

# The Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate

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## The Jarvis Street Pulpit THE UNCHANGEABLE CHRIST

A Sermon preached by the present Pastor, Dr. H. C. Slade

In Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, January 1, 1956

(Electrically Recorded)

"Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God; whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation."

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.

"Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein."—Heb. 13:7, 8, 9.

*This sermon is dedicated to the memory of our late Pastor, Dr. T. T. Shields*

**I** BELIEVE the true sense of this passage of Scripture is brought out more clearly by the translation of Dr. Weymouth which reads as follows:—"Remember your former leaders — it was they who brought you God's Message. Bear in mind how they ended their lives, and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today — yes, and to the ages to come: do not be drawn aside by all sorts of strange teaching; for it is well to have the heart made steadfast through God's grace, and not by special kinds of foods, from which those who scrupulously attend to them have derived no benefit."

There is not one of us who is not at times tempted to drift. The tempter is continually seeking to weaken us in our firm stand for the faith. If he can effect, not at first denial, but just a compromise or a slight drawing away from our strong position in relation to the truth as revealed in Jesus Christ, he is, at least for the time being, quite contented.

Also, there is in each one of us, apart from the inducements of Satan, a very strong disposition towards instability.

"Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it;  
Prone to leave the God I love;  
Here's my heart, oh, take and seal it,  
Seal it for Thy courts above."

Our main difficulty in the Christian life, as we all experience, I am sure, is to continue in the things we

have learned. The fact is none of us is as strong as he would like to be in the matter of steadfastness. It is, of course, as you know, comparatively easy to begin a thing, whether it be to essay a task or to profess a certain belief, but how to keep on keeping on, indeed, with most of us, is a very great problem. Mr. Spurgeon once remarked, "Some folks I know ought to be, by this time, experts at beginnings because they have been doing nothing else ever since I have known them — always making some new beginning but never continuing." Our Lord recognized this tendency among those who early professed to be disciples when He said, "If ye continue in my Word then are ye my disciples indeed."

With a keen sense of his own inherent weakness and, observing in others the same tendency to drift, the Apostle Peter, in order to safeguard us from a condition of instability, issued a faithful warning which we would all do well to heed, "Beware, lest ye also being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness."

You will readily observe that the Writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, which would appear to be the Apostle Paul, considered that the tendency to drift constituted a very real danger. Therefore, during his ministry in the many places he visited he constantly exhorted the people of God to, "Be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." To him constancy was a qual-

ity, not only to be earnestly desired, but to be diligently cultivated. At the time of writing this Epistle from which we have selected our text, the Apostle was suffering from a very special fear in this regard. This fear was chiefly occasioned by the removal of a number of faithful, spiritual leaders from their midst. Stephen, for instance, had been, as the first Christian martyr, stoned to death. James also had been killed. How many others had died by natural means, we do not know.

My friends, it is indeed an anxious time when God takes away from His church and the world a faithful pastor and especially one, as in our case, who was such an outstanding Christian leader. What was the exact nature of the Apostle's fear in this connection I wonder? Do you not think that we have it explained in the warning words he spoke to the Ephesian elders at Miletus? (the last time, so far as we know, he addressed them). In order to remind ourselves of the important charge given at that time, I shall quote from Acts, Chapter 20, verses 28-31.

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."

First of all, you will notice, he feared false teachers. Every professing church has such. They will come in among you, said Paul, and they will present new and perverse teaching. With this anxiety in mind he fervently warns the Hebrew Christians, "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines." In addition, during such a delicate period in their history, Paul feared ambitious men who would, as he said, from among yourselves arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples. Of them he said, "I cease not to warn everyone night and day with tears." Doubtless the same fears were entertained by the Apostle with respect to the Hebrew church, as in the case of the church at Ephesus. In order to fortify these Hebrew Christians against the impending danger of injurious drift, the Apostle prescribes a remedy. This remedy consisted of observing two things — he first exhorted them to remember their departed leaders, secondly, to consider the immutability of the Lord Jesus Christ. Since the case of the Hebrew church at the time of receiving this Epistle was exactly parallel to our own at the present time, which we experienced in the passing of our great pastor and leader, Dr. T. T. Shields, we shall have no difficulty whatever in applying the text to our own situation. To keep us steadfast as a church and unwavering in our distinctive testimony for Jesus Christ, what better can be recommended than to keep in constant remembrance our departed pastor and to meditate daily upon the unchangeableness of the Lord Jesus. We shall, therefore, for a moment think of the injunction to remember our departed leader.

#### I.

Those of you who knew Dr. Shields well will, I have no doubt, want to reflect upon his great personality and character. For your inspiration may you do that often. To us all he was a beloved pastor. How can we ever forget his many kind ministries in that capacity! All those memories of him are most noble and appropriate but the one distinctive feature by which he is always to

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be held in remembrance, according to the text, was his faithful preaching of God's Word. "Remember them who had the rule over you, who spoke unto you the Word of God." We shall long remember Dr. Shields for his preaching ministry above all else. As for his faithfulness, no one in this day of apostacy exercised a more uncompromising ministry than he. In his boldness for God he was without a peer. Never did he shun to declare all the counsel of God. No one ever heard any apologies for the gospel from his consecrated lips. As a result of his sound teaching and preaching many have been led to accept Jesus Christ as Saviour and numerous Christians throughout the world have been strengthened and built up in their most holy faith. We will continue to bless God upon every remembrance of him as a true and faithful witness.

As most of you here will recall, just one year ago today at the New Year's morning service he sent from his sickbed a text of Scripture as a motto for the year 1955, upon which he briefly spoke. This final speech, which will be long remembered by all of us, was electrically recorded. We can still hear him pleading as a faithful pastor yearning for the highest welfare of his flock, beseeching us to give ourselves wholeheartedly unto the Lord.

Much could be said also with respect to Dr. Shields' ability to preach. He was, we believe, gifted above many. How many times he carried us into the heavenlies with his eloquence as he set forth the glorious majesty and grace of our blessed Lord. Do remember, dear Christian friends, those glorious messages and utterances given from this pulpit for so many years, for that is exactly

what the Apostle is exhorting us to do. No greater tragedy could ever come to this church than for the members to forget the great principles of truth which were so clearly set forth and so ably expounded to us by God's true prophet, Dr. Shields.

Furthermore, we are admonished to imitate his faith: "Whose faith, follow." I know you will understand when I make this observation. We are not asked to imitate him. I quote Dr. Shields when I say, "Any person who tries to imitate another will invariably copy his defects and never his virtues." Hence, it is not a safe thing to do. But the faith of the gospel to which he held most tenaciously, for which he earnestly contended, by which he lived and by which he died, we are to religiously imitate. It was that faith which gave him all the peace and the confidence he needed when he at last approached the "Valley of the Shadow of Death". As I watched him make his exit and observed how peacefully and triumphantly he departed this life to go into the presence of the Lord, I said to myself then, "It is not hard to imitate a faith like that." We cherish the memory of this great man of God, as we do all others like him who have gone on before. Let us remind ourselves often of the strong convictions which he held, the noble stand he always took for the faith and the faithful ministry of the gospel which he consistently exercised. Such recollections will serve as a stimulus and help to keep us strong and steadfast to the end in our witness for Jesus Christ.

## II.

Now we shall consider the second part of our main subject, namely *The immutability of Jesus Christ*. What a comforting declaration that is, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today and forever." In this world of fluctuation the mind needs some principle capable of supporting it under every circumstance of life. Philosophy, science and everything else apart from divine revelation proffer their aid in vain. For the purpose of steadying us, amid all the vicissitudes of this mundane sphere, the Bible directs our views to Him "who changes not". At the same time the truth of the unchangeable Christ greatly helps to moderate our sorrow. I believe this is one of the reasons for which the text was originally given.

Nine months ago we lost our great pastor. Our loss was a severe one indeed. But is all gone? No! There is One who never leaves us, who never dies, who remains with us still. That One is Jesus Christ who said, "Lo I am with you always even unto the end of the age," and again, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."

How I wish we had the time this evening to elaborate as I would like on this great theme. However, on account of the Lord's Supper to be observed immediately following this service, I shall only be able to briefly touch on a few points. The great truth evinced here is, no matter who else or what else changes, our great Saviour and Redeemer is still the same. *In the dignity of His person He is forever unchangeable*. He is not subject to change. Because He is the eternal God, He cannot be changed. How different He is from us poor creatures, for it seems that we are always undergoing some great change. *Time alters us*. If you do not believe it, pick up a picture of yourself, say, one taken about twenty years ago. Contrast it with your appearance as it is now. What a difference! What a vast difference, fifteen, twenty, twenty-five, thirty years have made! The eye that used to flash fire is now becoming

a bit dim. The hair that was once raven black is streaked with grey. At that time you stood upright, you walked in a spritely manner, but now, to your amazement you are a little bent and your steps are taken somewhat more slowly. Time, for you, has brought about a good many changes. But upon this One who is the great I AM, time has no effect whatever. *Moods change us*. I was reading the other day of a remark made by some one about a certain type of person who is constantly changing in his moods. In a tone of disgust this person said, "One day he is like an orange and the next like a lemon." *Circumstances change us very often*. When we are exalted to a high position we are liable to become haughty. On the other hand if we happen to get a demotion and through adversity become reduced to poverty, we may take on a spirit of deep humility.

