

# View

## God's Call To Expansion

by Homer Hailey

The Bible continues ever fresh and adaptable to man in all ages; containing its message to all classes of men, and to men under all kinds of conditions. Solomon said, "there is no new thing under the sun;" and experience verifies the claim. If we delve deeply into the distant past, we find conditions and experiences coming and going about the same as today. Our study of the Bible should therefore reveal to us that which meets the need of the hour, then with the issue clearly before us, we should be able to meet it with all our might. During a particular period of Israel's history the people could not help being very disheartened. Sin had robbed them of power, and at the moment Sennacherib stood on the threshold of the land with his Assyrian army, threatening to wipe out the national life of Judah. The days of which I speak were the gloomy days of 701 B. C. In the midst of those trying times, Isaiah stood as the gigantic representative of Jehovah among the people, preaching, pleading, denouncing, threatening. Yet in the midst of his declarations of impending punishment and suffering, he encouraged them with promises and exhortations of the future.

In the fifty-third chapter of his book, the prophet pictures for Judah and Jerusalem the suffering Messiah, which he followed with a picture of glorified Zion in the days of that Messiah, following His suffering. "Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith Jehovah. Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy habitations; spare not: lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes. For thou shalt spread abroad on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall possess the nations, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited." (Isa. 54:1-3).

One need not speculate here, for Paul quotes the first verse in Galatians 4:27, applying the promise to the children of the new covenant, the covenant of promise. The fulfillment of the promise is realized in the church; and it is the church that should find inspiration in such a promise and command even now, as it faces its present day task and mission in the world. Amidst trying times the church was established, and when driven from Jerusalem by the enemies of truth did "spare not," but "lengthened the cords" and "strengthened the stakes" till they had "spread abroad on the right hand and on the left," "possessing the nations" and "making the desolate cities to be inhabited."

*Ecc 1:9 The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun.*

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And now, today, when God's people are again threatened, this time by the spiritual "Assyrians" led by the various "Sennacheribs" of the hosts of darkness, shall she withdraw from the conflict, to leave the field to others? Or shall she put the utmost faith in God, and "spare not," but "lengthen the cords, and strengthen the stakes," in anticipation of ultimate victory when the thousands of Sennacherib's host shall lie prostrate in death, slain by "the breath of Jehovah, like a stream of brimstone?" The very spirit, thinking, and tendencies of the times are going to have their influence upon the church and its life today, which influence will be felt for years to come.

The present war is purely an economic war; but involved in it are moral and spiritual values. The primary concern today is for material things; but to the Christian the concern must be for the things eternal. The spirit of war tends to do two things: (1) draw men into a superficial alliance, in which for the moment differences that previously existed are laid aside. This is to be commended and wished for, if there are no principles involved in the compromise. (2) At the same time it breeds suspicion toward all who differ with them in their spirit, and develop hatreds for enemies, and unbalanced thinking in vital matters. Hatred, suspicion, compromise of principles, are all contrary to the Spirit of Christ, and the Christian calling. In the midst of these conditions and dispositions there is going to be the constant temptation to compromise convictions and positions by alliances with denominations in various movements and efforts, and to slacken the fight against sin "in the high places."

Our question in the affairs of the day is, what is the place of the church and the Christian life in the midst of such conditions? The reply: The church must be a rock of refuge in the midst of the storm. It must be the preserver of faith and righteousness at all costs, as it loses not its bearing, but constantly holds forth "the word of life" in the "midst of a crooked and perverse generation." It must be the "leaven" hidden in the three measures of meal, working always to influence lives for good. Our task is the same as always, the removing of hatreds, suspicions, and malice by changing the hearts of people through the gospel; planting in the stead of these the principles of Jesus Christ. This presents the challenge of the prophet of long ago, as he cried "Enlarge the place of thy tent... stretch forth the curtains of thy habitations; spare not: lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes."

#### **Spare Not**

The definite goal of the church must be one of "all out for

Christ." The world today is stopping at no cost to gain victory; should the church with a vastly greater responsibility than that of any secular power be miserly in its effort? Jesus said, "Ye are the salt of the earth;" salt is consumed in accomplishing its purpose. Jesus further said, "Ye are the light of the world;" the light burns itself out giving light to others. It is consumed in its task, in achieving its objective. Both of these illustrations of Jesus intimate the accomplishment of Christianity at the cost of self.

