

2 Corinthians 9:15 (David Lunden) 169714

The Christian Shepherd: 2003, Unspeakable

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“Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift” (2 Cor. 9:15).

(Little Flock Hymnbook, #150)

The tongue and, behind it, the mind sometimes fail at the wonderful, the superlative and the majestic that transcend our little lives. We can handle the 1, 2, 3's of life the mind boggles at the infinities.

Sometimes, when words fail, we let our hands talk (to the dismay of English teachers). A beloved brother, a colporteur and gospel preacher (now home with the Lord), was master of four or five languages, but his volatile Latin temperament often bubbled out, both hand and tongue, as he told the old, old story.

Here in 2 Corinthians the Apostle, seldom at a loss for words, maintains a silent pen (mightier than sword), except to say that heaven's Gift transcends our words, our tongues and the mind behind them.

Our hymn writer, instead of “unspeakable,” uses “ineffable,” from the same root as our more common “infant” and “infantry.” What possible connection do these last two have? Age? Size? Armament?

Put simply, neither speak: the infant because he cannot the soldier because he must not. (Not theirs to question why; theirs but to do or die.)

And what of us? Are we speechless before such a wonder? God, in the Person of our Lord, became Man to redeem us and to bring us to Himself. Is it our immaturity when our tongues are silent? Are we mutely beholden to the captains and kings of this present world?

“Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings” (Matt. 21:16) perhaps suggests the imperfect praise due a perfect Subject. (The perfectionist waits, and waits... forever.)

“O Lord, Thy sea is so great and my boat is so small” brings us the sense of wonder, of the burning bush, something that the medieval cathedral builders recognized as vital, though failing to profit from the musings of Solomon, the temple builder (2 Chron. 6:18).

(Little Flock Hymnbook, #294)

D. Lunden (adapted)

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