A certain minister was asked some time ago if he happened to know another minister who had been recently called to a very prominent pulpit of his city. He replied, "I used to know him but since he has been called to this particular church he has become so inflated that he does not seem to know us humbler men any more." What folly! What a comfort it is to know that our Lord is not subject to circumstances. He is always Himself. That is what the text means, "Jesus Christ *Himself*." Is it too much to expect that He who once walked lowly through the land of Judea ministering so benevolently to the multitude can now, since He has been exalted far above the heavenlies, be the same? Yes, my friends, the One who sits on the throne and shall reign for ever and ever is the same Jesus as He was when He was here. There is no change whatever in His feelings or relationship toward us.

When Moses was commanded to go down into Egypt to deliver the children of Israel, he was to address Pharaoh, the King of Egypt, in the name of "I AM". "Tell him," said God, "that 'I AM', the great eternal self-existent, unchanging God has sent you."

In the New Testament you will find that, when Jesus was in discussion with the carnal Jews He laid claim to that very title by saying, "Before Abraham was *I am*." Deity may not be stated here, but it is certainly implied. No one but God could speak thus. Listen to what God says of Himself through Malachi, "I am the Lord, I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." Hear the Psalmist speak, "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." "For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night." Again, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

In Revelation, Chapter One, he describes Himself in practically the same language, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."

Do you think, my friends, that it is possible for us to think too highly of this person, the Lord Jesus Christ? Can we make too much of Him? No! As we honour Him, we honour the Father. As we bow to His sovereignty we glorify God the Father most effectively. "Unto Him every knee shall bow of things in heaven, things in earth and things under the earth, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."

Do not hesitate to magnify Him daily and make Him your-all in all. What a theme this is! One could go on endlessly and still never exhaust it.

I would remind you also that Jesus Christ is always the same *in His resources*. What He was when He laid the foundation of the earth, when he brought this world out of the womb of non-existence, when He piled the mountains and scooped out the hollows for the rolling sea, He is now and always will be.

For your encouragement recall the stupendous miracles which He performed during the days of His flesh — how he cleansed the lepers, made the blind to see, the deaf to hear, and the lame to walk, how He commanded the elements when He said to the winds, "Be calm" and to the waves, "Be still," how He raised the dead, cast out devils—and come to Him with all the disorders of your soul. He can heal them every one. You have sins within and by them you are baffled and utterly overcome. He, dear struggling soul, can forgiye sins. He can transform your life. He can make each of you a new creature. Is there anything too hard for the Lord? Oh, will you not fully trust Him for He is the same in His resources. The resources of His power and grace are infinite and they are constantly at our disposal.

Jesus Christ also is the same *in His character*. Do you say, He was in the past our great friend? He still is and always will be. More and more have we come to place high value on a true and loyal friend. With sadness we affirm that at present we are living in a day of fleeting friendships. Go home tomorrow and recall some friends you had a good many years ago. Take out the album and look at some of the portraits. You will say, "Ah, I remember him. Yet on this New Year's day I do not suppose he even thinks of me. He once loved me but he does not love me any more." Things have changed. Friendships have changed. What a contrast in this respect is presented by Jesus Christ. He is the One who declared, "I have loved you with an everlasting love therefore with loving kindness have I drawn you." As a loving friend He never leaves us. He is the friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

When the Apostle Paul had to make his first appearance before Nero he had the bitter experience of being forsaken by all his so-called friends. Without complaint, and using the occasion to bear testimony to the faithfulness of his Lord, he states the fact to Timothy as follows: — "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me; I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion." (II. Tim. 4:16 and 17). Ah, He is One whose friendship never dies, neither does it ever cool. Depend upon it, dear hearer, He is ever the same in His friendship. He who stood by you in all your former trials stands by still.

The truth of our text argues further that Jesus Christ is the same in *the efficacy of His atonement*. He is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. His sacrifice was efficacious for Old Testament believers. They were saved in exactly the same way as we are saved. All the sacrifices offered under the old economy were but types. None of those who offered, from Abel down, believed that the sacrifices of animals were of any intrinsic

worth of themselves. On the basis of these offerings they knew they could not be accepted of God. Hence, at each offering they all, by faith, looked forward to the great sacrifice which was to be made for them by THE LAMB on the cross.

Jesus Christ has died, His blood has been shed, the mighty work of atonement has been accomplished and is efficacious for us today. If you are a seeking soul and you will but appropriate the divinely provided sacrifice which was offered for you, it will avail for you even now. This same sacrifice availed for David when he in penitence cried, "Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean, wash me and I shall be whiter than snow." He was looking forward to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. It availed for Saul, the blasphemer. It availed for you and for me, fellow Christian, and it will avail for any sinner who will believe on the name of the Son of God up to the very end of time.

Because His atonement is efficacious to save and present us faultless before the Throne of God, our everlasting song shall be, "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, unto Him be the glory for ever."

Lastly, does not the fact that Jesus Christ is immutable suggest to you that His Word and all concerning Him is also *unchangeable*? There are some in our day who seem to think we need a new gospel, or at least to have the old one radically amended. In their judgment the message of the gospel has lost its power and has ceased to be an influence in the world. In vain, men try to persuade us when they argue that because we are living in a new day and people are different we must, therefore, have a new gospel which is more up-to-date and more suitable to the times. Let us remind you again that so far as the gospel message is concerned there can be no change and there is no need for any change. Man is just the same as he was when he fell back in the Garden of Eden. Human hearts are just the same. The world is just the same. Heaven is just the same and hell is just the same. The counsels of God are just the same. Therefore, the gospel must remain just the same.

This consideration leads us to affirm that *all the promises found in the Word of God are unchangeable*. During our Prayer Meetings we love, in our testimonies, to quote them. If there were any possibility of any one of them being altered in the least degree, we should immediately desire to forget all about every one of them. There would be no profit or blessing to be derived from them at all. But with thankfulness to God we declare, He is unchangeable in the fidelity of His promises. Of the many thousands who have delighted to bear testimony to that blessed fact, Joshua, the successor to Moses, was among the foremost. Under his leadership God had opened up the Jordon, subdued the enemies of Canaan, and given His people the land. Joshua reaches the stage of an old man but before he dies he places on record his testimony to God's unchanging faithfulness, which has been read many times since by every succeeding generation. Joshua 23:14—"And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof."

I was given a promise from the Word of God in the

year 1930 when I took my first church. It is as good to me today as it was then. I shall repeat it to you now. Isaiah 41:10 — "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." That promise is true to this hour. Do not hesitate for a moment to step out on His promises, even those which were given thousands of years ago. They are just as fresh and true as though they were given yesterday. Select any one you desire, rest in it and be assured that He stands forever by His Word. "God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: (Heb. 6:17 and 18). He has declared that they are not yea and nay, but yea and amen.

In closing I solemnly ask you, what bearing has this truth of the unchangeableness of Jesus Christ upon your minds? May it lead you to trust Him, trust Him fully. Put your full confidence in Him for He is our only hope, "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast." To us who are Christians the very thought of an unchanging Christ should make us stedfast in the faith and cause us to abound in His service. May the Lord so bless the meditation of this evening as to make it so, in a very pronounced sense, during the whole of the coming year into which we have now entered. Let us pray:

We thank thee O God for thy living Word which thou hast declared is settled for ever in heaven. We recognize before thee that many great speeches have been made, and have been forgotten, but the Word of the Lord abideth forever. We thank you to know that with thee there is no change. Thou art on the throne, thou dost reign and that forever. Oh gracious One, help us as we come to the close of this service to receive this truth which has come before us for consideration this night and to receive it in the love of it. Apply it to our hearts, we pray, that we may relate ourselves to it in the way that thou dost intend. Give us of thy comfort and make us stedfast in our faith and in all our ministering for thee. Help many this night we beseech thee to receive the Lord Jesus Christ, the unchanging One, as their Saviour and Lord. Bless us every one to this end for thy Name's sake. Amen.

#### PROTESTANTS! READ THIS:

"... the propagation of imperfect Protestant teaching tends to destroy the full faith of Catholics. Truth carries its own right to exist. It is a good thing to spread knowledge of the truth. *But error has no right to exist. It is a good thing to destroy error.* Now the Catholic Church, having the truth, has a right to exist and teach everywhere. In fact, she has to do so, for Christ commanded her to teach all nations. *Protestantism has not the same right.* It retains some elements of Catholic truth, but many corruptions of its own. However sincere Protestants may be, *Protestantism is an erroneous form of religion, and it keeps people from the real truth.* The Catholic Church therefore rightly objects to the propagation of error among those who have the truth, and rightly propagates the truth among those in error..."

—Rev. Dr. Leslie Rumble, Roman Catholic radio broadcaster in his volume *Radio Replies*.

## Christianity Looks at "LIFE"

*Life* magazine, one of the continent's leading secular publications, has run a series of articles dealing with the great religions of the world. As the contributions appeared the reader was impressed with the amount of research and study involved in these discussions of earth's religions. Now in a large year end issue, *Life* has devoted the whole magazine to an examination and discussion of what is termed "Christianity". Page after page is given over to a consideration of the history of organized Christianity, the influence of the faith upon American life and finally the impact of Christianity upon the rest of the world.

Any Christian who reads this issue will be far from satisfied with the Christianity of which the magazine speaks; it is certainly not the faith which the Bible reveals. Despite any commendable features of this particular issue of *Life* magazine, it is found wanting simply because it presents an anti-supernatural and dead form in the place of a vital, transforming faith. We do not intend to analyze minutely each article but we cannot refrain from making some obvious comments.