Paul said, "I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls;" this must be the "spare not" spirit of the church today, if a remnant is to be salvaged from the spiritual chaos of the times. This may demand suffering, but Peter said, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial among you, which cometh upon you to prove you, as though a strange thing happened to you: but inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, rejoice." (1 Peter 4:12, 13) Suffering has ever been the common lot of Christians in all ages; we need expect no less today.

#### **Lengthen thy Cords**

The scope of the church's service must be enlarged to include all men. If such a catastrophe as is at present befalling humanity is to be averted in another generation, the hearts of men must be changed by the gospel. The whole world of unredeemed becomes our challenge. "The World is the field," said Jesus; while the Prophet visualized Him as a King ruling a "dominion...from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth." This not in a "future dispensation" from the present, but now.

The church possesses all the essentials for the accomplishment of the task, unless it be one: the realization of the magnitude of its task and responsibility. It possesses the gospel, "which is the power;" the promise of God's presence at all times, "For himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee;" and the promise that our labor shall "not be in vain in the Lord." The thing needful then, is greater vision and harder work. Standing on the threshold of a new year, with far-reaching challenges before us, every congregation should "lengthen thy cords" to the very limit.

#### **Strengthen thy Stakes**

But it must not build loosely, rather, it must build for permanence. Stability is the thing that counts in a storm, not size. While stretching out in various directions, the stakes must be driven deep. There must be the development of a right conception of God if permanence is to be secured. God is not a

tribal deity, interested in one race because of color more than in another; He is universal, interested in righteousness and faithfulness rather than color and race. Neither is He interested in the mere ritual of outward worship; He delights in sincerity and truth.

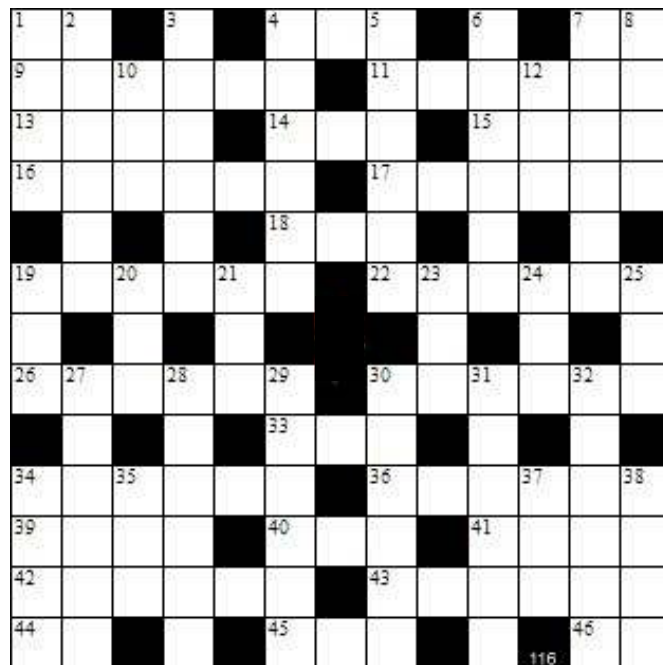
There must be home training, where principles of righteousness and loyalty to the truth are instilled from childhood. The sanctity of the home, and the integrity of the church must be emphasized if the stakes are to be strengthened.

Then, there is ever the dire need for thorough indoctrination in the fundamental principles of redemption. Catholicism is going to make a tremendous effort to "come back" out of the chaos of the day. Protestantism has failed, its compromising and modernistic tendencies have proved its undoing. In the midst of these facts, it is still true that only the truth can make men free. The church must "strengthen the stakes" as it prepares for the real shock of frenzied feelings, hatreds, and suspicions of coming days, and for the aftermath of present conditions.

