

# Voices That Despair of Revival

by John R. Rice

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*The speaker argues that revival is possible now, and that the voices that despair of revival are modernists who deny fundamental Christian doctrine and oppose old-time revivals and evangelism.*

**Scripture:** 2 Chronicles 7:14, Matthew 9:36, Luke 10:1, John 4:34, Acts 1:8, Acts 1:11, 1 Corinthians 1:21, Galatians 3:24, Ephesians 4:11

**Topics:** "Spiritual Revival", "Laborers For Harvest"

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## Description

John R. Rice preaches about the possibility of having revival now, emphasizing the urgent need for Spirit-filled workers to reach the lost. Drawing from Matthew 9:36-38, he highlights Jesus' compassion for the multitudes and His call for more laborers to bring in the harvest. Rice stresses that the issue is not with the harvest, which is plentiful, but with the laborers who are few. He challenges believers to pray for God to send forth more workers into His harvest, just as Jesus instructed His disciples.

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## Transcript

WE CAN have revival now! That is the sense of what Jesus said to His disciples and followers again and again. In Matthew 9:36-38 a statement of Jesus, to His twelve disciples, is given just before He sent them out, giving them power over unclean spirits. Read carefully that Scripture:

"But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest."

Jesus saw the multitudes and had compassion on them. Oh, if only He had Spirit-filled and prepared workers to teach them, win them, save them! So He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest." There was no trouble with the harvest; the harvest was great and plenteous. There was a shortage of laborers! That is contrary to all of our excuses, all of our unhappy efforts to avoid blame for our powerlessness and fruitlessness. The trouble is with the laborers, not with the harvest! So Jesus beseeches the twelve to pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth more laborers into His harvest!

After these twelve had been sent out to preach and teach and heal, Jesus appointed seventy other workers, and told them the same thing. Read the record in Luke 10:1-3:

"After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come. Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest. Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves."

The twelve are gone forth to preach, but these are not enough. The harvest truly is great, but the trouble is with the laborers. Again these seventy are commanded, "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest." These were only new converts. They were not even grown "sheep," they were only "lambs"; but Jesus said, "Behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves." They were all He had, and with yearning heart, He sent these new converts out to win souls.

Again we see that there was no trouble with the harvest. The trouble was with the laborers. God had a man-power shortage then, and He has one now. They could have had a revival then if they had the workers who meant business, workers with the power of God upon them, workers who would pay God's price for revival.

But a third time Jesus speaks on this same theme. It is an entirely different place, and a different occasion. Jesus is at the well of Sychar in Samaria. He has just won to loving trust and surrender the poor, shabby woman whom He met at the well. The disciples seemed wholly indifferent about the concern of the Saviour for sinners. They had been to the town to buy food, and they won no one. They told no one that the Son of God, the Creator of the world, the Wonder-working Jesus, sat at the well down below the city! They want Jesus to eat, but He has been so blessed in the salvation of this poor woman that He is too full of joy for her and too full of concern for others to want food. And here we read what Jesus told them:

"My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together."--John 4:34-36.

Here is that plaintive strain again! Oh, if people would only see the white harvest as Jesus saw it! Here are lost people, but they can be won! Here are men and women steeped in sin, depraved, blinded, but dear to the Lord, and having immortal souls that must be won. They are like the ripe harvest which may waste at the first wind or rain, and the Saviour says, "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest." It was wrong then, it is tragically and criminally wrong now, to suppose that some other time will be the time of revival, or that the time for revival is already past. The harvest is white now. Some people can be won now who will be forever lost unless we act soon. And one who will work at this blessed business, the Saviour promises, shall reap his sheaves and receive his wages. Oh, blessed harvest! And oh, blessed are the reapers! And, oh, happy and blessed will be the wages, when "they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. 12:3).

