the poised guillotine is ready to fall.

His virogous life had been punctuated with many imprisonments, impossible plights and perils, But the Lord had delivered him out of them all.

He knew what it was to have the prison stocks to fall from his hands at midnight and prison doors to swing open by the mighty power of God. He knew the perils of being lost at sea, shipwrecked in a storm, when all hope was gone, yet to be brought safe to land by the help of God.

Nothing had moved him, stopped him or abated his zeal for more than thirty years. But now his outlook is different. The realization has come to him that he is not going to be delivered this time.

The ~~entire~~ last chapter of the book bears the mark and sheds the atmosphere of a man writing the last chapter of his life and putting the finishing touches on an earthly soujourn that is triumphant even in death.

He had written of the Victory of the Vanquished in the 11th chapter of Hebrews and had classified those martyrs who had died horrible deaths in the morning of life in the same category with those died in glory having come to the end of life at the very top of the ladder of success.

Now he is experiencing what he has written of others He is to drink the martyrs cup and die the martyrs death. But this mighty prince of preachers ~~he~~ falters not. He is as calm in anticipation of death as if he were going out to preach a sermon.

The key phrase of his life he uses now. Again he cries  
IX AM READY.

If there was any one thing that characterised his ever move in all of his life it is the word READY. READY TO PREACH THE GOSPEL IN ROME:: READY TO GO TO JERUSALEM: READY TO BE BOUND: and now, READY TO DIE.

This mighty Murcelean warrior bearing in his body scars from many a conflict, trophies from many a batt

Confesses now his bonds. He is in prison at Rome waiting the hour of execution. His freedom is over. His great life of travel is past. Now the limitations of four walls shut him in. He can look out of the ~~small~~ window where a little light streaks through that out there in the world of men there is a great power at work that is a thousand times stronger than the might of Rome. A power that he had a part in setting in motion. It is the power of the Gospel.

He recognizes his confinement but he knows that four grey walls can never imprison the gospel of Christ.

~~Death can never~~ He confesses the nearness of death to himself. But he knows that death cannot destroy the gospel, and chains can never bind it. He triumphantly affirms that it was at work and would continue among men forever.

Ac knowlegeing his bonds he declares in the same breath the impossibility of binding the Gospel.

*as death looks over his shoulder he puts it off*  
Paul is emphatic and dogmatic in his methods but he always basis every great ststatement on a sound premis. He had appraised the gospel many times." I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one they believeth. Again) God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ; for by it I am cricified unto the world and the world unto me."

He had been the champion exponent of the doctrine of the resurrection. e believed that the bonds of death had been burst asunder by Christ. He believed with John that the word became flesh and dwelt among men. And he believed that the power of a resurrected Christ could never know confinement.

He had been told by Peter of How Jesus had passed through walls and dissappeared again when the doors were closed. and he believed it.

Christ the living word, had conquered death hell and the grave. And that Christ was out there in the world of men working, moving, convincing and conquori.

He knew that Timothy might be discouraged, and that his many followers from ~~ROME~~ throughout Asia Minor might lose heart by his imprisonment and death. So he seems to be saying, I am bonds and death awaits me but the Gospel is not BOUND.

## 1... OTHERS HAD TRIED TO BIND IT:

Paul had spent his life combating narrowminded prejudice in the church. To him the gospel had no limitations and it was for all men,

(a) Some had tried to limit it to Jesus only. They would not accept the gospel from any preacher. They would accept no messenger of the truth but Jesus Himself/.

(b) Others had tried to circumscribe it to racial lines. Paul had to go to Jerusalem and stand on the floor of the Jerusalem and declare to the church fathers that the Gospel was not for the Jews only but for Gentiles as well.

(c) Some had tried to bind upon its back the time worn traditions from Abraham to Calvary. But Paul had said Circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth anything but a new creature.

(d) Men tried to clutter its simplicity with certain legal burdens and confine it to racial barriers,

All of these he fought against and championed the freedom of the word of God, and triumphantly exclaims in the last hours of his life. **THE WORD OF GOD IS NOT BOUND.**

## 11... MEN STILL TRY TO BIND THE GOSPEL.

(a) Some claim to have a monopoly on it.

That they have certain divine rights provided for them in the gospel that no other can share unless they go their way.

(b) Others claim a certain special insight, that God has given to them. A special revelation that no other can receive.

(c) Some would circumscribe it to a particular name and denomination and say its benefits goes this far and no further.

(d) Some would limit it to only the new birth and say that Sanctification is not a provision of the Gospel.

(e) Some tell us that the Holy Ghost cannot be received now, It belonged to the apostles only.

(f) Some would strip the gospel of the great doctrine of healing.

(g) Others tell us that the question of sin cannot be completely settled in this life. We cannot get rid of

We can only subdue it for a season. We must sin every day.

### III. THE PROVEN LIMITLESSNESS OF THE GOSPEL.

Paul had challenged the whole world with the Gospel. He had proven it among the philosophers of Athens and among the "barbarians of Asia Minor.

He had put it on parade before Felix, Festus and king Agrippa. He was able to say those of Caesars own household salute you.

He had seen the small and great melt before it, prison doors ~~xxxx~~ fall from their hinges. Demons were cast out. dead raised, sick healed, ~~xxxx~~ whole cities turn to God, worlds conquered. Not one time in all of his life had he seen the gospel proven weak or fail.

### IV. His supreme argument:

Always his defence was in the fact that Christ rose from the dead. He knew that as long as the risen Christ lived in the hearts of any man that the word of the Lord could not be bound.

### V.. MY GOSPEL.

A favorite phrase of his, My Gospel.

Was it egotistical. was he being puffed up or exalted. Who did he call the gospel of Christ ~~ma~~ My gospel?

He was not dishonoring Christ. He was not attempting to exalt himself.

He was testifying that His identity with the Gospel made him one with its principals and teachings.

He was so lost in the Gospel of Christ till. For him to live was christ and to die was gain. Its no ~~in~~ that lives but christ liveth in me.

He was not only preaching the gospel he was living it. If you want to know what Christ is like. Look at me.

(The girl in Conway)

Jesus had said if You would see the Father look at me. Paul said if you would know Christ get acquainted with me.

I think Jesus Christ would be ashamed to be identified with some holiness people of this day.