

# CALL FOR GOSPEL ACTIVITIES

## Glorious Opportunities for Christian Usefulness

(Entered according to Act of the Parliament of Canada, in the Year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Three, by Wm. Baily, Toronto, at the Department of Agriculture, Ottawa.)

A despatch from Chicago says—Rev. Frank De Witt Talmage preached from the following text: Matt. xx, 7, "Go ye also into the vineyard."

A prospective theme! It is especially appropriate for the first sermon of a new year. This is not a time to sound a requiem over the dead. It is a time when the gospel colors should be unfurled defiantly to the breeze and when an aggressive campaign should be planned for invading the strongholds of evil surrounded by satanic entrenchments. "Forward, march!" should be the command all along the lines, not "Mark time!" not "Halt!" not "Fall back!" not "Detail for sentry duty." We should have for the gospel ranks a grand charge and not a tattoo. There should be no willingness to sleep upon our arms in peace.

A negative policy will never capture this old world for Christ. It is well at times to preach the command, "Thou shalt not." There are many things that are not in our very nature. It is but a short time since they were babies. Now they are boys and girls. Soon they will be grown men and women. We go back to visit the scenes of our childhood which we left only a few years ago, and we find that the companions of our youth are now grown up and married and have babies of their own.

Sunday school work offers an unlimited field for gospel effort. Many many are the children among whom the earnest disciple can labor. The silent Roosevelt may be right in uttering a vehement protest against the tendency of the upper classes to shirk parental responsibilities, but among the middle and the lower classes children seem to be everywhere. There are broods of them, swarms of them, flocks of them, great hosts of them. The multitudes of patterning feet lately fill the earth with music when these infantile daily tramp to the public schools.

In order to house them for educational purposes millions upon millions of dollars must be spent annually. No Christian disciple need be afraid of building upon another man's foundation when he goes to work for Christ among the little children. There is not a consecrated Sunday school superintendent in all the world who is not at his wits' end to find the right kind of teachers who will gather the boys and the girls into the students' classes for his Sunday school.

A FIELD FOR GOSPEL LABOR. Sunday school work is of the most vital importance. Among all the fields open for gospel labor I have purposely placed it first, because I believe it to be the most important of all. No one can fully estimate the future influence of the children who are now playing about our doors. The great statesmen, once placed his hand upon his son's head and said, "This child is greater than any one in Greece, for the Athenian commander of the Greeks, I command the Athenians, his mother commands me, and I command his mother." We, in Christ's name, can place our hands upon the children. In Sunday school work we can say, "The children will be greater than all, because the children of to-day will be the men and the women of to-morrow." If you can save the cradles and the nurseries for Christ, you can save the world for Christ. I plead and beg of you, Christian disciples, to expend a great part of your gospel energies in working among the children.

Another gate stands wide open for practical gospel usefulness. This gate leads into a field aglow with ripened human grain, ready to be garnered. It is crowded with young people. But, though crowded with the young men and maidens, yet each passenger train coming into our large cities is emptying part of its load into this field as the freight trains daily discharge their cattle and horses and sheep into the Chicago stock yards, and yet there is always room for more. Young men and maidens, like children, seem to be everywhere. We crowd against them in the electric cars, we bump against them on street corners, we see them through the swinging doors of saloon and billiard halls. Who will help save them? Church member, is not Christ calling you to go and labor among the stalwart pinos of youth as well as to use the gospel ax among the gnarled and worm eaten branches of sinful old age?

THE CHRISTIAN'S DUTY. How is the Christian to go after the young people? Simply enough. He is to go after them with the same vigor as the agents of evil do

week out, you will see the eye brighten and the lip smile and will hear the blessed words of endless gratitude. You will not only hear human commendations, but you will also hear the Divine Saviour say: "I was sick, and ye visited me. Verily I say unto you inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren ye have done it unto me."

THE GOSPEL INVITATION. But there is still one more field of Christian activity to which I would direct your attention. That is to the side rooms where the after-meetings should be held in every Christian church immediately following the benediction of the Sunday-night services. That is the place where the gospel net is drawn. That is the room in which after a week of prayer the sinners are given a direct invitation to join the church. There they are brought face to face with Jesus Christ and are urged to make a decision in reference to their soul's eternal destiny. That is the one place above all others where the Christian should expect to see the direct results of his spiritual labors. It is the one place toward which all his scholars and young people should converge and concentrate and find its gospel climax.