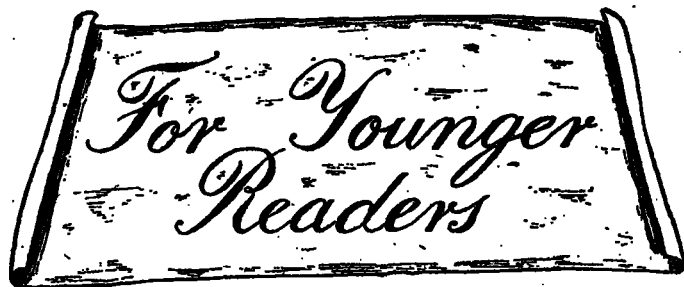
The grotesque picture on the cover can only be described as repulsive and will confirm anyone in the conviction that "religious art" and the attempt thus to portray the Lord Jesus Christ is fraught with difficulty. Who could have chosen such a terrible and crude representation of the Saviour on the cross? The editors of the magazine tell us that the cover picture was chosen by a committee of the *National Council of Churches* as were the other pictures such as that of John the Baptist pouring a handful of water on the Saviour's head!

Of more importance than these considerations is the whole tone of the article which, from the Protestant viewpoint, exalts the ecumenical ideal and belittles the Word of God. Over and over there are references to the attempt to realize the strengthening of the ecumenical bond. Then, in the leading article of the first section we read that "Most Protestants will say that the final authority to which they appeal is that of the Word of God — *not simply the text of the Bible, but that text as interpreted either by the church through its ordained ministry or by the spirit of the individual Christian.*" However true this may be of the attitude of "most Protestants" it certainly is not the historic Protestant position which regards the Word of God *per se* as the final authority.

Let it be said that *Life* has presented an accurate study of the modern religion which parades under the name "Christian". This study should cause Christians to stop and ponder their own affiliations and decide whether they will continue to support this modern ecumenical monster. It is interesting to note that while *Life* presents a series of articles by Modernists and Romanists, it had to turn to an evangelical church to picture a large, active Bible School. In a two-page spread (pp. 54, 55) is seen the great Sunday School of our friend, Dr. G. Beauchamp Vick of Temple Baptist, Detroit. Modernists may write books, steal colleges and churches, spin theories and pull political strings but the gospel alone reaches men and wins them to Christ.

Our latter day Christianity would not abolish the cross indeed, but it seeks so to festoon it with flowers, that the offence thereof may be hidden out of sight.

—A. J. GORDON



### THE BIRD AND THE SNAKE

This story of an atheist's conversion records one of the outstanding triumphs of redeeming grace . . .

"I was hunting with my friends. We were spread out in a line through the forests, and the beaters were endeavouring to drive lurking beasts into the open. We had been hunting for hours, and I was tired. Finally, as I reached a small clearing, I sat on a log to rest. And then I was rather startled by the loud cries of a frightened bird. Its terror was obvious, for its little wings were frantically fluttering, and its cries were most agitated. I wondered what had happened, and then I saw a snake approaching the tree, intent on raiding the nest. I might have intervened, but before I could move another bird flashed through the branches of the tree, to perch alongside the nest. I do not know what transpired between the two birds, but it appeared that the female bird explained her danger, and in some strange way derived comfort from her mate's reactions. The frantic cries ceased, and although the male bird departed as quickly as he had arrived, the partner sat placidly upon the nest apparently without fear.

"Sir, the change in affairs was almost too much for me. What had the cock-bird said? What was about to take place? The snake was considerably nearer, and at any moment would begin the ascent of the tree. I resisted the inclination to interfere; I wanted to watch proceedings. Higher and higher the snake climbed, and I was beginning to fear for the safety of the nest, when the male bird returned. Its movements were so quick that I hardly had a chance to see it. Hurriedly it descended for a moment or two to the nest, placing something in position above the little family, and then retired to the tree-top to share my vigil.

"The snake reached the level of the nest, prepared to strike, and then to my unbounded astonishment its head went back, and in a moment the snake slid down the tree. I heard its passage through the undergrowth, and again all was silent. I was amazed, and immediately climbed the tree, to discover that the cock-bird had deposited on the nest a small collection of leaves. They belonged to the one plant poisonous to snakes. In those few moments of desperate activity the leaves had been spread over the occupants of the nest; and when the snake saw that it would need to encounter the deadly herb, it preferred to seek food elsewhere.

"Sir, when I returned to my seat on the log, I asked myself who gave the bird the sense to know what plant was needed? Whence came such knowledge? I was driven to the conclusion that only the great Creator could have implanted this wisdom in the mind of such a small creature. And then I began to realize that if a

small bird derived help from God, I needed that same Helper. I bowed my head and prayed; and that, sir, is how I came to trust my father's Saviour. A tiny bird led me to Him."

—From *Bible Windows* by Ivor Powell.

## When the Props are Knocked Out

**Y**OU are in hospital. You have always enjoyed good health. But now you are very ill. Your friends are becoming more serious. You notice a drawn, anxious look in your loved ones. You suddenly realize you may die. You remember your own brave words to friends in a similar condition but you are no longer brave. The props are knocked out and you see how unreal and impersonal and impractical so much of your faith has been.

You may be a home-maker. All your life you have been sheltered in the environment of a Christian home. Your decisions were made for you. "Do this." "Don't do that" you were told. But now you are called upon to make your own choices. Everything is so vital. You are crushed by your responsibility. The props have been knocked out and you feel totally inadequate and unprepared to face the realities of life.

Or perhaps you are a new missionary. Back home you felt you had really "arrived" spiritually. Remember all the activity? But now you face the unmasked power of Satan and you feel all alone. The props are gone. Your only resource is God.

To have the props knocked out is disillusioning, but it may also be highly enlightening. It is good for us to face reality. To discover how much of our religious experience is whitewash, borrowed, counterfeit, is humiliating, yet healing. How can we be prepared for this experience?

*Discern the props.* Learn to distinguish between the externals and internals, the decorations and the substance.

*Stress reality.* Be frank about your faith. Practice honesty. Don't have a second-hand experience. Get into God's Word for yourself. Have a personal experience with the Holy Spirit through surrender and commitment.

*Anticipate the crises.* Don't live in a dream world. Life is urgent. Time is fleeting. Through your devotional life and your service for God live in such a way that you will not be caught unprepared.

I read about a church that had a beautiful mural painted on its walls. The plaster kept cracking and again and again it was necessary to have expert repairmen replaster the wall and skilful artists retouch the mural. Finally the board decided to get some outside counsel and sent for an engineer. He checked the building from every angle. He soon found the trouble. There was a spring under the foundation of the wall. It was a simple matter to dig down and to seal off the trouble at its source. Our problems are so much like this. We need to make Christ the solid Rock on which to build our lives and homes. We need to seal off the destroying influences — to build on God. Then come what may, we shall stand even if the props are knocked out.

Pastor John Boehmer in *High Park Herald*



# A Devotional Study in Revelation

by Dr. R. Dabarry

## CHAPTER 27

### THE BOOK OF REVELATION IN A NUTSHELL

THE study of our thrilling theme has now come to an end. Our readers have had great patience in following us in our difficult exploration, for we have gone through fascinating territories. And we can understand why, every morning, a certain Scottish preacher could captivate the crowds which were eager to hear the exposition of the book of Revelation.

In spite of the length of our preceding twenty-six chapters, we have only skimmed over the contents of the book. Thus the spiritual lessons to be drawn from the Patmos visions remind us of the words of their witness: "If they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." (John 21:25).

It is truly a miracle that so immense a subject could have been condensed in some forty-five pages, whereas the gospel of John, a masterpiece of concision, requires about seventy pages to depict, in the midst of lengthy discourses and numerous comments, a few aspects only of the very short earthly ministry of our Saviour. After reading the book of Revelation, we can therefore think of the following remark made by a certain traveller: as he was going to close with great difficulty his overloaded case, he changed his mind and said: "I must yet put in it a staff, a hammer, a sword, a trumpet, a mirror, a lamp, bread, water, wine, manna, oil, an assortment of about sixty books, with many other things . . ." Suiting the action to the word he added a Bible to his luggage.

Although, as we have already observed, the purpose of John's writing is not to offer original ideas, the previous conceptions which are found throughout the rest of Scripture take a clearer and larger meaning in the light of the revelations of the last biblical writing.

We shall now rapidly examine the main features of that kind of transfiguration.

#### I. JOHN'S WRITING GIVES THE LAST WORD ON THE DETAIL OF THE BIBLICAL REVELATIONS

We are indebted to this prodigious book for new, enlarged, and therefore still more precious, revelations concerning:

1. *God the Father*, in the beauty of His glory, in His beneficent grace, in His profound wisdom, in the holiness of His justice, the assurance of His victory.

2. *God the Son*, in His humiliation and exaltation, in His present earthly and heavenly ministry.

3. *God the Holy Ghost*, in his heavenly relationship and His earthly action.

4. *Satan*, and his abominable nature, his almost unlimited means, his formidable enterprises, his dreadful achievements, his assured defeat and punishment.

5. *Man* and his downfall, his redemption, and his wonderful destiny.

6. *Redemption* in its sublime conception, its painful origin, its easy acquisition, its unlimited results.