All these Scriptures should burn in our hearts, for they are as applicable today as they were when Jesus uttered these principles, thrice repeated. They could have revival then; we can have revival now. The harvest was white then; it is white now. Souls were lost then, away from God; and many likewise are lost now. Then the people of God could have God's power, could use His Word, could have the blessed anointing of the Spirit of God, could claim God's promises and see great revivals. Now, God has not changed, and men are not changed, and the Word of God which lives and abides forever is still good! We

can have revivals now! The harvest is white.

Will we again see great revivals, mass revivals? Will multitudes gather again, as in old time, to hear the preaching of the gospel? Will there be a deep moving of the Spirit of God upon His people, renewing their love, cleansing their lives and giving them passion and power for soul-winning? And will whole towns and cities and countries be moved mightily by such revivals? Will multiplied thousands of sinners in each of many cities hear the gospel, be convicted, repent of their sins and be converted in mass evangelistic efforts? I say that we can, and we will in proportion to the way God's people meet His requirements.

All over America there are great groups that say no, when I say that we can have great revivals now.

And what do we mean by revival? Some would make a distinction between revival of the saints and evangelism, winning the unsaved. But all the great soul winners have used the word revival to include not only the stirring of Christians and winning them to a new consecration, a new cleansing of heart and life and a new obedience, but the winning of the unconverted to Christ. These two greatly-to-be-desired results cannot be far separated. For the primary work of the church is evangelism, soul saving. The Great Commission, the basic charter of the church, includes a command for soul-winning and then a command to teach the baptized converts the same basic soul-winning duty. It is impossible for a Christian to be really revived, to get a fresh vision of the will of God in his life and a new and a more abounding zeal to do the will of God without honestly setting out to obey Christ in this soul-winning matter.

All the successful evangelists have known this. And when Spurgeon, Finney, Moody, Torrey, Chapman, Gipsy Smith or Billy Sunday spoke of revival, they meant not only a blessed refreshing for Christians, but a great campaign of evangelism for the unsaved.

"What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." And God has immutably joined Christian surrender, devotion and faithfulness with soul-winning. For one to know Christ better is to catch His soul-winning passion and be about His main business.

So when we say revival we include evangelism. When we say that we can have revival now we mean that we can have the mighty power of God to win multitudes to Christ.

Let us say further that when we say we can have revival now we mean the same kind of revival which God has graciously given in all ages, that is, mass evangelism, the preaching of the gospel in power to great multitudes by men especially called and anointed--men whom the Bible calls evangelists.

Many these days say we cannot have revival now. Or they say we can win souls in Sunday schools and in personal work, but that we cannot have mass evangelism. Some claim that the age has so changed that God can no more use evangelists.

The voices that say no more great revivals, may not say it in those words. They may say it by criticizing evangelists, like the ultradispensational seminary president who said that evangelists are "false forces in evangelism." They may say it like a prominent pastor in a N.A.E. committee who said, "We don't want any of this Billy Sunday stuff." They may say it by charges of "sensationalism" against evangelists, or "money-grabbing." Some say we are in the last days, that Jesus is coming very, very soon and that therefore great revivals are impossible. Some say that we have a new day, a great new modern world which cannot be reached with the old-fashioned ways. Modernists say the old-time message will not do. Some Bible believers say that the old-time methods will not do. In actual fact God has given in the Bible

the old-time method of revival in the pattern of Elijah, John the Baptist, Jesus, Peter, Paul, Barnabas, Apollos and Stephen as He has given the message. I for one am persuaded that God has no more changed His essential method of preaching the gospel to great multitudes than He has changed His message. It is still true that "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1:21), just as it is still true that "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures." We had as well face the fact that radio evangelism, rescue missions, house-to-house-visitation soul-winning, child evangelism, and soul-winning in colleges all flourish when there is powerful mass evangelism like that in the days of D.L. Moody and Billy Sunday; and diminish when mass evangelism diminishes.

And God's people had just as well be reconciled to the Scriptural fact that evangelists must be included with evangelism. Ephesians 4:11,12,16 says:

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edification of the body of Christ . . . maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

Evangelists are a gift of God to the church. The office of the evangelist is as definite as that of pastor or teacher. And the office of an evangelist comes before that of a pastor in the divine order and importance, as they are named here. One who says that God will not use evangelists as He has used them before is really saying that there can be no more of the Bible kind of revivals.