THE CALL TO CHRISTIAN LIFE. Thus the call to the Christian life is a bugle blast for work. The church pew is not meant for a bed of roses, where indolence and sloth can lie down for perpetual slumber. Consecrated church membership is a sacred affinity for intense missionary activity as well as for "gospel rest." A famous musician once said, "If I stop practicing upon the piano one day I will feel my deterioration, if two days, the musical critics will feel it, if three the world at large in my promiscuous audiences will feel it." If the consecrated church member stops working for Christ one day he himself will feel his own spiritual deterioration. If two days his Christian friends will realize it, if three days the world at large will be the sufferer because of it. Faith's wings are movable. They must be kept working all the time. Now comes the practical determination for the Christian to settle—where are you specially fitted to go to work for Christ? Choose your spiritual occupations. From among the many fields of gospel opportunities choose them now.

MISSIONARY WORK. Another glorious field of Christian usefulness is to be found in missionary work. What do I mean by that? Christian labor among the cannibals of the south seas? Among the fur-robed Eskimos, in their igloos, of the icy north? Among the tattooed Maoris of New Zealand and the half-civilized natives of the orient? Oh, yes. They are all included in that term, "missionary work." The divine command, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost," has a worldwide significance. One of the first duties of a Christian is to work for the foreign missionary society of his church. By money donations, by needlework and by pledges you should re-enforce our Christian missionaries laboring in foreign fields. You cannot have a world's Saviour unless you feel that the black man of Borneo and the yellow man of China and the Bengali of India are your brothers—brothers in Christ.

PEOPLE AND THINGS. Items of Interest From the World's Four Corners. Mexico produces more silver than any other country. There are 2,242 foreign students in the technical schools of Germany. The Magyars rule Hungary, although they number but 6,000,000 or 7,000,000 in a total of 43,000,000. A project is on foot in Geneva for the establishment of aerial excursions to view the summit of Mont Blanc. To-day the Empire of Japan has a population of 49,000,000. This means more than 300 people within a square mile. Rules for the more careful handling of furniture by State railway employees have just been issued at all German stations. An English railway train on December 4th ran from Marylebone to Manchester, a distance of 206 miles, in 219 minutes. The pictorial post-card craze still rages in Europe. More than 41,000,000 were delivered by the Swedish post-office last year. In 1870 the German people barely exceeded 40,000,000; in 1885 they had risen to nearly 47,000,000, and in 1900 the census returns gave 56,345,014. No less than 111 officers of the British Army have qualified as interpreters in the Russian language, eighty-three of whom belong to the Indian service. In Wales there are 500,000 people who cannot speak English; in Ireland there are 30,000 who speak only Irish, and in Scotland there are 40,000 who speak only Gaelic. A regulation has been made in Vienna that all electric lights must be raised to sixteen feet above the pavement, as otherwise they are calculated to injure the eyesight of passengers. A French Apiculturist has been experimenting with bees as messengers. He has discovered that they will return to their hives from a distance of four miles in about twenty minutes, bearing despatches, after the manner of homing pigeons. Diseases of the heart have greatly increased in Germany in recent years. One person in every seven being now afflicted. Influences, alcoholism, and excessive addiction to bicycling and other sports are named by Dr. Stock as the chief causes. Short-hand is not a modern invention. There were schools of short-hand in Egypt in the third century of our era. A recently discovered papyrus shows a contract between a shorthand teacher and a gentleman who wished the art taught to one of his slaves. The cigar-makers' unions of New York City have organized a camera corps to take snapshots of every union man who is discovered smoking a non-union cigar. Every guilty wretch who smokes a non-union cigar will be fined or otherwise punished. Viscount Hayashi, the new Japanese Ambassador to Great Britain, is a man of fine culture. He speaks English with mere traces of the trace of a foreign accent. His reading has been wide, and has led him to translate many notable foreign works into Japanese. Portugal is the most illiterate country in Europe; nearly sixty-eight per cent. of her population cannot write. In Italy the proportion of illiterates is fifty-three per cent.; in Russia, thirty-six per cent.; in Spain nine per cent., and in Britain, not quite four per cent.