7. *The Christian* in the privileges and responsibilities of his calling.

8. *The local Church*, God's appointed instrument.

9. *The Bride-Church* and its slow and painful earthly preparation and its glorious destiny.

10. *The Rebelled World*, in its blind consecration to the service of the Seducer, in the use it makes of force, money and error, against the true people of God.

11. *False Religion*, in its skilful and persevering enterprises.

12. *The Sufferings* which the Christian must inevitably endure.

13. *The Total and Assured Victory* of a divinely-sustained faith.

14. The unique and endless *Retribution* of rebels and *Rewards* of the elect.

15. *The historical sequence* of the principles, organisms and facts, that bring about the realization of the divine plans.

16. *The Glorious Bliss of Eternity*, which will efface the baleful parenthesis of the satanical, angelic and human revolts.

On each one of those points, the book of Revelation offers new and numerous lights, which readers are strongly advised to study. Their Christian outlook would thereby be much enlightened and enlarged.

#### II. THE BOOK OF REVELATION GIVES THE LAST WORD CONCERNING THE WHOLE OF THE SCRIPTURES

The general view of things human, mundane, and divine, contained in the last writing of the Bible is expounded in a way which is unsurpassed by the other books of the sacred record. Nowhere else is found such completeness, such clarity, such logical connections. As anything we could say on the subject would be inferior to the following extract written by a great commentator, we shall only quote him here:

"Whatever differences of opinions there may be among the commentators concerning the precise times and

places, the events and the persons to which these visions apply, all of them agree as to their general character and their purpose, and as to the lessons which can be drawn from such. Those lessons are remarkably appropriate to every period of the history of the people of God. The interpreters are thus unanimous in deducing from these symbolical representations the fact that Jesus Christ has been raised to the highest dignity in heaven and that He exercises a universal dominion over the earth; that His cause must for a long time face troubles, suffering and struggles; that perseverance and faithfulness are our necessary duties; that after destroying the power of his first enemies (the Jews), the Arch-enemy will arouse new agents against the new people of God; that the temporal and political power, the persecutor and the false prophet will ally for the purpose of destroying or corrupting that people; that the characteristics of that close union will be pride, worldly vanity, a spirit of persecution, a life of disorders and luxury; that, while exposed to the attacks of those enemies, the elect people will always be divinely protected; that whosoever sets himself against the kingdom of Jesus Christ will certainly be destroyed; that, in this very age, there exists a permanent and intimate relation between the visible world and the invisible world: for praises and prayers constantly ascend to the throne of God, while messengers of wrath or mercy come down from it; that the divine providence and government are exercised over all things, directing all events and causing them to work together for the best ends; that the people of God, after passing through a period of humiliation and tribulation, will be brought into a condition of glory, peace and happiness; that the Saviour, who redeemed His people by His sacrifice, continues to watch over the children of God with infinite tenderness; that He helps and defends them by His unlimited power; that He will finally receive them into His heavenly kingdom; that, all things impure and defiled being cast away, the servants of Jesus Christ, of all ages and nations, will be merged into a glorious whole, the Bride-Church, where they will be perfectly sanctified and will enjoy an everlasting bliss in the presence of their God and Saviour. Those are some of the main truths contained in this book. They are expounded with matchless vividness, and they have contributed much to arouse faith and love, courage and longsuffering, hope and joy, in the hearts of all the servants of Jesus Christ."

### III. THE BOOK OF REVELATION GIVES THE LAST WORD CONCERNING THE LESSONS TO BE DRAWN FROM THE BIBLE

Among the innumerable lessons which we can draw from the reading of the book of Revelation, let us, by way of conclusion, point out some of them.

1. *A lesson of Gratitude.* By means of numerous figures, examples and appeals, the book reveals to us the wonders of our Christian calling. We are not mere beneficiaries of some casual indulgence: we are the objects of a love everlasting in its purposes, marvellous and touching in the means it employs. Not only are we called to live the life which God has planned for us, but that life becomes an essential element in an infinite scheme. All of our actions, all of our words, all of our thoughts have, both in time and in space, infinite repercussions. In all that concerns us, we are not distant associates of Deity. Drawn into the most intimate

fellowship with the holy Trinity, we are destined to be perfectly merged with the eternal Bride. A tie of holy love also binds us for ever to all those who share our Christian calling. Our present sufferings and joys, deeper than those of the world, will, together with brighter lights and nobler tasks, develop our Christian personality. The spiritual ideal offered by the book of Revelation should therefore stimulate our most ardent gratitude and kindle our sanctified cravings.

2. *A lesson of Watchfulness.* What the book of Revelation teaches us concerning the Enemy's designs and the means which are at his disposal is well meant to arouse our sense of danger — particularly what is revealed with regard to the simultaneous action from without and from within of the hostile forces. Inner temptation is thus seen to be as formidable a foe as any external adversary. The book dashes the naively optimistic conceptions so dear to the natural man; not only does it tell us that the good can be amazingly counterfeited, but that a mixture of good and evil is very often favoured by the Father of Lies to accredit evil. Therefore the *unmixed* good alone must be welcome. Thus are unmasked all the false religions: not only those which openly antagonize apostolic Christianity, but those which, while offering a semblance of truth, still contain pagan features. We are thus reminded that we must be particularly watchful with regard to all that is closest to us: we must be mindful as to the protection of our own local assembly and of our own heart against the treacheries of the false "angel of light". The book of Revelation particularly shows that one of the Adversary's most effective devices consists in creating within the Christian a carnal piety which is satisfied with favouring the good dispositions of the natural man, while relegating in the background the need for a transformation of his evil dispositions. The book therefore lays great emphasis on the fact that we should earnestly search for all the truth.

3. *A lesson of Holiness.* John's writing gives us a vision of the tremendous importance of the interests involved, interests which are, primarily, the divine glory, secondarily, our own calling. With evil, no agreement, even unconscious, no concession, even momentary, can be permitted: "He that is not with me is against me!" By presenting to us the truest picture we can have of our God "as He is", and by giving us the assurance that we shall be like Him, the book of John confirms the conclusions of his first epistle: "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." (1 John 3:8).

4. *A lesson of Stedfastness.* Enlightened by the book of Revelation, the Christian has a truly tragic conception of the spiritual conflict into which he is plunged. He is ready to see in his trials only "a beginning of sorrows". (Matt. 24:36). "A rest elsewhere" becomes his motto. He does not refuse the cup of bitterness which the Saviour drank to the dregs. He accustoms himself to think: "For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" (Luke 23:31). But in full agreement with the whole tenor of Revelation, the Christian yearns to be able to say: "I now rejoice in my sufferings . . . and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church." (Col. 1:24). He finds true happiness in sufferings. Surely, after his visions, John must have had considered his captivity on the Patmos Island



under a totally different light, and must thus have blessed his Lord for his trials.

5. *A lesson of Hope.* Although the tremendous fact of the Lord's return occupies a legitimate place in the unfolding of the visions of Revelation, that fact, being an transitory event, is greatly transcended by the revelations concerning the future. For we are not merely called to participate in that initial glorious act of short duration. But we have the complete assurance that we shall eternally enjoy the beatitude which is to follow: the first stage could not replace the goal. Therefore, as we unite our voices to the "Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus" of the apostle John, his visions carry us beyond the limits of that blessed starting-point which the second coming is.

7. *A lesson of Salvation* is finally given us by the Book of Revelation in its numerous visions of the "Lamb slain" as well as in what we read there concerning the robes washed in His blood.

A lesson of Salvation is also to be found in the appeal of the Spirit, the Bride, and "him that heareth". For with great insistence, each one of them still makes that appeal heard today; for the eternal safeguard and the boundless happiness of sinners in peril of everlasting death: "COME!"

NOTE: Next week we shall print Dr. Dubarry's impressions regarding his contact with various expositors of the Word of God — especially with those who have specialized in the study of prophecy.

## Enthusiastic Response to Dollar-A-Month Club

**"YOUR Dollar Erects Churches!"** This is the familiar slogan of the Dollar-A-Month Club. This plan, which was first announced in October of last year, has received a good reception from Christians everywhere. Those who desire to see the establishment of vigorous New Testament churches in the growing cities of our land, agree to contribute only one dollar per month to a church-extension loan fund. This money is then loaned out to deserving new pioneer churches to enable them to build suitable places of worship. The sum of one dollar seems to be very little, and each dollar by itself would not do much. If, however, thousands contributed this small sum each month, a considerable fund is realized. For example, if only one thousand persons thus contribute, a fund of *twelve thousand dollars is raised in one year!*

The response of THE GOSPEL WITNESS readers has been enthusiastic. As soon as the plan was announced we received signed pledge cards and hearty comments from all parts of Canada, and also from the United States. Some sent in the year's sum of twelve dollars, and still others sent contributions of twenty-five and fifty dollars, and one hundred dollars. As more people catch a vision of what the Lord can do through such a fund, there will be an ever greater response, and a forward movement in establishing sound gospel-preaching, independent Baptist churches.

Below we share with you some of the many comments that we have received from our readers, as they spoke of this DOLLAR-A-MONTH CLUB. These letters are representative of the feeling and expression of many others.

### From Ontario . . .

Enclosed is a donation for October and November. My husband and I are happy to give it, and trust that God will speak to the hearts of many more to support this work so that New Testament churches can be built, and the preaching of His precious Word go forth in all power. I have a friend down the street who would like to help out too. She will fill out the paper in THE GOSPEL WITNESS and send it to you.