When we say that we can have revivals now, we mean we can have all the blessing that God Himself has attached to the ministry of evangelists. If we can have revivals now with the work of mighty Spirit-filled evangelists like Spurgeon, Moody, Torrey, Finney, Chapman, and Sunday, then we can have pastors' colleges, Bible institutes, universities, rescue missions, and great upsurges of missionary zeal and work. You see, the key work of evangelists in the kingdom of God involves not only soul-winning but, in the words of Scripture, "the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ ..." so that all together may make "increase of the body." Let us face this thing honestly. Those who say, no more great revivals really say no more Christianity in the power and vigor of New Testament times.

I say that we can have great revivals now, as great revivals as the world ever saw. I mean we can have mass evangelism shaking whole cities, with thousands saved in a single campaign. I say that the gospel can again grip whole communities, whole areas, and affect the moral standards, the philosophy of life of the general public. I say that as a result of such mass revivals we may have a new and mighty missionary impetus that will win millions of souls around the world, that will build and support great Christian institutions like those that came with the ministry of great evangelists of the past. I mean an evangelism led by men called of God as evangelists, anointed with power from Heaven; men with the gifts needed for mighty mass movements, backed by Bible-believing pastors and people.

Who are these who doubt that we can have great revivals? Whose are these defeated voices that despair of great revivals; these voices which discourage faith, these defeated voices which withhold support from those who would do what Jesus commanded in getting the gospel to every creature? The defeated voices that teach that the vigor and glory of New Testament Christianity cannot be reproduced are the voices of modernists who do not believe the fundamentals of the faith; the voice of worldlings who are not willing to give up sin and the favor of the world; the voice of the backslidden who have lost faith, lost their first love, lost their Christian joy; the voice jealous of evangelists and their boldness, their crowds and popularity;

and the voice of the ultradispensationalists whose wrong understanding of the Bible hinders their belief in the possibility and probability of great revivals. Let us discuss these defeated voices which despair of revival.

#### I. Modernists, Unbelievers in Fundamental Christian Doctrine, Say No More Great Revivals

It is true that modernists who deny the inspiration and reliability of the Bible, deny the deity of Christ and His blood atonement, deny the need for the new birth and other fundamental Bible doctrines, encourage what they call evangelism. But modernists habitually and deliberately change the meaning of historic Christian words and use them in another sense entirely foreign to their original meaning. So a modernist may speak of Jesus as the Son of God or say that Christ is divine when he does not believe in the virgin birth of Christ, nor His bodily resurrection, nor that He is deity incarnated. These infidels in the churches simply mean the false doctrine that all men are the sons of God by nature, and that Christ in that is not essentially different in nature than other men, though perhaps better in degree. The modernist may speak of the Bible as the Word of God when he does not believe it is God's infallible revelation at all, but only that there are some good things in it from God. When a modernist speaks of salvation, he does not mean personal regeneration, a new birth by personal faith in Christ. You see, modernists are deceivers. As the Scripture says, these are false teachers "who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them .... "And again the Scripture says, "Through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you" (1 Pet. 2:1,3). Discerning Christians must beware of the "feigned words" of modernists who intentionally deceive by using the language of historic Christianity when they do not believe in historic Christianity. So modernists speak of "evangelism" when they really mean house-to-house calling to enlist people in church membership, often without regard to repentance and the new birth.

Actually modernists oppose evangelism, oppose old-time revivals. In discarding New Testament doctrine they have discarded New Testament methods and aims. And modernists say that now a grand new day has come in which people are too intelligent to be influenced by the old gospel. Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, typical modernist, in a letter often published, said that he did not believe in historic Christian doctrines and did not know a single intelligent minister who did! In other words, modernists proudly believe their learning is so far advanced and that modernists have so gained control in the churches that old-time doctrines, as preached in mass evangelism, will not be heard nor accepted by intelligent and enlightened people.

