

# WHY LOOK AT A GALLOWS?

By Desmond Ford

Only the Christian faith “wears well,” and becomes authenticated in the actual living. All great books are like that—they are, so to speak, written in invisible ink, and only as the pages are held before the fire of life does their full significance appear. In the light of the tragic and ecstatic facts of existence, pain even agony, bewilderment and frustration, duty, responsibility and failure, guilt, remorse and death, as well as joy, love, hope and fulfillment, Christianity and Christianity alone, in its Biblical form, matches reality.

The worst men know more about duty than the best man does. Information is never enough. Motivation is the great human lack—and that the Christ of Calvary, and he alone, provides. Why is it that Scripture alludes to only about one day in every three hundred of our Lord’s life? Why is so little said of the Bethlehem birth, of the first thirty years of Christ’s sojourn here, and of more than 99 percent of the days of his actual ministry after his baptism? Why is it that the last week of our Savior’s life is given from one-third to one-half of the space in the four gospels? The reason is plain. Spurgeon expressed it as well as anybody:

Our Lord’s power to draw all men to Himself lies mainly in His death. By being lifted up from the earth upon a cross he was made to die, and so also was he made to draw all men to Himself. There is an attractive power about our Lord’s person, and about His life, and about His teaching; but still, the main attractive force lies in His death upon the cross. Most certainly this is rare and strange; for when a great religious leader dies, a large measure of his personal power is gone.... Is it not strange that what is so often fatal to the influence of other men is a gain to our Lord Jesus Christ; for it is by his death that he possesses his most powerful influence over the sons

of men? Because Jesus died, He is this day the mightiest ruler of human minds, the great centre to which all hearts are being drawn.... Herein is a wonderful thing. The Lord Jesus has lost no influence by being hanged upon the tree; nay, rather it is because of His shameful death that he is able to draw all men unto Himself. His glory rises from his Humiliation; His conquest from His ignominious death.... Christ’s death of weakness threw no weakness into Christianity; say rather that it is the right arm of her power. By the sign of suffering unto death the church has conquered, and will conquer still. By a love which is as strong as death she has always been victorious, and must forever remain so. When she has not been ashamed to put the cross in the forefront, she has never had to be ashamed; for God has been with her, and Jesus has drawn all men to himself. The crucified Christ has irresistible attractions; when he stoops into the utmost suffering and scorn, even the brutal must relent. A living Savior men *may* love, but a crucified Savior they *must* love. If they perceive that he loved them, and gave himself for them, their hearts are stolen away; the city of Mansoul is captured before the siege begins, when the Prince Emmanuel uncovers the beauties of his dying love before the eyes of the rebellious ones. -*Treasury of the New Testament, Vol. 2 pp. 483-484*

The most important factor in our lives is what we choose to attend to. Attention brings either love or some other powerful motivator. God intends that by beholding his love reflected in the manifold imagery of the cross we shall be changed.

Desmond Ford. *KALEIDOSCOPE OF DIAMONDS VOL. 2 pp. 3-5* 

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