### From an American Evangelist . . .

Please accept this cheque (\$5.00) as a start toward the erection of churches in your Dollar-a-Month Club. I have a number of places here, and elsewhere to give; however the beautiful witness of the paper I receive each week thrills my soul.

### From New Brunswick . . .

I would like you to count me in on your DOLLAR-A-MONTH CLUB. I am sending one dollar for November. I trust you will get one thousand members. I pray the Lord will bless this effort for the furtherance of the Gospel.

### From British Columbia . . .

Please find one dollar enclosed for the DOLLAR-A-MONTH CLUB. I pray God may bless you in your great effort to establish the church of our Lord Jesus Christ in many communities, and honour and glorify His holy Name.

### From Ontario . . .

I was interested in reading about this Club. It sounds like it will be a good plan. I pray that God's blessing will be upon it.

### From Nova Scotia . . .

Enclosed please find money order for twelve dollars, being membership dues in the DOLLAR-A-MONTH CLUB for the whole of 1955. I hope to send dues for 1956 in due course. The idea of raising money in this way, for the purpose stated, is an excellent one.

### From Texas . . .

The enclosed cheque (\$12.00) is for the purpose of the Church Extension Loan Fund for the entire year of 1956.

Let all our readers take this matter to heart, and we shall see an unprecedented crusade that will guarantee that future generations in the growing new suburban areas of our land will have the privilege of hearing the glorious gospel. Send along your donation and join us in prayer that this venture may be blessed.

"Your Dollar Erects Churches!"

## The "Non-Sectarian" Sect

IS IT wrong to have some great immovable convictions based upon a prayerful study of the Word of God? Is it a sin, or an indication of low spirituality, to be aggressive in the propagation of that which we are persuaded is scriptural, and necessary for the eternal welfare of men? Further, must we relinquish all cherished and scriptural convictions which do not please those who advocate the acceptance of the lowest common denominator of evangelical truth? There seems to be a rising chorus of opinion which would heartily answer the above questions with a resounding affirmative. We are told that this is not the time for the propagation of "sectarian" or "denominational" dogmas; rather we should be "non-sectarian", "non-denominational" or at least "inter-denominational".

On first thought this suggestion seems to have an aroma of charity and sanctity about it. It appeals to the natural desire for unanimity and co-operation. It seems to guarantee that any who follow this rule will encounter less opposition. Furthermore, a consensus of opinion among many evangelicals would show that they favoured this loose belief; also many arguments, based upon expediency, could be produced to show that the non-sectarian position is the one that could make a "popular appeal." Are spiritual questions answered by a "gallup poll" method, or by appeals to expediency, and imagined results? Surely no Christian would dare to suggest that our answers are found in these ways.

### Everyone Is a Sectarian!

First of all, let it be already understood that *everyone is a sectarian*. We realize that every reader will agree that most are sectarians, but each will see himself as the exception to that rule. Everyone likes to think of himself or herself as the one person who views things objectively, but the plain fact of the matter is that even those who boast of their "non-sectarianism", or to use a more modern term, their "undenominationalism" are sectarians and denominationalists.

Let us face facts, and not hide behind words. Those who to-day describe themselves as "non-denominational" or "undenominational" have certain well-defined characteristics, and convictions. *In short, non-denominationalism has become a denomination!* In saying this, we do not intend to condemn this non-sectarianism, but rather seek for honesty in discussion. There is no sin in having firm convictions, but there is a sin in having them and denying that they exist.

Although there may be no well-defined creed, there are certain principles that characterize those persons and churches that boast of their "non-sectarian" nature. There is a general agreement among them that much of the body of belief of the other denominations is concerned with the "non-essentials", or questions upon which there should be allowance for differences of opinion. *That in itself is a conviction.* To say that it is not is to play with the meaning of words. Furthermore, that is a controversial conviction just as much as the most sectarian dogma for it explicitly declares to any and all who hold some belief as true and dear, that they are wrong in holding it as essential.

### "A Bigotry to Laxness"

The great Samuel Johnson coined a phrase which more

accurately describes this "non-sectarian" position — "bigotry to laxness"; whereas the sectarian may be sneeringly referred to as a bigot to some well-defined, scriptural belief, the one who prides himself in his non-sectarian spirit and code is often a bigot of the first order in insisting that his own lack of conviction is the true rule for all men. Personally we would choose to be true to our convictions and run the risk of censure rather than pose as one who is absolutely impartial, but who at the same time demands that everyone else share *our brand* of impartiality.

This laxness sometimes has as its basis the inference that some of God's commands are optional. Who are we that we can conveniently categorize as "necessities" and "optional" any of the commands of the Lord? Such a procedure smacks of the neo-orthodox school, which sees some of scripture as the Word of God, and other parts that are simply the words of men. We are not called upon to sift God's commands: ours is to obey!

Let us be more specific. How often have we heard men affirm that believer's baptism is the rule laid down in the Word of God, but they have proceeded to inform us that this matter should not be insisted upon; but should be optional, since some men held different views, or some churches have a different practice. Now we do not demand that everyone believe as we do about baptism, but we are persuaded that believer's baptism by immersion is taught in the Word of God. If anyone else is so persuaded and at the same time adopts a lax view, we would only describe such behaviour as wilful disobedience. The Lord has not asked us to pick and choose those commands that we will obey. *We are to obey all!*

The modern brand of non-sectarianism often boasts of its charity and its inoffensive character. We would ask: Is it charity or love to God that leads one to overlook what He has delivered to men? Yea, is it even love for the souls of men to withhold from them that which we know full well is revealed in His Word?

Of course, anyone who objects to this non-sectarian sect is abused as one who delights in conflicts. Let us pause to recall that the very ones who have raised this clamor, repeatedly play down as non-essential or ride rough-shod over many truths that are dear to others. Anyone who tells me that some Biblical truth that I cherish is of no consequence, is asking for a conflict.

In order that we be not misunderstood, we reaffirm our conviction that all truth must be delivered with a burning love of God and for men's souls. That which we advocate is not some stone-cold, intellectual acceptance of dead dogma: it is a living, vital acceptance of the truth of God coupled with a desire to please Him in obeying His Word. If that is sectarianism, then we are confirmed sectarians of the first order.

### SUNDAY IN JARVIS STREET

The past Sunday was a bitterly cold day in Toronto. Despite the unfavourable weather, there was a good attendance at the morning Bible School, and the other regular services of the day. The Pastor, Dr. Slade, spoke at both the morning and evening services. In the morning he preached on: "Security in the Midst of Temptation". In the evening his subject was "The Assurance of Salvation".

# The Jarvis Street Pulpit

## "Revive Thy Work!"

A Sermon by Dr. T. T. Shields

Delivered in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Thursday Evening, January 3rd, 1929

(Stenographically Reported)

"O Lord, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy."—Habakkuk 3:2.

I SHALL speak to you again for a little while this evening on the subject which engaged our thought Tuesday morning, the subject of revival. Let me read the text again: "O Lord, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy."

I have long had a conviction that a very special burden of responsibility rests upon us in this place. We must, on the one hand, avoid anything approaching a spirit of Pharisaism. We must not allow ourselves to think that we are in any respect better than others. What we are, we are by divine grace; and if it be so that we still believe His Word, and seek to honour His Son, it is only because God has been gracious to us and has not permitted us to wander from Him. He is the Alpha and the Omega; and salvation — yours and mine — is all of grace. But I do believe that the Lord is looking today, not only for men and women, but for churches which He can use for His honour, for the glory of His name in the salvation of souls.

I have sometimes wondered why we have come to be so cordially and so generally disliked. I have wondered why we should fall heirs to an inheritance almost of hatred. But these things do not happen, and I believe that God, in His providence, will sometime set fire to it all, and use it for His glory. I have said before now that I have never particularly objected to the Devil's paying our advertising bills if he wants to. But it is a mark of disfavor in many directions to be identified in any way at all with the work of the Lord in this place.

Is it so that God plans to make us the channels of His grace? A man came to me one day — he had come from the other side of the sea without appointment on our part, and preached here during the Pastor's absence at one service. Before returning to England he called to see me. He said a thing which I would never have dared to say. He is Superintendent of the London City Mission in Old London, and has had a rather wide experience in Christian work and Christian organizations. He said, "I wanted to tell you that tremendous responsibility rests upon the people of God in this place, for I am convinced that God is some day going to do something here which will kindle a fire around the world." It was a staggering statement and one needs to be very, very, careful how he receives such a statement as that, and what attitude he takes up toward such an idea. But certainly I believe that God wants to lead us out into greater depths

of His grace and power, and to use us as He has never used us yet for the salvation of souls. Therefore I have suggested to you that it should be the burden of our prayer every day, and all the time, "O Lord, revive thy work."

### I.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE EVIDENCES, THE CHARACTERISTICS, OF A GENUINE, SPIRITUAL, REVIVAL THAT COMES FROM GOD? In some parts of the country they talk about "holding revival meetings", and they may or may not be revivals at all. But we are speaking now of a revival that comes from Heaven like the revival of springtime when winter is past, and the rain is over and gone, and the flowers appear on the earth, and the time of the singing of birds is come. When there is a genuine revival which is the result of a visitation from Heaven, what are its characteristics?

