

STRAIGHTWAY

"And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him" [Mark 1:18].

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FUNDAMENTALISM: "VISION OR DREAM? ECHO OR VOICE?"

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**"Where there is no vision,
the people perish: but he
that keepeth the law, happy
is he" (Proverbs 29:18)**

Many of the Proverbs are given in a simple text. Many of the revivals since the days of Jonathan Edwards were sermons preached from a text. Textual sermons are as much needed in our time as expository thought, although most of my preaching and teaching continue with exposition. Of course, textual sermons are found in biblical texts.

Vision is what we actually see in the present tense; dream is what has been seen in the past. Voice is what is being said right now; echo is what was just said and last heard.

Joel spoke of the distinction between young men seeing visions, and old men dreaming dreams. This distinction remains: young men, if they have anything at all, see the

forward vision; old men as they are concluding their lives dream of what is past. Both vision and dream, voice and echo are needed for any generation. Echo appeals to our memory.

Our text has a powerful contrast: first, there is the negative; second, there remains the positive.

First, where there is no positive vision of our earthly view of Christ in the present tense, the people will be loosed and unrestrained to the judgment of God.

Second, but where there is the keeping of the vision, through the Word, the law, the people will be blessed and happy.

**"Now therefore hearken unto
me, O ye children: for blessed
are they that keep my ways"
(Proverbs 8:32).**

There are two kinds of war: foreign war and civil war. In a civil war a country's interests and energies tend

to be even more paralyzed than during a foreign war.

We, as Fundamentalists, must carry on a negative and a positive war with the foreign **enemies** of God. In a civil war, we must carry on a negative and positive controversy with the **brethren** of God.

In the former, foreign war, we must be grouped for battle; in the latter, civil war, we must be grieved for victory.

So, today, missionary and evangelistic work, though hindered by our war with enemies, must not cease. Also, consecration and revival, though grieving in our souls for disorderly brethren, must not make us bitter.

No corps of cowards can conquer the world for Christ, whether on the foreign front or the home front. We must serve with vision, not a dream; we must be a voice, not an echo. We weep over the lost souls of sinners; we weep over the lost fellowship of brethren. But we must never weep, later, because we quit the foreign or home front. We plead for evangelism and we plead for revival, but we must not quit the vision and the voice for God. We must call, invite, and plead for souls

to be saved and couples to enter the ministry; they must hear our call; they must see the vision. We must run the risk of Vision and Voice. This can only be done with the work of the negative, first, which deals with the destruction of sin, error, and apostasy. Then we must move in Vision, the positive Vision, which deals with the spiritual construction of grace, righteousness, and holiness. No matter if the battle against our enemies increase, we must proceed; no matter if the burden of separated brethren increase, we must succeed. We must never love anyone if we are determined to never run the risk for that love. While foes and friends increase against us may we walk on with God.

There are two dangers in these two wars: how much negativeness should be tolerated?; how much positiveness must be generated?

In the Garden of Eden the positive was more precious; the negative served it. Now, after the Fall, the negative is even more necessary, but we could be prone to lag in our emphasis for the positive.

We must always remember we cannot build on the negative, what we are against, what is wrong. The main purpose of the negative is to clear the ground, take off the debris, and ready the site.

We can only build on that which is right, that which is true, the positive truth. Apologetics and polemics mainly restrain the enemy whether foe or separated brother. But proclamation of the Word to our enemies represent the building, the construction work, of the Church.

Contrary to average opinion, the modernist, the humanist, the remnant, and the ecumenist are always living

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with denials and negatives towards the Biblical Faith as affirmed by Bible Believers. Because of their negativity against the Word of God, they are ten times more likely to be wrong in both their denials and their assertions.

Modernism cannot succeed in finding Christian power by denying its source. Naturalism cannot destroy the Supernatural in God and Christ because it only clings to the natural. Therefore, neo-Christianity must fail because it sets forth a perfectly hopeless task.

We, as Fundamentalist, however, must be comforted by the fact that this new brand of so-called Christianity must lose because it is destructive rather than constructive, predatory rather than productive. These neo-Christian foes prove it is easier for them to rob what others have accumulated than to earn and build for themselves. The Charismatics have mainly taken the goats of liberal churches as their disciples, or confused some sheep in evangelical circles. But the fact remains: true evangelism and revivalism are absent in their movement. Such success has not called out the core-hearts of true Christians who love the pure Word of God. They remain steadfast.

In this, we see the dead burying the dead, and the dead unburying their dead. Man as his own god is a religion as dead as Deism, another kind of the same kind with "the absentee god."

For Fundamentalists, however, the situation before us, the greater situation before us, centers in the great struggle as to whether Christianity is to remain Christian in the public definition or not. Will Fundamen-

talism die in the public area of life? The crucial conflict of today is not that of Christianity with rival religions, but with anti-christianity, and the breakage of the brotherhood of Christainity. Either that which tears out its vital spiritual organs and doctrine, the fundamentals, must cease to be accredited as Christainity, or the Churches maintaining it is doomed as a Christian institution. Surely we must believe that the biblical Christian world has grown weary of the doubt, denial, and widespread destruction from the prolonged assault on New Testament Christianity. One thing remains: only as the churches continue on the foundation of the great fundamental teachings of the Word of God can they stand secure.

Like Japan and San Francisco, California, we are asked by God to live on the edge of a spiritual earthquake world, and we must build earthquake-proof churches. We must still sing, "The Church's One Foundation" and mean it.

There is one testimony of Judas we may salvage: he did not go and join the Sanhedrin crowd and they did not want him. He did not start an anti-christian group. He simply went out and hung himself, and with love in our hearts for Christ, we say that helped us, in view of the fact he did not choose to confess his sin to Christ.