Fosdick preached and published a sermon on "The Peril of Worshipping Jesus" (Hope of the World, Harper). In that sermon Fosdick plainly denounces those who worship Jesus, says we should not call Him Lord, should not pray to Him, should not enshrine Him on our altars, should not sing, "In the Cross of Christ I Glory." Of course if you take away from the evangelist the deity and lordship and worship of Jesus Christ, you have no revivals. Well, modernists do not believe in revivals, do not want revivals, and finally, hope they have forever killed revivals in the Bible sense, in the old-fashioned sense of mass evangelism.

The American Unitarian Association, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Massachusetts, has published a pamphlet, The Relation of the Liberal Churches and the Fraternal Orders. Elijah Alfred Coil, minister of the First Unitarian Society, Marietta, Ohio, was the author. He roundly rebukes lodge men whose orders plainly teach salvation by character and the universal fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, without a need for being born again, and yet go to hear evangelists preach. He quotes Billy Sunday as saying, "The fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man are the worst rot ever dug out of hell." He

properly reminds his modernistic friends that evangelists and all Bible believers hold in spirit the creed, "We are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, by faith and not for our own works or deservings." This modernist, this Unitarian minister, this Master of the Masonic Lodge, denies the doctrine of salvation by the blood of Christ and urges his infidel friends to stay away from preaching like that of Billy Sunday. You see, modernists, all unitarian Christ-rejectors, do not want revivals, do not believe in revivals, and think they are gone forever among intelligent people. But that is only because they believe Bible Christianity is out of date.

Even the milder modernists fear evangelism. For example, Dr. A. Earl Kernahan, in his book, *Visitation Evangelism; Its Methods and Results*, with a foreword by Methodist Bishop Edwin H. Hughes, pioneered a method much used among modernists for increasing church membership by house-to-house visitation. Kernahan says many fine things. It is evident that he believes in some kind of conversion, though he says that "every child on earth is a Christian." But he is afraid of mass evangelism. He says on page 40:

"Too often the professional evangelist brought in to lead a campaign of mass evangelism, is reactionary in his theological outlook. Oftentimes he is eccentric, and his eccentricities are exaggerated for publicity purposes. Oftentime he is a past master in the creating and directing of a dangerous mob psychology. Often the people who are won by this method are won to a certain theological interpretation of the Bible, which is mechanical and out of date."

Again, on page 56 Kernahan says:

"We have been driven to attempt a new method because we are in a new day of evangelism. Mass evangelism has very largely served its day and is gone, or is going."

Modernists, those who believe that the evangelist in a "campaign of mass evangelism, is reactionary in his theological outlook," and that the converts of revivals are thus often "won to a certain theological interpretation of the Bible, which is mechanical and out of date," naturally believe that "mass evangelism has very largely served its day and is gone, or is going." God forgive all the fundamentalists who join in this modernist propaganda against old-time revivals.

Let us face this voice of defeat which says there will be no more such great mass revivals. It is the voice which hates the Bible, which would take the crown of deity from Jesus Christ, which denies historic Bible Christianity. If the modernist's viewpoint is right, then Bible Christianity itself is doomed along with mass evangelism. Thank God, we know better than that!

Let me restate it: Bible evangelism, mass evangelism, that is, old-time revivals, are offensive to modernists who hope and believe that they are out of date. The emphasis on sin is offensive to modernists who are not willing to repent. The emphasis on God's grace, on the blood of Christ as the only hope of sinners, is offensive to the modern infidel who worships man and believes in salvation by merit instead of by saving faith. Evangelism is based on the authority of the Bible as God's infallible revelation. Such faith in the Bible is essential to Bible evangelism, essential to great revivals, but is utterly abominable to modernists. The voice of modernism, unbelief in the churches which says there can be no more great revivals in the historic and old-fashioned sense, speaks as the enemy of the Bible and as the enemy of New Testament Christianity itself.