I think both as applied to the individual believer and to the church collectively, there will be sure to be signs of returning spiritual health. One of the things that any doctor will give attention to when he is called to examine a patient is his respiration. How does the man breathe? Are his lungs sound? Is he using them? Or is he just panting for breath? When one's health is what it ought to be he will breathe freely and easily and naturally. *And when there is a real revival in the heart of an individual, prayer becomes natural to him, it becomes the delight of his life.* I might almost say that it becomes automatic. He prays almost unconsciously, he prays all the time, because he is holding commerce with the skies; and in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus he is breathing the very atmosphere of heaven itself. If any of us find a new delight in prayer, a new freedom in prayer, then we ought to thank God for evidences of returning health. If we do not find it so, then it ought to be a matter of concern to us, and we may well pray that we may learn to pray better and more constantly. But that, I am sure, is one of the most infallible indications of a genuine spiritual revival, a delight in prayer on the part of the individual.

*And when it comes to the church, when a church is revived, there will be a new interest in the ministry of prayer, in the ministry of intercession.* There are certain parts of the lung that are sometimes like the best parlor in the farm-house that is shut up and is used only occasionally, and a bit like the spare bedroom that is reserved for the preacher — to give him a cold when he comes. It is not much used, and is the dustiest and mustiest place to be found around the house. There are

portions of the lungs like that, and if there is going to be any trouble at all that is where it will start; in the unused cells of the lungs is where the disease will lodge. But if we are letting God's fresh air into our system it will do more to neutralize the power of disease germs that have lodged there than anything else. And as health returns, more and more the whole respiratory system is brought into play, and into new and freer exercise.

So when there is a revival in the church, people who have not been accustomed to pray will begin to pray, and people who have not been attending prayer meetings will then somehow manage to get there; and whereas a hundred, or perhaps less, have been praying before, the lungs of the church will be enlarged — or at least the active part of them will be increased — and there will be more and more prayer. If it is not so, let us pray that it may be so; and if it is so in any measure, let us give God thanks for it, and let us exercise ourselves to the utmost in this ministry of prayer.

*Another thing: there will be a return of appetite.* It is a very difficult thing to bring a patient back to his normal state of health if he will not take nourishment. I read the other day that that was the difficulty the doctors were experiencing with the king. They were feeding him on raw eggs — and I had a good deal of sympathy with him! It was a necessary treatment, I suppose; and the report said if he could be induced to take more nourishment he would more rapidly progress toward his normal health.

How is your appetite? That is what the doctor asks when he comes to see you, "Is your appetite pretty good?" "Yes." "Well, what do you eat? For what have you an appetite?" He examines the diet to find out whether the patient has an appetite for the right things. When there is a genuine spiritual revival, and spiritual health is returning, people have a better appetite for spiritual things, notably the Bible, for it is the bread of life to the soul. You remember one prophet said, "Thy words have I found, and I have eaten them." We are actually to eat the word of God, and nourish our souls on this spiritual food.

What is your appetite for the Word of God? I do not mean the preached word. He must be in a wretched state of health who cannot eat a bite when it is prepared for him! There are people who come to church and sit and yet receive very little from the sermon, and there are others who enjoy it if it is to their liking. But that is not an indication of very good health. Call a healthy family around the table at mealtime, and they will all make a raid on the food. And when one is ravenously hungry he knows how to get his own meal. I have little use for a man who cannot get his own dinner. If he could not, if I were his wife I would go away for a month until he learned! I do not mean that men like that sort of thing, but if you have a good appetite you cannot wait for mealtime.

Is the Bible like the pantry to your soul? Are you always going to it for a cookie between meals? When we are really hungry we shall find that this storehouse of meat and drink will be wonderfully attractive to us. On the other hand, if you find that you have eaten nothing, if you have not gone to the cupboard at all, then you had better go aside with God and have the Divine Physician examine you. There is something sadly wrong with us if we have no appetite for spiritual things.

Of course where there is good health *there will be renewed activity.* We shall get up out of bed and go to work. People who eat and do not work will be as badly off after a while as those who try to work without eating. But where there is a normal appetite and good health you will find the people of God constantly witnessing for the Lord, always about the Master's business.

Then there is another thing: wherever our Lord Jesus went people who were lame learned to walk, people who were dumb learned to talk, people who were deaf learned to hear, and people who were blind learned to see. *When there is a real spiritual revival we shall have a keener eye-sight, a deeper penetration, a great spiritual discernment, and we shall have more acute hearing.* Sometimes dullness of hearing is not due to a local condition, the physician will tell you, but is the result of a general decline in health; and that if your general health were improved then your local disability would depart. Our difficulty is that so many people do not hear the voice of God — and do not want to hear the voice of God. They are deaf. They do not see their duty, they are blind; they do not see their privileges in Christ. They are "blind, and cannot see afar off, and have forgotten that they were purged from their old sins." But when there is a genuine spiritual revival there will be a renewal of sight and of hearing, and our feet will be beautiful upon the mountains as we preach the gospel and publish peace; and the dumb people will learn to speak. I have seen it again and again when God comes into the midst of His people, those who were dumb somehow or another learned to lip the name of the Lord, and their voices are heard in prayer and testimony, and there is evidence that the Lord is near.

*When there is a revival of real affection in the heart for the Lord Jesus Christ it will be sure to show itself outside.* I remember a man who was very careless about his dress; he was quite slovenly in his appearance. Sometimes you would find him wearing soiled linen, he was not careful to keep himself neat at all. Suddenly a change came over him, and everybody remarked on it. He looked as though he had just come from the hands of a valet, he was so "spic and span". He was always dressed up. People said, "What is the matter? What in the world has come over that man?" Someone who knew said, "Do you not know? Do you not know? He is trying to appear well in somebody's eyes!" Then somebody whispered, "The fact is, the poor fellow is desperately in love, and is doing the very best he can to make somebody else fall in love! That is the reason for his being so careful of his personal appearance."

It is something like that in the Christian life: when Jesus Christ becomes really precious to the believer he wants to appear well in His sight. When He becomes the Beloved of our souls we do not keep our best clothes for strangers: we are rather like the apostles: "Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him." The great question then is, "What does He like? What does He like us to do? How does He desire us to appear? What is the direction of His will?" When there is a real revival in the heart you will find there will be a genuine transformation of life, and everybody will know it. They will say, "Something has happened. That man was a merely nominal Christian, but now his whole character is transformed, and he is a different man entirely." It is because he has fallen in love afresh with his Beloved. That is the reason:

a real revival means a renewal of fellowship with Jesus Christ.

Perhaps I should add one other thing. There will always be conviction when the lame man leaps as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sings. It will not be long before the grave of Lazareth is open, and he who was dead will be sitting at the table with the Lord. But if there is to be conviction there must first of all be a genuine revival in the hearts of God's people.

## II.

HOW CAN WE PROMOTE SUCH A REVIVAL AS THAT? What can we do? "O Lord, I have heard thy speech." *We can surrender ourselves afresh to the authority of Jesus Christ, actually yield ourselves to Christ that He may be our Lord.* I do not mean just once, that I can say to-day, "I take Jesus Christ as my Lord", and then forget all about it. But I mean we must take up an attitude toward Him so that His Word will be the supreme authority in our lives. Go back through the Old Testament and note the difference between certain men who were in their measure godly men. Take the case of David, for instance. If you examine his record you will find that it was characteristic of David that he "magnified the Lord". It is possible to study the Bible just as the Hindu says his prayers, or as the Roman Catholic counts his beads. I heard a man say once, speaking of a certain person, "Some people count the stars, and some people collect butterflies: Dr. So-and-So studies the Bible." He put this man's interest in the Word of God on the plane of hobbies, the gathering of butterflies or pretty stones on the part of the man who is interested in that part of naturalistic study.

I have known some people who were great students of the Bible, yet no one could say that the Bible had any particular authority in their lives. It is one thing to know with our heads what the Bible teaches, but it is another thing to bring our lives under the subjective influence of the Bible and make it the law of our daily life. We have the authority in this Scripture by which to regulate the minutest detail of our lives. Where do you go for advice on a question that perplexes you? "I should like to talk things over with Mr. So-and-So." Supposing it were a matter of business, whom would you consult? If you wanted your own judgment checked up or reinforced as the case might be, to whom would you go on a matter of business? "Well, to a business associate of mine." Would you? What is it to walk in the counsel of the ungodly but to ask advice of ungodly men? If I, as a Christian, asked the opinion, the counsel, of somebody who does not know Christ, with respect to any duty in life, whether business or pleasure or anything else, what am I doing but submitting to the counsel of an ungodly man? Is there no better way than that? "But you do not mean to say that in matters of business one can get advice from the Bible?" someone will ask. I certainly do. I have no doubt about it. I believe the Bible, to the Christian man, is the best business guide that ever was written.

Joseph was a fairly successful business man. Who taught Joseph how to get a corner on all the wheat of the world, and to become absolute master of all the world's markets? No business man in Egypt. He got direct communication from Heaven, and the Lord of the universe is the best One to counsel you what next year's wheat yield will be; and the markets of the country will

depend very largely upon that after all. Wisdom in respect to these matters is here.