But the destruction and disintegration are all around us. The supernatural vision concerning Christ and His Word have been replaced in many quarters with a natural or pragmatic dream. Man is endeavoring to succeed all the statistics of the human achievements of the past. But this neo-vision of modern, apostate Christianity has caused the people to

perish—to be loosed and unrestrained from the Law of God. In this “hour and power of darkness,” our task is compelled to be largely defensive, but we must not allow the defensive “negative” to swallow up the Gospel “positive.” If we have to have a sword in our hand let us be sure we have a trowel in the other hand, too. We must never fight the war, whether with the neo-foe or separated brother in such a way, that we forget it is only “for Christ’s sake.” All other fighting is unworthy.

It is prophesied that before Christ’s Second Coming all sorts of enemies, foreign enemies and home brethren, must be faced. It is sad, but we must live with it. It was prophesied that rumors would fly, delusions would flourish, and confusion would come, but none of these things must move us. Jesus, Himself, had to engage with controversy; Jesus, Himself, would be betrayed by friends. We walk in His steps.

We must pity the brother, we must pray for him too, who speaks his major purpose in preaching and writing with too many negatives and especially concerning the brethren. There is the entire Bible as our daily resource; we must speak for the Vision; we must speak for the Law, the whole Word of God. There are yet many wonderful things to preach from the Bible. We desperately need preaching for the home, parents, children, art, music, nature, ethics, little things, hospitality, courtesies, and kindnesses. It is not until we have condemned the apostasy to the core will our negatives for Christ be satisfied; but it also must be sure, as Fundamentalists we will not be satisfied until all the positive glories of

biblical truth is brought before the feet of our Lord Jesus.

We must not only war, but we must win. We must not only fight, but we must be free. If we have no positive vision and purpose, we perish. If we have no obedience, we have no law in our time. Dreams are past; echoes are over; vision encourages and keeps God’s people; Voice declares and reveals God’s Word. What will our life be? Vision or dream?; Echo or voice?

Christian Martyrdom

Christian martyrdom is the result of biblical separation. Church history is replete with the testimony of millions who sealed their testimony for the Lord Jesus Christ in this final act. Today there are satanic forces gathering in the wings of a last-day theater, and soon they will move to center stage in the concluding act of this drama of hatred against the children of God.

But there are two definitions of martyrs: (1) One who submits to physical death rather than renounce his Christian faith. (2) One who submits his whole life through many sacrifices, sufferings, and tribulations as a living sacrifice for his Lord.

In the 1980’s, we are viewing a forthright presentation of the second group. These have identified themselves with historic, biblical Fundamentalism in holding to the doctrine of biblical separation. Their identifications, associations, sponsorships, and leaderships have brought a living martyrdom.

O.T.S.

ZION: BEAUTY AND BOLDNESS

The separation of Jerusalem, the joy and center of the whole earth, has a beautiful situation among all the people of the earth. As biblicists, we must view ourselves as a joy to God as we are marked for the center of controversy in this last age. We must maintain individual purity and not think of ourselves as the only godly men in the whole world. We must see this as a beautiful “situation” in the midst of this apostasy. We must not mourn; we must proclaim. We must not moan; we must pray. We must not isolate ourselves. We must not just seek victory; we have victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!

Having found separation and purity, we must arise and get on with the battle! Five blessed commands are given to us in this warfare.

First, we must “walk about Zion.”

This simply indicates that we were born for this time. We must carefully and privately consider the situation and century into which God has called us to fight this battle. We must see this as our blessed opportunity to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ.

Second, we must “go round about her.”

This indicates a going round about her as a soldier on duty during war—a sentinel for God. We must guard this Bible, this Christ, this God, and defend our faith in the power of the Holy Spirit. We cannot wait for some other army to do our battle. All of us must be either a battlefield, a warrior, or a weapon in this matter.

Third, we must “tell the towers thereof.”

This declares that there are certain refuges into which we may run. There remain churches, institutions, leaders, and channels who are remaining true to the Word of God as separated biblicists! We must “tell”; that means literally number, count, or carefully note these churches and institutions. We should promote them and tell others about them.

Fourth, we must “mark well her bulwarks.”

If this battle continues, and if Jesus tarries, we must “mark” the places remaining in this world that are genuine “bulwarks” of the Christian faith. There are schools, publishing houses, evangelists, fellowships, and others who we need to defend and assist. It should not be an insult to us if somebody else is doing battle against the Lord's enemies with greater success than ourselves. Hallelujah! Thank God for whoever and whatever is gaining the victory over the enemy! Let us support and identify them, wherever they may be! The

“bulwarks” are more important than the individual soldier who might give up his life in obscurity if it means to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ! Too many desire to be big, to be first, to be great—when we ought to settle for being good, obedient, and loyal to our Lord Jesus! Let personal ambition go, so that God can heal “fractured fundamentalism” wherever it is found.

For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

Finally, we must “consider her palaces.”

No matter how hard the battle might get, thank God for the palaces where there is communion, fellowship, encouragement, love, loyalty, and fidelity with one another in the Lord Jesus Christ. Anywhere two or more true soldiers of the Cross find strength, inspiration, and fellowship in this battle, there is a palace of blessing. No, not everybody is wrong; no, not everything on the face of the whole earth is false and bad. Thank God for the true brotherhood—the true, biblical ecumenicity! Let us join together for the battle! The root, fruit, and future of true Fundamentalism is now on the line for Christ.

With what we have received in Christ Jesus, we must “tell it to the generation following”—to our children and our children's children. Our success without a succession of successors will ultimately mean we suffered a failure. But what we need to resolve in our souls is this:

For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death.

O.T.S.

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