

# Steadfastness in Conviction

by Duncan Campbell

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*Duncan Campbell's sermon emphasizes the necessity of steadfast conviction in the truths of Scripture and the transformative power of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer.*

**Scripture:** Proverbs 24:21, John 3:3, Romans 14:5, Titus 3:5

**Topics:** "Conviction", "Steadfastness"

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## Description

Duncan Campbell emphasizes the importance of steadfastness in conviction, drawing from Proverbs 24:21 to highlight the need for unwavering faith in God's Word amidst a changing world. He reflects on the Lewis revival, where deep conviction led many to experience the saving grace of God, rooted in a firm belief in the authority of Scripture. Campbell warns against a diluted Christianity that neglects the necessity of repentance and the transformative power of the Holy Spirit, urging believers to proclaim the full counsel of God with conviction. He calls for a return to the fundamental truths of the Gospel, asserting that true Christian experience is marked by a supernatural transformation rather than mere decision-making. Ultimately, he stresses that a life lived in the Spirit, marked by steadfastness and conviction, is essential for effective witness and revival.

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## Transcript

"My son, fear thou the Lord and the king: and meddle not with them that are given to change" (Proverbs 24.21).

During the Lewis revival I well recall the mighty impact made as the powerful breath of the Spirit touched community after community. Everywhere, men and women of all ages became convicted, and many came to a knowledge of the sovereign and saving grace of God. The past fifteen years of consistent Christian witness at home and abroad, whether in the everyday life of the community or as Christian workers, goes to demonstrate how deep and real the work was.

The question has often been asked: "Why the Hebrides?" While having regard to the sovereignty of God in revival, there are human factors which, in this case, merit consideration, and foremost among them is the fact that here we have a people who had not been robbed of their belief in the authority and inspiration of the Word of God. The Bible in the home, at family worship and in church was to them the Word of God: its authority and inspiration were not questioned. It was this living faith in the Divine facts revealed in the Gospels, and now made alive through the power of the Spirit, that gave such wonderful impetus to what were once slumbering congregations, and set them on their feet, "terrible as an army with banners" (Song

of Sol. 6. 4).

CONVICTION regarding the Divine facts of God's justice, mercy and grace found expression in the heart-cry of a young woman as she lay prostrate on the floor of the church: "Oh, God, hell is too good for me: my sins are like mountains, but your mercy is great, and in that mercy I would trust!" An elder of the church who, with others, had been much in prayer that God would visit the parish, when he listened to this cry of soul-distress, declared: "This is God at work: His Word has become alive, bringing its own CONVICTION!"

Here I would quote from an article which appeared in the Church of Scotland record, Life and Work, from the pen of the late James Murray Mackay of Barvas:

"Many who had come under CONVICTION found the Lord at those prayer meetings. There were others who came out from them feeling no better -- if, indeed, they did not feel worse, but desiring with all their hearts to follow the Lord, and who, like the lepers of old, 'were healed as they went' -- some of them on the way home from the prayer meeting."

Is there not need today for an authoritative message based on the Word of God, and proclaimed with personal CONVICTION, relative to the great fundamental truths of Scripture? Surely we must stand for a positive Gospel, giving the Word of God its rightful place, and bringing back to a bewildered people the grand and eternal truths of grace, atonement, redemption, justification, sanctification, heaven and hell! -- the truths that Whitefield and Wesley preached.

What is CONVICTION? Surely the state of being convinced. Paul, in writing to the Romans said: "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind" (Rom. 14.5), suggesting that there must be no uncertainty. It is said of the Master that He spoke with "authority and not as the scribes" (Matt. 7.29). He laid down laws, He declared truths with the authority and assurance of intimate knowledge. "I say unto you," was His formula. Follow His teaching and you will discover that there is never a 'guess', a 'perhaps', or a 'maybe', in His speech: all is calm, authoritative, sure. He moves amid the great themes of the soul as one perfectly at home. To Nicodemus He said: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3.3). In that statement Jesus clearly reveals that in order to know God, a person must have a supernatural experience, and Paul refers to this experience thus: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour" (Titus 3.5, 6).

Are we STEADFAST in our CONVICTION regarding what constitutes Christian experience? More than mere decision is necessary! "The Holy Spirit entered, and I was born of God," was how someone put it. We need to proclaim this truth, and to do so with CONVICTION, especially in a day when we are being offered a Christianity that is easy, when the emphasis is on decision, without any real reference to the miraculous impact, as the redeeming, regenerating power of God invades the soul. How often one has heard preachers stress the point: "What you must do is just accept Christ: do not bother as yet about the pictures, theater or the dance; all that will be dealt with as you go on." I have no hesitation in saying that no more damnable advice was ever forged on the anvils of hell! Where does repentance come in? Is repentance not "a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it, unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience" (Shorter Catechism). Repentance must ever precede salvation. We must give forth a clear-cut message: "He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.