## II. The Voice of Worldliness Says No More Great Revivals

All the best and most fruitful evangelists fight sin, and this is offensive to the worldly and to the friends of the worldly. Sensible, experienced evangelists and other Christian leaders know that until God's people humble themselves and pray and seek God's face and turn from their wicked ways (II Chron. 7:14), God cannot hear from Heaven and forgive His people and heal their land. Psalm 66:18 says, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." God will not hear the cry of Christians for revival power, for the convicting and saving of sinners except as they confess and forsake their sins. So it is the divinely-appointed method for those who would help to bring about revival that they should preach to Christians on their sins, their failures, and their worldly ways.

Likewise, in preaching to the unsaved, one soon finds that it is impossible to get sinners convicted of their sins and bring them to repentance without making them conscious of their lost estate. It is true that one is not saved by keeping the law, but "the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ" (Gal. 3:24). When preachers condemn sin and preach on the wages of sin and show how God hates sin, how God will judge and punish sin, the Spirit of the Lord can bring sinners to see their need of a Saviour.

A young evangelist preaching in his third revival and seeing drunkards and other hardened sinners wonderfully saved, told me with great joy, "I have found out that if I can get people lost enough, I can get them saved!" Of course he meant that if he could get sinners to know how far they are from God, how terribly wicked their hearts, how fearful their ultimate fate if they do not repent, he can get many of them to flee to Christ for refuge and trust Him for mercy.

With this in mind, the reader should remember the great moral revolution brought about by the evangelical revival under Wesley's leadership in England. The great book, *This Freedom Whence*, by J. Wesley Bready (American Tract Society) gives documented proof that prison reform, the Sunday School movement, the end of the slave trade and an enormous raising of moral standards throughout England and America were all largely brought about by the influence of this revival and such preaching as that of John Wesley and Whitefield. Older people in America remember that the preaching of Billy Sunday and of other evangelists like him had more to do with the bringing of prohibition in America and a moral revulsion against drinking than any other single factor. When the churches in America turned their backs on mass evangelism, they lost the prohibition cause. Students of revival will remember how plainly and powerfully Finney preached against every kind of sin--from profanity and secret orders, to vanity in dress. Sermons of D.L. Moody on sowing and reaping and kindred subjects brought tremendous conviction. He preached against slavery, against drink, against secret societies. He preached restitution and repentance.

So honest, Bible-preaching evangelists today speak out boldly against the moral rot in the movies, against increasing drunkenness, against divorce, against the lewdness of the dance and the looseness and immorality of necking and petting among modern young people. Such preaching is unpopular with worldly people.

We must not suppose that the opposition of worldly people to mass evangelism is always insincere. People who rationalize and excuse their worldly living or who defend the worldliness of others come to dread the division, the sensation produced by such preaching. They fear that worldly people will be driven from the church, that the income of pastors will diminish, that pastors and churches will thus lose the favor of influential people. Such opposition may be sincere but we must face it for what it is--the voice of worldliness, the voice of unsundered, unconsecrated people.

One should note that many who oppose mass evangelism and speak against evangelists and feel that the methods of mass evangelism are out of date, are fundamentalists. Some preachers who believe the Bible and all its principal doctrines are not willing to take the costly stand for holy living which great revivals demand.

I was called to a church for revival services. The pastor seemed to be orthodox in doctrinal position. He had from time to time called in well-used evangelists each year, obviously because of the new converts added to his church through revival efforts. But he went privately among his people to minimize my plain preaching against worldliness and sin. When I talked to him about it, I found that he himself attended lewd picture shows and did not teach Christians to live a separated or consecrated life.

But some Christians who are willing themselves to avoid worldly amusements and habits are yet unwilling to have worldliness rebuked in the pulpit. Plain preaching may alienate some of the best paying members. Many pastors do not have the courage to face the scorn of leaders in secular education, the newspapers and social leaders.

