

From the Editor  
**Mighty In The Scriptures**  
by Art Azurdia



Are you acquainted with the name *John Broadus* (1827-1895)? His is an impressive resume:

- a professor of Latin and Greek . . .
- a former president of the University of Virginia . . .
- a founding professor and former president of Southern Seminary . . .
- a pastor of a Baptist church . . .
- a published commentator on the Gospel of Matthew . . .
- a patriarch in American homiletical education . . .

Three weeks before his death, Broadus stood before a class at Southern Seminary and read the following text: “Now a certain Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus and he was mighty in the Scriptures” (Acts 18:24). Having concluded the reading, Broadus proceeded to say, “Gentlemen, we must be like Apollos, mighty in the Scriptures.” A student later said that a hush fell upon the class for the next few minutes as Broadus stood and repeated, “Mighty in the Scriptures . . . mighty in the Scriptures . . . mighty in the Scriptures.”

More than a century has transpired since Broadus audibly mused these words, exposing his deep conviction that men preparing for pastoral ministry should be “*mighty in the Scriptures.*” It makes me wonder: To what extent is this value shared in our own day and time? Is this the current aspiration of plebes preparing for pastoral ministry—to be mighty in the Scriptures? Is it the passionate and ongoing pursuit of seasoned pastoral veterans? What about denominational boards and ordination councils—do they esteem and encourage strong and robust biblical/theological skill among their candidates? As churches seek to fill vacant pastoral positions, what do their job descriptions reveal about the values they most highly cherish: *Mighty in the Scriptures*? Or something more akin to: *Mighty in visionary planning*? *Mighty in fundraising*? *Mighty in managerial techniques*? *Mighty in counseling*?

To be sure, we give thanks to the Lord of the Church for His gifts to us in the form of human beings empowered with visionary perspective, administrative skill, and counseling insight. It *is not* my aim to depreciate the contributions of such Spirit-endowed members of the body of Christ. It *is* my aim to assert that these gifts *do not* define the chief pursuit and ambition of the Gospel minister. For such a man there can only be one, ultimate, lifelong preoccupation: to be a pastoral theologian—that is, to be a man (to quote Broadus) *mighty in the Scriptures.*

The consequences of forsaking this holy preoccupation have been well-documented and are evident to discerning Christians. In a great reversal of our 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century advances, a *de-formation* has occurred in many evangelical churches and denominations, resulting in a devastating contradiction that presently exists between a theological confession of the Bible’s unique inspiration and a practical disregard of the Bible’s authoritative sufficiency.

How do we remedy this inconsistency? How do we work toward the eradication of an ecclesiological contradiction that blemishes our integrity? In part, we seek to be a generation of pastors mighty in the Scriptures—a *re-formed* company of pastoral theologians who will tirelessly and courageously labor in the

Christ-centered Scriptures, seeking to master our congregations with His Word. This is, after all, the apostolic mandate:

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths (2 Tim 4:1-4).

Throughout the years our family has spent many hours reading and rereading *The Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan (By the way, Spurgeon himself claimed to have read *The Pilgrim's Progress* well over a hundred times!). As a pastor, I have always been mindful of the scene in which Christian is invited into the Interpreter's House to be furnished with vital instruction intended to sustain him on his journey to the Celestial City.

After lighting a candle, Christian is ushered into a private room in which he sees a larger than life-size portrait hanging on the wall. "Oh, my! Such a glorious piece of art!" Christian exclaims. In Bunyan's allegory, it is the portrait of a true pastor. And Bunyan's subsequent description of it is exceedingly revealing: ". . . it had eyes lifted up to heaven, the best of books in his hand, the law of truth was written upon his lips, the world was behind his back, he stood as if he pleaded with men, and a crown of gold did hang over his head."

This, dear brothers, is what ought to describe us as pastors: ". . . the best of books in his hand, the law of truth written upon his lips"—an allegorical expression of the identical thing for which John Broadus pleaded with God: "*men mighty in the Scriptures.*"

My way of saying it isn't as nearly eloquent or moving. I do hope, however, that you get the point: May God grant us *pastoral theologians*—men whose life-effort will be zealously devoted to bringing the Scriptures to a human race unmindful of its own true need.

I eagerly commend to you this issue of *The Spurgeon Fellowship Journal*. May the Lord use it as a tool in the *re-formation* of our pastoral calling.