

"Scum of the Earth"

Vance Havner

"We are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day." —Corinthians 4:13.

We are made as the filth of the world," says Paul, and both Moffatt and Weymouth put it "the scum of the earth." Paul is drawing a contrast between conceited, puffed-up Corinthians on the one hand—split into schisms and parties, following pet preachers, proud of their cleverness and sophistication — and on the other hand, the humble, suffering apostles, bearing in their bodies the marks of the Lord Jesus. The Corinthian variety was never more numerous than now, not only in the world and in modernism but in conversatism as well where, along with apologists, we certainly could use a few more apostles! The spirit of the age, the mood of the times, is Corinthian; and the church is not here to catch it but to correct it and, if need be, condemn it. Certainly it is an unfruitful work of darkness and we should have no fellowship with it but rather expose it.

Every historian knows that Christianity has made its greatest strides under persecution, not under patronage. The church rolls on when her leaders wear scars, and folds up when they parade their medals. When her apostles are chained in prisons dark, still in heart and conscience free, in the worthy succession of Paul and Bunyan and Foxe and many another, she does great business. But when they move into the boulevard and are elected president of the Uplift Club, she practically goes out of business.

"Scum of the earth!" What do we have in contemporary Christianity comparable to that? Campbell Morgan, dealing with this verse, asks, "I wonder what application that has to us?" and then moves on.

"Scum of the earth!" Have we ever been called that for Jesus sake? We have struck a truce with the world—worse than that, we have gone into alliance. We enquire of Baalzebub as Ahaziah did, when we get into trouble, and hire the efficiency experts of this age to solve our dilemmans. We are on good terms with the age, and that is thought to be a sign that things are going better for the gospel. But the age grows darker, and where is there a word in the New Testament to indicate that we should expect to fare better at her hands than did our forebears?

This fashionable, popular, comfortable brand of Christianity is a flat failure because it is a compromise. Without offense, it is without effect. We have lost our reproach, and look at the results! Unless we can produce an equivalent today for the "scum of the earth" of apostolic days and a faith and experience that will bring down the wrath of the powers of darkness, "Ichabod" will be written all over our churches. Some of us are bearing reproach but it is deserved reproach brought on ourselves and not the reproach of Christ without the camp. To become the "scum of the earth" for Christ today does not mean wearing hair shirts or courting trouble. All we have to do is be New Testament Christians and we will soon discover that the shame of the cross is just as real today as ever. We do not believe that it is possible to be a New Testament Christian in any age and at the same time be

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hail-fellow-well-met and acceptable to this world. They are incompatible! Christ and Belial have nothing in common.

We do not mean that the "scum of the earth" need be confined to what is called the lower social strata. Scholars and millionaires have known Christ's reproach, but before they did the scholar had to become a fool that he might be wise, and the rich man had to become poor in spirit. However, it is undeniable that the bulk of the saints have been among the foolish, the weak, the base and despised and things which are not. The great revivals never start at the top but at the bottom.

When individuals, churches or religious bodies lose their reproach and become rich and increased with goods, having need of nothing, then the reproach ceases and the rot sets in. One thinks of the early days of the Baptists or Methodists or Quakers. Consider Rowland Hill saying of Wesley: "He and his lay lubbers go forth to poison the minds of men . . . his ragged legion of preaching tinkers, scavengers, draymen and chimney sweepers." They were the "scum of the earth" in those days, but do not forget what they did!

When the Greeks came to see Jesus He did not lecture them on philosophy. But if they came today we would immediately go into a dither trying to dress up our gospel to suit their fancy. Jesus said the corn of wheat must die, and we need to confront prospective disciples with the challenge of death to self and a new life hid with Christ in God, a life of reproach and shame for Jesus' sake. But we do not hear that these days. We have gone off the deep end trying to make the Christian life a lot of fun and thrills, a glorified excursion, just a better way to have a big time.

Let us quit fooling ourselves. It is just as unpopular to be a Christian as ever. It costs just as much—and that is, everything. It is not a spiritual spree nor a chorus-singing lark. We need some candidates for "scum of the earth."—Alliance Weekly.

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Cross of Jesus Christ. Naturally, there had been young men in her life; but she had set her heart to follow Jesus, and she would not swerve from her purpose. God had called her, and she would be true to the heavenly vision

She seemed so tiny as she waved farewell from the great steamer that was to take her to a strange land and a strange people. But the smile above that fluttering white handkerchief was radiant, for "One was walking with her over life's uneven way, constantly supporting her each moment of the day." That One brought another life across two oceans to that same strange land, to that same strange people, for the same supreme purpose. The young man from one country, and Rose from another, came within sight of each other, then near enough to join in social acquaintance-ship, and later in friendship. Joined hands soon led on to joined hearts, and one day the girl from one land came up the aisle of a little mission church where the young man from another land was waiting at the front, and in that third land to which God had called them both, their long journeys ended in a snowdrift of bridal veiling.

Since that holy, happy day, those two, as one, have had the joy of pointing many souls to "The Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."

Who made the wiser choice? YOU decide! —The Alliance Weekly.

The Challenge of Holiness

A. D. Cann*

"Holiness is as popular as the cross," stated Dr. C. W. Butler at Beulah Camp a few years ago.

The world abhors suffering and so they bypass holiness and the cross. Did I say the world? Not all the world, for there always have been and always will be a remnant who cherish holiness.

Holiness is a state of grace obtainable in this life. It begins when the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost. Holiness is established when the "body of sin" is destroyed by the baptism with the Holy Ghost.

Holiness is central in the Christian faith. In relation to the human family it roots back to the beginning. "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." Eph. 1:4. It was God's will that men and nations be holy. It still is. "God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness." God created a body for man and is able to keep that body from disease. God created human personality and He is able to keep that personality from sin.

Holiness challenges to purity of life. It is a call to combat with the Devil without and abnormal appetites within. It is a challenge to live for the Lord and not for the body. Paul said—"I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection."

Holiness is a call to combat with evil. Our weapons are not carnal, but spiritual. Evil can only be rooted out by the power and energy of the Holy Ghost. It is the duty of the Church to preach and practice holiness. To preach less is to compromise, to practice less is hypocrisy. The Church that is found preaching and practicing holiness is the Church that should be found filled on Sundays. It is the Church with high ethical standards. The members are humble, honest, sincere and zealous for missions both at home and abroad. It is impossible to be holy and heartless at the same time.

If a salesman intends to sell a car he sets forth all the qualities that excel. Comfort and beauty in the superior body, top performance from a high powered motor, economy for the budget, etc. He does not once mention that in a few months the car will depreciate four hundred or five hundred dollars, that another three hundred dollars will be required for operation expense, etc. He does not mention that if you buy a car you probably will not be able to buy a refrigerator and other creature comforts that make up life. He has only one idea—you cannot afford to be without a car. People need holiness. We cannot afford to be without it. It is costly, all we have, or ever hope to have—but it is worth it. Think of the inward rest, the peace of mind. Think of being ever ready to meet our Maker. This, thank God, is the challenge of holiness.

The holiness message is the message of the hour. Men and nations need holiness. It is essential in this life and a requisite for the life to come. Let us not be ashamed of holiness, much less, the Lord Jesus who by His life and death made holiness available to all the race of Adam who believe. Holiness is the keystone in the bridge that contacts earth with Heaven. If we are to win the peace among the nations then we must be a holy people.

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