In a large, historic Eastern church, fundamental in doctrine, the Deacons' board was largely dominated by members of the Masonic fraternity. Obviously, for the popular pastor to attack this evil would bring serious opposition; so he did not do it. Later he resigned the church to go into "evangelistic and Bible conference work," and in his public announcement he assured the public that he would preach only "a positive gospel," by which he evidently meant that he would not denounce sin. It was not surprising that he had little results in his evangelistic campaigns and soon accepted another pastorate. This man is a good man. He believes the Bible, he loves Jesus Christ and wants to see people saved. But he would be against old-time evangelism with its preaching on sin, its mighty call to repentance, its rebuke of the world and the reproach of Christ which falls on Christians who are true to Christ in great revivals.

Many a born-again Christian does not want any preaching that will offend his picture-show-going, cigarette-smoking, dancing son or daughter and his worldly neighbor.

Almost always such people say that such revivals are out of date. They rationalize their own cowardice and in contrast say evangelists are sensational and uncouth.

One of the voices of defeat, which says, no more great revivals, is the voice of worldliness.

### III. Spiritual Backsliding Opposes and Discredits Revival

Related to the voice of worldliness, yet distinct, is the voice of backsliding. I mean that many people are indifferent to revivals and do not believe revivals are possible simply because they are spiritually backslidden.

Some truly born-again Christians do not have faith that God really answers prayer. They do not have any deep confidence in the power of the word of God to convict and save sinners as preached by Spirit-filled men. They do not pray for revival with any enthusiasm because spiritually their faith has grown cold and small. This is the voice of spiritual backsliding. Many Christians, truly born again, have found their love for Christ has grown cold. Such Christians have no deep compassion for lost sinners, no holy urge in their hearts to win people to Christ. The thought that there can be no more great revivals comes naturally to one who does not much care about revival. There are obviously so many difficulties and so many problems in connection with a great revival that one who is spiritually backslidden and cold in heart does

not want to believe the Bible.

Such Christians have often grown to neglect secret prayer because they find no real joy in talking to God and have no deep burden for His help. Often they do not enjoy the Bible, and many who claimed to have been converted never seriously read the Bible to find out the will of God. These Christians with cold hearts, with no mind for prayer and no time for the Bible, are not prayer-meeting Christians. They do not delight to hear the Word of God preached. Often they do not have family worship, or have only a perfunctory kind. Backslidden in heart, those whose love has grown cold and whose devotion to Christ has wavered, do not long for great revivals and often do not believe in them.

And if backsliders do not want revivals, then the converse naturally suggested is that one who does not want revivals is backslidden in heart.

The Christian who is defeated about other matters would be defeated about revivals, too. In his unbelief, in his lack of compassion, in his lack of intimate touch with Christ, those spiritually backslidden despair of seeing great revivals again. This voice of defeat comes from a defeated life and a defeated heart.

#### IV. Jealous Christian Workers Often Consciously or Unconsciously Oppose and Fear Revivals

One of the voices which cries out that the old-time revivals are out of date, that new methods must be used, is the voice of jealousy.

God set in the church pastors and teachers, as is plainly told in Ephesians 4:11. God also gave evangelists, but He put the evangelist before the pastors and teachers!

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers."

Just as apostles and prophets are placed before evangelists, so evangelists are placed before pastors and teachers in this divinely-inspired order. Evangelists are called of God and ordained of God to win more souls than pastors and oftentimes to have larger crowds, have more influence with Christians, gain a better hearing from outsiders and perhaps receive better remuneration than many pastors.

Now Christian workers are only human beings. As Diotrophes was jealous of John the Beloved, as enemies of Paul preached the gospel from envy, we may expect the same spirit sometimes to appear today. In Christian colleges instructors are sometimes envious of full professors, and heads of departments are often jealous of the powers of the college president. Assistant pastors often seek to compete with the pastors in the affections and leadership of people in the church, and the organist is frequently jealous of the choir leader. So, many a pastor when he sees the evangelist preaching to larger crowds, preaching with greater boldness, seeing more converts than he himself has seen, often finds it difficult not to envy the evangelist.