I think I spoke to you of a man who told me that he was sour for years as a Christian, and went to church only occasionally. He had been a wealthy man, wealthy enough to buy a railroad — and foolish enough to think of it. He asked somebody about it, and went into partnership with a certain man. He said they bought the railroad for hundreds of thousands of dollars. It was an enormous sum of money. The partner defaulted, and he had to pay it all. It ruined him. He had built up a fortune and came right down to rock-bottom. His house and everything he had went. He said, "I got angry with the Lord and said, Why has the Lord dealt with me like this? I did not go to church, I stopped praying, and I was generally miserable. One Sunday afternoon, for want of something better to do, I opened my Bible and happened to turn to Proverbs and read, 'He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it: and he that hateth suretyship is sure.' Then I said to myself, I have been blaming God all these years, whereas if I had listened to what God said to me I would have been a better business man; and would not have lost all I had.

The last word of wisdom on business, or anything else, is to be found in the Bible; and if you want to be a good business man and a devoted Christian, if you want to do your duty toward God and secure for yourself the largest and truest profit, then be guided by the Spirit of God. That is what it means to take Jesus Christ as Lord. It means that the Bible is to guide me, and I am to bring all these matters of daily routine into the light of the judgment of the Word of God, to find out what God would have me to do.

This man to whom I referred walked in the counsel of the ungodly. He got advice from an ungodly man, he consorted with sinners, and at last sat down in the seat of the scornful; he was cynical and out of sorts generally. What is the cure for that? The man who avoids that is thus described — "his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night." If you want to keep out of the counsel of the ungodly, get the counsel of Him Whose name is called "Counsellor". That is what He is for, to give us advice. I believe the religion of the Lord Jesus is the most practical thing in the world. I believe this Book will guide us in our family life, in our business life, in our playtime — if we have any — in our intellectual life, in every aspect of life. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom."

If we are going to have revival, that is what will happen: we shall open our hearts to the counsel of the Most High, and when we have God's Word on any subject we will do it. Then Jesus Christ becomes in very truth our Lord. "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?" It is of no use for us to call Him Lord unless we actually obey Him when once we have received His commands.

If that is to become the rule of our life, we cannot do it once and for all. I heard of some little boy of thirteen or fourteen years, who had been under certain influences, who got up and thanked the Lord that he had "received his sanctification"! Received his sanctification! Poor boy; I did not blame him, but I did blame his elders for talking such nonsense. Do you know what sanctification is? Sanctification begins when we are justified.

freely by God's grace, and are yielded to Jesus Christ as our Lord, and when the Word of God becomes the authority of our lives. How long will it last? How long will you have to ask God's advice on your daily affairs? Right up to the last hour and moment of life. And in the measure in which we yield to that authority and receive the grace to do the things which He commands, in that measure we are being sanctified, for sanctification is simply another name for the education of the soul, it is another name for the education of God's children who are born again, and then they are trained by this great text-book into a knowledge of the will of our God. It is a life process, and just in the measure, and so long as we submit to the authority of the Word of God, we shall be conscious of revival in our own hearts.

*Of course that will mean immediately the facing of certain sins of omission.* There are some things we have not done — what then? If we are going to have blessing we must go and do them. We must go and pick up our blessing where we laid it down by simply going and doing the thing we ought to do. Nothing could be simpler than that. But I have no doubt at all that everyone here could to-night go and do something that we know is divinely required of us, but which has been neglected; and in the doing of that will come an accession of power that will begin the revival in our own hearts.

*Sometimes there is place for restitution.* If we have wronged anybody we ought to go and put it right, we really ought. In some cases I have known it has been the restitution of money. But let me say this — and I wish I had the whole church membership here that I might say it to them — if there be one man or woman in this church that entertains in his or her heart any kind of animosity toward another — I do not care what it is, by so much that person will block the blessing in his or her own life. My friends, if I read my Bible at all accurately, it is absolutely impossible for any man or woman to grow in Christ while nourishing a grudge against somebody else. You can pray until the crack of doom, but you have to get that malice out of your heart or you cannot be right with God. You have got to get rid of it. It is a root of bitterness that will poison the springs of life, that has no right in the heart of any blood-bought child of God.

There are some people who try to get rid of some awkward passages in the Scriptures such as: "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses," by saying that that belongs to another dispensation; "That is works"! I think that is all nonsense. That belongs to Y-O-U. That is for Y-O-U. It belongs to you, and it belongs to me. I have no right to expect that God will forgive me my sins if I am not willing to forgive other people. The reaction of His forgiveness, the realization that by His grace I am pardoned, ought to make me ready to forgive my worst enemy. Do not judge it. If that is your condition before God, face it and get rid of it, and get a revival in your own heart right away. — and you will get it. It is a glorious thing to get rid of things like that. Do you know anybody you are "out" with? Go and get "in" with them, tell them it is all over. Things of that sort do more harm to the cause of Christ than anything else in the world. Little things of that sort between the people of God do more to stop revival and spiritual blessing, I believe, than all other offences put together. It is such a childish thing anyway. When we become men we

ought to put away childish things. I do not think any of us has any right any night of his life to lie down until he has absolutely, by God's grace, forgiven everybody who has ever done him a wrong, so that you can meet anybody as your friend. That is a very practical thing, is it not? But that sin is the thing that stops blessing, and when put right it is the thing that will bring blessing. I am positive it will bring blessing.

Then, you see, *the application of the authority of Scripture to everyday life will mean that I will have to be careful what I think about.* The Word of God ought to be the subject of my meditation: "In thy law will I meditate day and night"; "My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord." Sometimes when you think of somebody that you do not like — there may be people whom you do not like that you can love for Christ's sake. I meet people with whom I have no natural affinity at all. It may be that you find some people the same. If so, let the Word of the Lord have authority in the realm of your thought, "bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." If there is somebody you cannot think about without being warmed up a bit, then say, "I am not going to think about Him. I will think of the Lord Jesus." As you think of all that He is, all that He has done, all that He is yet going to be to you, He will so fill your life with joy that you will think, "How foolish I was to think of that man." The Word of God will be regnant in our minds, and the Spirit of God can come in and flood us and make us a blessing to the people roundabout us.

When He does that, the Spirit of God ought to have authority. Let me be very personal, very practical, and say that *the Spirit of God ought to have authority over our tongues.* I mean tongues! You know what I mean! That little member! The t-o-n-g-u-e! Do not spiritualize it. I mean the thing that talks, that makes a noise! the tongue! You do not need that exhortation? Well, a very wise man said that all kinds of wild beasts had been tamed, "but the tongue can no man tame." It is a terrible weapon. The Bible is so terribly true that it describes certain people like this: "The poison of asps is under their lips." There are some people that never speak about anybody without ejecting their injurious poison, the poison of asps; they are human yellow jackets — no matter how they are dressed. There are more horrible figures than that. The Lord Jesus said, "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Is not that a horrible thing, to call anybody a viper? Do you know why He did that? They were always poisoning people. I have known some people who had a faculty of poisoning everybody, always saying mean things about people. "Oh," you say, "they deserved it". I have no doubt they did. So do you! You deserve a double dose of it very likely! If the Lord were quick to mark iniquity, who of us would stand?

I was talking with a pastor the other day about a certain church, and a certain great difficulty in that particular church. I told him the course pursued by a certain minister whom I knew twenty years ago. He went to a church where there had been sharp division and very marked bitterness. This man went to be pastor of the church. He was a very gracious, gentlemanly, sort of man. When he went into a house and some of them wanted to introduce him to other members of the church by telling him all they knew about them, he gently re-



buked them. "Have you seen Mr. So-and-So?" "No, not recently." "Well, I think I had better tell you about him." "Please do not. Mr. So-and-So is a friend of mine. He is a member of this church. I should be disloyal to my absent friend if I listened to you. You must not say it." "Of course, if you do not want to be advised"— "No, I do not want to be advised at all." They felt abashed, and half ashamed. Perhaps he would visit next a home on the other side of the issue, and when they started to speak evil of anyone he would say, "No, no; I will not hear it. Mr. So-and-So is a friend of mine, and I will not permit you to say an unkind thing about a member of the church. You offer me an insult in your own home when you try to speak unkindly of another member of this church. I will not have it." After a while they found every spark fell in a lake of water; it would not burn. After he had visited every member of the church they felt ashamed. The viper went out — and God came in.

What right have you to say anything or permit anybody else to say anything derogatory of any member of the church? That sin needs rebuking every time it is indulged in. There is a place for open rebuke. Do you know one of the greatest sins of which Christian people can be guilty? One of the greatest of all sins? It is this: privily slandering somebody with the tongue.

I think I will tell you a story. Some years ago I was in Kansas City. I stayed at a certain hotel in which my friend, the late Dr. Dixon was staying. We shared the same room at his request. One day he came into the room, and shutting the door he said, "Sit down a minute, I want to talk to you. I am terribly upset." "What is the matter?" "I have just come from the Convention (the Southern Baptist Convention), and one of our Southern leaders came to me and told me that Dr. So-and-So (I will call him Dr. "A") had certain affidavits involving Dr. "B" in serious wrong-doing, but that for the honour of the ministry he was not making these affidavits public. As soon as I heard that I said to my informant, 'I will go right to Dr. "A".' No! No! No! Don't you dare do that. I told you that in strictest confidence.' Then I will go to Dr. "B" and tell him, so he will have a chance to defend himself.' No! No! No! No! You must say no word to Dr. "B" about it.' What do you think of that?" Dr. Dixon asked me. "Who was it?" I enquired. When he told me, and I said I had some acquaintance with the man he said, "I did not know you knew him." I said, "I know him too well. It was the devil who spoke through that backbiter. He may be president of a college, and he may have all the degrees that all the universities on earth can give him, but the voice that spoke when that was said was the voice of the devil — and it came from hell. He first of all injected his poison into your mind, and then sealed your lips so that you cannot get it out. The next time Dr. "B" met you he would discover that you were cold toward him. He would never find out why, he would never have an opportunity of defending himself. Doctor, I want to tell you something. You did not tell me in confidence, and I am going to both Dr. "B" and Dr. "A". I am going to find out." I found out exactly what I thought. It was an infamous, unmitigated, lie that had the very poison of hell in it — told by a professing Christian, told to damage the reputation of a great man of God.