# THE KING'S REGULATIONS

### ORDERS THAT THE SOLDIER NEVER OBEYS.

#### Officers Set Their Subordinates the Example of Law-Breaking.

The soldier is generally looked on as the personification of obedience, and it will therefore come as a revelation to many to be told that some of the most stringent orders in the Service are not only not obeyed by the soldier but are openly set at defiance by him.

First among these comes the order prohibiting a soldier marrying without the consent of his commanding officer. Some do apply for leave and obtain it, but many who are not qualified for the married life ignore all regulations on the subject and enter into the nuptial state without leave or license from any of their superiors. The lot of the soldier being recognized, he has only his pay with which to support his wife, and this is barely enough to keep himself, without adding further to his responsibilities.

When uniform is issued to the men they are strictly forbidden to alter it in any way, under penalty of severe punishment; yet without more ado they take the articles straight to the tailor's shop and get them altered to suit their wayward fancies. Now and then an example is made of one of these law-breakers, but, as a rule, the order is more honored in the breach than in the observance.

### AN INCREDIBLE SITUATION

#### A PERPETUAL BURNING RAILWAY STATION.

##### A Fire Near Glasgow, Scotland, Which Cannot Be Extinguished.

It is not generally known that in Scotland, not more than three miles out of Glasgow, there is a fire raging at a railway station which has been going on for months, and notwithstanding that tons of water have been poured upon this insidious fire it cannot be put out. It seems incredible, but it is nevertheless true.

The details are as follows: Several months ago a waste piece of ground close to the station was wanted by the railway company as a siding. The level of this ground was too low, so trucks loaded with shale which had been put out of the necessary level. A large proportion of this refuse consisted of rotting vegetation, and in the course of a little time it heated to such an extent that combustion set in and started not only a smouldering fire, but flames actually burst through the ground.

Attempts were made to quench this fire, but it was thought, after several weeks of hard work and tons of water, that it had been put out. What was the surprise, however, to see it break out afresh in another place and nearer the station. Fears then began to be felt for the safety of the station buildings, especially as the main double line to important coast and country towns.

LED THROUGH IT. Fresh energy was then brought to bear and much more water was poured on this fire, which seemed to have been extinguished, but from the volume of steam and smoke issuing from innumerable crevices it was seen that the fire demon was resisting all efforts, and was slowly creeping nearer and nearer to the foundations of the railway station.

It was now whispered and soon became known that the station had originally been built upon a sort of shale which came out of the mines in the near neighborhood years ago. These shale mounds have been known to take years burning right through, and the stench from them is anything but pleasant.

Now, when it became known that the fire referred to was gradually eating its way to the foundations of the station, a mild sort of alarm had been given, not only by the railway company, but also by the suburban station. For the mines have been worked out, and hundreds of beautiful villas have arisen out of their ashes—so to speak.

The fire gained ground every day, until by aid of it reached beneath one of the platforms, and any day thereafter might be seen the novelty of a crowd of people waiting on a platform from the chimneys and crevices of which were arising in many places jets of steam.

### FROM THE FIRE BELOW.

Such a volume of water was kept continually playing upon it that it was prevented from showing aboveground, but any casual observer could see the evidences of the great heat below.

In time it was observed that the foundations of the station were settling and cracking and twisting in many places, and all sorts of efforts had to be resorted to to keep the buildings from being permanently injured. At this present moment, as these lines are being panned, the fire has reached under the main line of the track, and it is one of the curiosities of the neighborhood to see the jets of steam and smoke issuing from between the sleepers.

It is now a foregone conclusion that the fire cannot be extinguished, and it is being left to have its own sweet way and burn itself out. When this will happen nobody knows, as there is a large part of the foundations of the station not yet reached, and as this fire is going on for many months it is quite probable that it will go on sapping under the station until the buildings tumble about the passengers' ears—London Tit-Bits.

When a man is too accommodating he is apt to become a nuisance.

# THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

### INTERNATIONAL LESSON, JAN. 24.

#### Text of the Lesson, Luke iv, 16-30. Golden Text, John i, 11.

"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised and we esteemed Him not." "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came into His own and His own received Him not" (Isa. liii, 3; John i, 10, 11). He knew it would be so and yet He came, and became a son of man that we might become sons of God. For us He suffered and died; with Him we must die and suffer if we would reign with Him (Heb. ii, 14-18).