Pastors have often criticised evangelists as being sensational when actually they regretted they could not be as bold and preach to as large crowds as the evangelist. A pastor has often criticised an evangelist as being a money-grabber when actually the evangelist put far less stress on financial remuneration than the same pastor. Pastors usually will not accept a pastorate without a definitely-promised salary, and often haggle for a free parsonage and a paid vacation. I have known a number of ministers to refuse a call to a pastorate because they said the salary promised was not adequate. Yet I have never known a reputable evangelist to set a price on his service, or ask a minimum guarantee. I have known a number of

well-known Bible teachers to do so. The reason such pastors criticize an evangelist is not because the evangelist asks for more money but because he sometimes gets more! For the very same reason, poorly-paid pastors criticize well-paid pastors. That is simply old human nature playing a familiar part.

Denominational leaders are often jealous of the influence of evangelists. Pastors are in position to raise money for the denominations-evangelists usually are not. Pastors will usually cooperate more fully with the denominations than will evangelists. Pastors often have annuity or life insurance at stake, and often expect to need the recommendation of the denominational secretary or the good will of the bishop, while evangelists are usually independent in such matters. Evangelists are usually not made trustees of denominational colleges or seminaries.

This jealousy and natural antipathy of pastors and other Christian workers toward evangelists who get bigger crowds is natural, but it is carnal, not spiritual.

A great church asked me to come for revival services. The pastor said, "We always pay Bible teachers \$100 a week and evangelists \$150 a week. Will that be satisfactory?" I replied that any amount the church set would be abundantly satisfactory, that I would not be a party to any agreement whatever on the salary matter except that it was to be left to the pastor and church since I never made any demands.

After a blessed revival, with the church auditorium packed out night after night and with many saved, including prominent business men, the church paid me considerably more than the \$150 a week intended. A short time before, the church had had a well-known and beloved Bible teacher and had paid him \$100 a week. He had spoken to not more than a third as many people per night, I suppose, and I could well see the viewpoint of the church which was willing to pay more for larger crowds, more souls saved and greater blessing. But I can imagine how that Bible teacher would feel about evangelists! And the thoughtful reader will see why Bible teachers have complained that evangelists are sensational, that they play on people's emotions, and that they harshly condemn sin. Such people criticize evangelists, not because evangelists are wrong, but because they are right. Men who do not win souls criticize those who do. Men who have small crowds criticize those who have large crowds.

I can see how a defeated man, resenting the crowds, or the popularity, or the income of some greatly-used evangelist can come to believe that all such evangelism is out of date and that it would be better to win souls in the Sunday school, in child evangelism, in Youth for Christ, without great mass revivals led by evangelists.

One of the defeated voices which despair of revival is the voice of jealousy among Christian workers.

#### V. Ultradispensationalism Is a Voice of Defeat Despairing of Revival

There are some Christians who over-emphasize the dispensational teaching in the Bible. Of course there is a dispensational difference between the old covenant and the new covenant, between the ceremonial law and the gospel. But ultradispensational people say that the Acts of the Apostles is a record of a transition period and that the Christianity of the book of Acts is not to be a pattern for present-day Christianity. Such people sometimes say that the Sermon on the Mount was for Jews only, not for us, and that even the Lord's Supper is "a kingdom prayer" not suitable for us. They say that the miracles, power and gifts manifested among Christians in the book of Acts are now out of date. Such people usually say that the only "baptism of the Spirit" there is now is what one receives at conversion. These ultradispensationalists say that we are in the last days, that the Saviour must come very soon. They say

that "the great apostasy" is on so that a great revival is impossible. They usually think that a number of signs prove that from the time of the first world war on to the present should be called "the last days" and that many signs indicate the Saviour must come at most in a few months or years.

The ultradispensationalists do more to discourage revival than many because they are Bible believers, not infidels. They are premillennial, not amillennial. They believe in the verbal inspiration of the Bible and believe it literally true. These ultradispensationalists are usually followers of John Nelson Darby, one of the founders of the Plymouth Brethren movement. They have had tremendous influence in the notes of the Scofield Bible; they have infiltrated the Bible institutes built by the evangelists, and substituted their own pet doctrines for the teaching of Moody, Torrey, Spurgeon and Finney on the fullness of the Spirit.