Keep your confidences to yourselves, everyone of you. Do not go whispering into somebody's ear something that

is told *in confidence*. You cannot walk with God and do that kind of business. These are little things, but they are the things that grieve the Spirit of God in any believer's life, and they are the things that must be dealt with if we are ever to have a real revival.

I wonder did I touch anybody? I wonder did I hit anywhere? I want to take it to myself, and I want you to apply it. I hope I am safe in assuming that every man and woman here this evening wants above everything else that God would rend the heavens and come down. If we do, I hope we can pray this prayer. "I will pay any price, I will take any position, I will perform any duty, I will make any sacrifice, I will be anything, I will be nothing if need be, I will do anything or be anything — whatever Thou shalt direct, only O Lord, revive Thy work."

I have a great deal more to say of the same sort, but I think I will hold it over for the present for our time is gone. But shall we make it our daily prayer that we may get rid of everything that would stand in the way of the blessing of the Spirit of God.

#### AMUSEMENT IN THE CHURCH

The notion having grown up that we must entertain men in order to win them to Christ, every invention for world-pleasing which human ingenuity can devise has been brought forward till the churches in multitudes of instances have been turned into playhouses, with theatre-boards, announcing the courses for the gay season, boldly set up at the doors; and there is hardly a carnal amusement that can be named, from billiards to dancing, which does not now find a resting-place in Christian sanctuaries. Is it then phariseeism or pessimism to sound the note of alarm and to predict that at the present fearful rate of progress, the close of this decade may see the Protestant church as completely assimilated to nineteenth century secularism as the Roman Catholic church was assimilated to fourth century paganism.

—A. J. GORDON in 1894.

#### THE EDITOR'S ANNUAL LETTER

Soon our readers will receive a letter from the Editor telling something of the work of THE GOSPEL WITNESS during the past year. We request the prayers of our many friends that this letter may elicit a healthy response so that our work of the coming year may make even greater progress than it has in any year of the past.

#### THE EARLY CHURCH

With no power except the "irresistible might of weakness"; with no wealth except the riches of glory inherited through her heavenly citizenship; refusing all compromise with the world, declining all patronage of kings and emperors, she nevertheless went forth conquering and to conquer, till in a few years she had undermined the whole colossal fabric of paganism. And might not the church of Christ do the same today if she were to return to this primitive ideal? and if renouncing her dependence on human resources — wealth and power and social prestige, she were to inscribe upon her banner that ancient motto: "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord."

—A. J. GORDON

# Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 20 First Quarter Lesson 4 January 22, 1956

OLIVE L. CLARK, Ph.D. (Tor.)

## THE CALL OF PETER, JAMES AND JOHN

Lesson Text: Luke 5:1-11.

Golden Text: "And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing; nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net." —Luke 5:5.

Parallel Passages: Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20.

### I. Teaching the Great Multitude: verses 1-3.

After our Lord was rejected by the people of Nazareth, He made His home in Capernaum, a city of Galilee, situated on the shore of the Sea of Galilee (Matt. 4:13; Luke 4:31). There He remained until He left the vicinity of Galilee about six months before the crucifixion. But during that period His activities were not confined to Capernaum, but He toured Galilee with His disciples and also made a trip to Jerusalem. The Great Galilean Ministry of our Lord is recorded in Luke, chapters 4 to 9.

It is possible that the call of the three disciples as described in the Gospel of Luke is a separate incident from the call of the four disciples, Andrew, Peter, James and John, as recorded in the other Gospels (Matt. 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20). However, the three accounts are so similar that they probably refer to the same event.

This was a time of popularity, so far as the Saviour's ministry was concerned; crowds eagerly gathered to hear His preaching and to behold His miracles. But, although many thronged about Him, only those who actually touched Him by faith were healed (Matt. 14:36). Association with a Christian church or Sunday School will not save; one must come into vital relationship with the Lord Himself.

The Lake of Gennesaret was called also the Sea of Gennesaret, the Lake of Galilee or the Sea of Galilee. In modern times it is called the Sea of Tiberias. This lake formed an appropriate setting for the miracle of the fishes, since it is the centre of the fishing industry even to this day.

The two boats belonged to the two pairs of brothers: Andrew and Peter, James and John. The fishermen had temporarily abandoned their boats, being busy repairing or casting their nets (verse 2; Matt. 4:18; Mark 1:19). These activities are illustrative of two aspects of the ministry; restoring the sinning saints to repentance and usefulness (Gal. 6:1, where the Greek word translated "restore" is the same as that translated "mending" in Mark 1:19), and seeking to bring repentant sinners to the Saviour (Acts 8:26-40).

Among the Jews it was the custom for the teacher to sit down as he taught, and our Saviour followed this custom (Matt. 5:1). He chose the place where all might see and hear Him. We must make the best possible provision for people to hear the Gospel message.

### II. Calling the Select Few: verses 4-11.

Most of the Saviour's miracles were performed, not merely in response to the need of some suffering one, but also to teach a spiritual lesson. As the boat belonged to Peter, and as our Lord's remarks were addressed to him particularly, we conclude that he was the one most concerned. The key to the understanding of the miracle is found in verse 10. Christ gave to Peter, and incidentally to James and John also, a manifestation of His Divine power in saving souls, with lessons as to their own part in that service, and a vision of the immensity of the task before them. Some of the lessons are as follows:

1. Human skill, apart from the Spirit of God, is of no avail in the task of soul-winning (John 15:5). Christ allowed the night of useless labour, as He permits the drought before the showers and barrenness before revival (James 5:17, 18).

2. Service performed at His word, in obedience to His Spirit, will bring a rich harvest. The word "Master" in verse 5 means "superintendent" or "Lord of my activity". Even then, Peter let down only one net, although he was told

to use the nets. Our Master desires perfect, prompt, unquestioning obedience.

3. Peter experienced a vision of the holiness of God, and hence realized his own unworthiness (Job 42:5; 6; Isa. 6:5). The one who would be used of God must be humble before Him.

4. In contrast to the fish which would soon die, the disciples were to "take men alive". On the Day of Pentecost Peter took three thousand living captives to grace the triumph of the Lord.

5. The Lord drew the fish to the net, but He gave to the disciples the task of setting out and drawing in the net. Preach the Word; it is God's own means of reaching men (Jas. 1:21; 1 Pet. 1:22, 23). "Throw out the Gospel net!"

6. Peter, James and John forsook all and followed Christ. They had previously been called to believe on Him (John 1:35-42); now they were summoned to serve Him (Matt. 4:19). Worldly pursuits and pleasures must be forsaken.

7. After the death of Christ when the backslidden, discouraged Peter led the other disciples in returning to their former vocation, the risen Lord in mercy performed a similar miracle, which doubtless aroused memories of the experience of the Lord's power and of their whole-hearted surrender to the call of the Master at that time (Jer. 6:16; John 21:3-11).

### Daily Bible Readings

Jan. 16—The Call to Salvation .....	John 1:35-42
Jan. 17—The Call to Rest .....	Heb. 4:1-11
Jan. 18—The Call to Service .....	Matt. 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20
Jan. 19—The Call to Discipleship .....	Luke 14:25-35
Jan. 20—The Call to Consecration .....	Rom. 12:1-8
Jan. 21—The Call to Separation .....	2 Tim. 3:15-26
Jan. 22—The Call to Holiness .....	1 Pet. 1:13-25

### Suggested Hymns

Who is on the Lord's side?  
Jesus calls us o'er the tumult.  
Hark! 'tis the Shepherd's voice I hear.

### POWERS OF DISPERSION

When Handel once undertook, in a crowded church, to play the dismissal on a very fine organ there, the whole congregation became so entranced with delight that not an individual could stir till the usual organist came impatiently forward and took his seat, saying, in a tone of acknowledged superiority, "You cannot dismiss a congregation. See how soon I can disperse them!" We have known excellent men who could use that last sentence without being guilty of the slightest egotism. Whether they conduct a public service, or teach a Bible-class, or lead a prayer-meeting, the result is sure and rapid. Instead of saying with the Babylonian king, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built?" they can cry, "See how soon I disperse them!" After one or two such feats, would it not be well for brethren to rest upon their laurels? We have none too many strong institutions at present, and we do not wish that their number should be diminished. If, however, the brother must be seen and heard, let him now try the rake for gathering instead of the fork for scattering. It is the time of hay-harvest; he can learn what we mean by going into the meadows.

C. H. SPURGEON

### MY COVENANT

### DOLLAR-A-MONTH CLUB

Desiring to have a vital part in the work of the furtherance of the Gospel, I hereby pledge One Dollar per month, to be applied to the Church Extension Loan Fund of The Conservative Regular Baptist Association of Canada. This money will be loaned out to deserving causes to assist in the erection of suitable places of worship. (Matt. 28:19, 20).

Name .....

Address .....