Having met the wild beasts and the devil in the wilderness, and having overcome by the word of God, He returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, but not until he returned to where John the Baptist was baptizing and John had pointed Him out as the Lamb of God, and Andrew, Simon, Philip and Nathanael had become His disciples. It is probable also that He changed the water to wine at Cana, went to Jerusalem to the Passover, cleansed the temple, met Nicodemus and the woman of Samaria and healed the nobleman's son at Capernaum before the incidents of our lesson occurred at Nazareth. See John i, 19, to iv, 54.

That He had been brought up at Nazareth would not add to His reputation, judging from John i, 46. Let all such as live at some Nazareth take courage. It is not our environment that mars or makes us, else Adam and Eve would never have fallen. The expression "brought up" is sometimes translated "fed" or "nourished" (Matt. vi, 26; Luke xii, 24; Rev. xii, 6-14) and may suggest in addition to physical growth, a nourishing by God with His word and spirit, and a training or education by His providences.

It was His Sabbath day custom always to be in the place of worship on that day, even though the spiritual benefit, apart from that derived from the reading of the Scriptures, may have been very small. If the statement implies that it was also His custom to read the Scriptures, then we are increasingly interested to see Him, as a young man, always taking part in the services. As He unrolled the scroll of the prophet Isaiah He found what we call Isa. lxi, 1, and He must have read, according to Neh. viii, 8, distinctly giving the sense and causing them to understand the reading. He read a very brief portion, stopped in the midst of a sentence, folded up the scroll, or rolled up the scroll, gave it to the minister, sat down and began to say, "This day is the Scripture fulfilled in your ears" (verse 21). He evidently had no difficulty in finding the place, but this is a matter which is not easy to a good many believers to-day. As to the portion He read, is it not a complete summary of the glorious gospel of the blessed God? (I Tim. i, 11.) Glad tidings for the poor, the broken-hearted, the captives, the blind, the bruised (Isa. lvi, 15; lxxvi, 2; Matt. v, 3; ix, 27; Ps. xxxiv, 18; II, 17; Luke xiii, 27; ix, 39; xiii, 10; Rev. ii, 17). The acceptable year is still with us—it is still true that "now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation" (II Cor. vi, 2; John v, 25). The glorious truth is worthy of every one's acceptance that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (I Tim. i, 15). As He took His seat all eyes were fastened on Him. Was it because of the way He read, or was it because of what He next read? Had He read the next sentence He could not have said that it was then fulfilled, for the day of vengeance is not yet. Redemption for Israel and vengeance upon her enemies, so often associated in Scripture, will be at His second coming (Isa. xxxiv, 8; xxxv, 1; Jer. li, 7; Luke xxi, 24-28; II Thess. i, 7-9). Only the first words of His discourse are given, but as one has said, "It must have been rich in matter and sweet in manner." He was full of grace and truth, full of the Spirit, and it was the Father who spoke through Him (John i, 14; xi, 40).

He sees the unbelief and enmity in their hearts, and He reminds them that in the days of Elijah and Elisha not many benefited by the teaching or the miraculous powers of God's servants. He knew that Nazareth considered Him Joseph's son and that His townspeople would not receive Him, but it was in the plan that He should thus offer Himself to them.

What great blessing was within the reach of Nazareth that day, but what blindness possessed her! She knew not the time of her visitation, the God of Israel, had been in her midst unknown, His glory veiled in human form these many years, and now He reveals Himself as Jesus, their brother, the long-foretold Messiah of Israel, but they will not receive Him, for to them He is only "Joseph's son." Oh, how great and all important the question, "What think ye of Christ, whose Son is He?" (Matt. xxi, 27). They would have killed Him, His hour to die had not yet come, and no man could take His life (John x, 18).

From the time that the devil told that the seed of the woman would conquer him for ever, and to destroy that seed given up the conflict, but "the Lamb shall overcome" for He is Lord of lords and King of kings" (Rev. xvii, 14). He quitted through their midst and went down to Capernaum and taught them on the Sabbath day, and while they were astonished at His teaching they did not receive Him (Matt. x, 23, 24).