The ultradispensationalists generally say that no more great revivals are likely, that it is much harder to win souls than before because of the great apostasy which, they say, now marks the closing days of the age.

This teaching is subtle, it is respectable, but it is deadly in its effect on evangelism.

Ultradispensationalists have not turned out a single great evangelist. They turn out many Bible teachers.

Typical of that teaching is the book called True Evangelism, by Lewis Sperry Chafer, which calls evangelists "false forces in evangelism," which says that "a 'revival' is abnormal rather than normal," and not to be "a sanctioned method of work" (p. 7). He says that evangelists place "false or undue emphasis on methods" by demanding "some public action in connection with conversion, such as standing or going forward in a meeting." He especially opposes sending "out workers to plead with individuals in a miscellaneous congregation," and desires evangelists not to preach on sin.

Many ultradispensationalists accuse every evangelist who works with churches of any denomination but Plymouth Brethren of compromising.

Many kindly, good Christian people, influenced by ultradispensationalists, feel that it is hopeless to expect revival. They are defeated. They feel so critical of worldly people that they cannot help them; so critical of evangelists that they do not trust them. Such people have a tendency to enjoy technical study of the Bible more than soul-winning, to be more interested theoretically in Jewish missions than in great citywide campaigns, though only a handful of Jews are saved each year in all the Jewish missions in America and frequently one single city-wide campaign will show more converts than all the Jewish missions in America will show in a year.

Another full chapter will be given to show from Bible prophecy that great revivals are yet to come and that this ultradispensational viewpoint about revivals is utterly unscriptural. But here let us mark this ultradispensational voice for what it is--the voice of defeat, the voice of failing Christians. The doctrine of the ultradispensationalists is heresy. The attitude of criticism and division is sinful. It discourages revival, it brings reproach on premillennial truth. It puts out the fires of soul-winning.

Let us make a clear distinction between the premillennial doctrinal position and ultradispensationalism. I am a premillennialist, which simply means that I believe Jesus may come at any time, just as He promised, and certainly must come before there can be any millennium on this earth. That is, I take the Bible literally and believe that the same Jesus who went away shall so come in like manner as the disciples saw Him ascend into Heaven, and in accordance with the plain promise of the angels who stood

by (Acts 1:11 ). Premillennialists simply take the Bible at face value when it teaches that the Lord Jesus Christ Himself will one day return for His own, raise the Christian dead, change the Christians who are alive and take us with Him to Heaven, then a little later will reign literally on the earth. It happens that evangelists generally take the Bible literally and so nearly all the great soul winners have been premillennial in faith. Spurgeon, Moody, Torrey, Chapman, Billy Sunday were all premillennial. As far as I know, all the widely-used interdenominational evangelists in America today are premillennial in doctrine; that is, they believe that the Saviour may come at any moment, just as He said. But to set dates or years for the Saviour's return, to say that we cannot take the examples of the New Testament as our pattern in soul-winning, to say that Christians should never pray for the power of the Holy Spirit and that the times themselves forbid revival, is a voice of defeat, the voice of a false dispensationalism.

You hear the cry of defeated voices which despair of revival. Some of these do not want revival. Those who wish to have revival do not have the faith for it, perhaps are unwilling to pay the price for it. They are the voices of modern unbelief, liberalism; of worldliness; of spiritual backsliding; of jealousy among Christian workers; the voice of ultradispensationalists whose wrong interpretation of the Bible makes them believe great revivals are now unlikely, if not impossible. Say what you will--these voices are voices of defeat, not of faith, not of victory. Their spirit is not the spirit of the Acts of the Apostles, not the spirit of the Apostle Paul. Their spirit is not true to the promises of Christ, nor to the implications and obligations of the Great Commission. Defeated Christians are not Spirit filled Christians, are not faith-filled Christians, are not Christians in the glory and power and joy of the Lord. We must not believe these defeated voices. They are wrong! And in succeeding lectures we earnestly hope to show that we ought to have now and can have now, if Christians will meet God's requirements, as great revivals as ever blessed this earth.

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