He that committeth sin is of the devil" (1 John 3.7, 8). Paul makes it crystal-clear in his exhortation to the Corinthians: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you" (2 Cor. 6.17). When does He receive us? When we come out from that which is unclean! Henry Ward Beecher, in an address dealing with the truth of separation from worldly things, said: "If anyone can invent a quicker way to send souls to hell than by the moving picture, they ought to be given a patent right for their infernal ingenuity!"

Our business is to proclaim the whole counsel of God. "Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him" (Isa. 3.10, 11). Of the apostles it is said: "Ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine" (Acts 5.28). Here were men who knew the truth and proclaimed it. "Christ died for our sins" (1 Cor. 15.3): the substitutionary work of Christ was central in their message. "Who . . . was raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4.25); "Who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing" (2 Tim. 4.1). These were the truths that "filled Jerusalem." If we are to see the Church of God revived, we must again proclaim to the people the message of AUTHORITY -- the Word of God. Are we not called to be His witnesses? A witness speaks from experience and knowledge. "I know" is his watchword.

Michael Faraday was once asked: "What are your speculations now?" "Speculations I have none," replied Faraday, "my soul rests upon certainties!" The testimony of the blind man who was healed by Christ, was: "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see" (John 9.25). That testimony was beyond philosophy. "One thing I know"; this must be our CONVICTION and confidence as we handle the Word of Truth, which alone makes us "wise unto salvation" (2 Tim. 3.15).

The late Dr. James Black, in his book, *The Mystery of Preaching*, says: "If there is anything that creates a peculiar passion, it is truth. It generates its own white heat. And if you preach what you believe, as if you believed it, as if it meant everything to you, there will be a natural ring and passion in your word that is infinitely better than any extraneous type of eloquence. Truth is the one thing in every age and station that has set the heather on fire."

C. H. Spurgeon said: "Avoid contributing to the shallow thinking of today by preaching without truth." Goethe, the German poet and philosopher said: "Give us your convictions: we have doubts enough of our own," and it was Charles Finney who declared: "Sinners are not converted to God by the direct contact of the Holy Spirit, but by truth employed as a means. To expect the conversion of sinners by prayer alone, without the employment of truth, is to tempt God." How often one has witnessed this in revival. The young convert does not speak of being 'changed', he speaks of being 'saved': he does not speak of a 'new start', no, he speaks of a 'new life', a 'new creation'. The Word of Truth has changed his whole conception. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3.16). It is the impact of truth borne home by the power of the Spirit that has brought about that change. That is why I believe that it is absolutely necessary to keep to the Word of God when dealing with matters concerning man's state and future destiny.

Let me affirm also what I have already tried to point out, viz., that the avowed purpose of Jesus Christ was to propagate the great truths relative to God's eternal purpose for man. That purpose is set in clear light in Deut. 10.12, 13: "And now, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, To keep the commandments of the Lord, and His statutes, which I command thee this day for thy god?" Are we fully persuaded that in God's great scheme of redemption provision is made that makes possible

such a life and walk? A young man, now a minister in the Western Isles, a convert of the revival, when staying in one of our colleges, came to know the wonder of this life and walk. In conversation with him, he said: "I never thought such a life was possible this side of heaven." He had found the secret as he pondered the words of Christ: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10.10). But, it was the testimony and witness of a young minister that so impressed him that into his heart there came a longing to know this abundant life.

How true are the words of Oswald Chambers: "You can never give another person that found, but you can make him homesick for what you have," and surely this is what was in the mind of the apostle when he wrote to the Philippians: "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" (Phil. 1.27). In that passage of Scripture Paul pleads for reality, consistency and STEADFASTNESS. Your "manner of life" (2 Tim. 3.10), is how he puts it -- a "manner of life" such as will cry aloud that this is "the work of God" (John 6.29). The Apostle Paul also wrote: "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Gal. 5.25). So, in its final analysis, the secret of such a life is in the fullness of the Holy Ghost.

I read some time ago of a pair of scales, so exquisitely poised and balanced, that if you wrote your name on a sheet of paper and put it on the scale, and at the same time put the companion sheet on the other side of the scale, the paper with the signature would tilt down the scale, and the other would go up. On ordinary scales the signature would make no difference, but on the exquisitely balanced scale, it made all the difference. It is the signature of the Holy Ghost upon our work and witness that makes all the difference.

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