--- Bible Banner - January 1942

ACROSS

- 1 \_\_\_\_, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God (Rom 11:33)
- 4 I'm not strong enough to dig, and I'm ashamed to \_\_\_\_ (Luke 16:3-4)
- 7 "\_\_\_\_! What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? (Luke 4:34)
- 9 Therefore, rid yourselves of all \_\_\_\_ and all deceit (1 Peter 2:1)
- 11 thou shalt not be to him as an \_\_\_\_ (Ex 22:25) KJV
- 13 "Yes, Lord," she said, "but \_\_\_\_ the dogs eat the crumbs that fall (Matt 15:27)
- 14 As for all the hills once cultivated by the \_\_\_\_ (Isa 7:25)
- 15 the harvest of the river, is her revenue; and she is a \_\_\_\_ of nations (Isa 23:3) KJV
- 16 You've given my people a \_\_\_\_, but you haven't told me the answer (Judg 14:16)
- 17 If you are the Son of God, tell these \_\_\_\_ to become bread (Matt 4:3)
- 18 nephew of Abraham
- 19 They were delighted and \_\_\_\_ to give him money (Luke 22:5)
- 22 It \_\_\_\_ up quickly, because the soil was shallow (Matt 13:5)
- 26 a man who controls his \_\_\_\_ than one who takes a city (Prov 16:32)
- 30 Today it will be \_\_\_\_, for the sky is red and overcast (Matt 16:3)
- 33 Sir, come down \_\_\_\_ my child die (John 4:49) KJV
- 34 at the voice of the enemy, at the \_\_\_\_ of the wicked (Ps 55:3)
- 36 but \_\_\_\_ him as if he were your father (1 Tim 5:1)
- 39 There were three gates on the \_\_\_\_, three on the north (Rev 21:13)
- 40 God said to Noah, " \_\_\_\_ going to put an end to all people (1,2) (Gen 6:13)
- 41 wife of Boaz (Ruth 4:13)
- 42 After this, Paul left \_\_\_\_ and went to Corinth (Acts 18:1-2)
- 43 you will \_\_\_\_ yourselves for all the evil you have done (Ezek 20:43)
- 44 "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell \_\_\_\_ to come to you on the water." (Matt 14:28)
- 45 Thou shalt worship the Lord \_\_\_\_ God, and him only shalt thou serve (Matt 4:10) KJV
- 46 Therefore I \_\_\_\_ sending you prophets and wise men and teachers (Matt 23:34)



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DOWN

- 1 Moses said to Aaron, "Take a jar and put an \_\_\_\_ of manna in it (Ex 16:33)
- 2 \_\_\_\_ a form of godliness but denying its power (2 Tim 3:4-5)
- 3 catch fire
- 4 I have seen you in the sanctuary and \_\_\_\_ your power and your glory (Ps 63:2)
- 5 How can the \_\_\_\_ of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? (Matt 9:15)
- 6 And this \_\_\_\_ of him went forth throughout all Judaea (Luke 7:17) KJV
- 7 And \_\_\_\_ is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth (John 4:37) KJV
- 8 The Egyptian magicians also did the same things by their secret \_\_\_\_ (Ex 7:11)
- 10 They bound him, \_\_\_\_ him away and handed him over to Pilate (Matt 27:1-2)
- 12 But the ship struck a sandbar and \_\_\_\_ aground (Acts 27:41)
- 19 A man finds joy in giving an \_\_\_\_ reply (Prov 15:23)
- 20 So the LORD said to him, "Bring me a heifer, a goat and a \_\_\_\_ (Gen 15:9)
- 21 second occupant of Eden
- 23 hole in the ground (Ps 7:15)
- 24 The birds of the \_\_\_\_ nest by the waters (Ps 104:12)
- 25 ye have respect to him that weareth the \_\_\_\_ clothing (James 2:3) KJV
- 27 Do we still have any share in the inheritance of our father's \_\_\_\_? (Gen 31:14)
- 28 the watchman called unto the \_\_\_\_ (2 Sam 18:26) KJV
- 29 \_\_\_\_ the devil, and he will flee from you (James 4:7)
- 30 as rain in harvest, so honour is not \_\_\_\_ for a fool (Prov 26:1) KJV
- 31 To this day it stands in \_\_\_\_ of the Abiezrites. (Judg 6:24)
- 32 Jesus loved \_\_\_\_ and her sister and Lazarus (John 11:5-6)
- 34 the ephod, close to the \_\_\_\_ just above the waistband (Ex 39:20)
- 35 Those nurtured in purple now lie on \_\_\_\_ heaps (Lam 4:5)
- 37 Jesus answered: "Watch \_\_\_\_ that no one deceives you (Matt 24:4)
- 38 Large crowds followed him, and he healed \_\_\_\_ there (Matt 19:2)