

## **The Certainty of the World's Conversion**

A sermon delivered at Covenant Presbyterian Church  
at the first worship service held in the Rock Springs Road facility,  
Sunday, July 5, 1998  
Soli Deo Gloria!

### *Introduction*

The full significance this morning's service for our nation, Southern Presbyterian history, our congregation, and Christianity in the west is yet to be determined. Future generations will in all likelihood record that the establishment of Reformed congregations like Covenant were instrumental in the revival of Christianity in the 21st century. For what we have in this building is the erection of another foothold for the conversion of the world to Jesus Christ. It represents not only ten years of hard work, sacrifice, and commitment, but also indicates the expansion of historic, biblical, and reformed Christianity in a growing number of God-fearing families across our land. May God be praised, his kingdom built, and our congregation used to extend his unconquerable and glorious kingdom!

The goal of Covenant Presbyterian is and will always be the discipling of the nations to Jesus Christ. Accordingly, our work has just begun. It will not end until the last person under our influence whom God intends to save is confronted with the claims of the gospel and submits to the Lord Jesus. This building affords us with a more efficient tool for carrying on the work, but it is not the final goal of our congregational experience. I stress this to ward off any feelings on your part that we can now rest a while or take our ease. On the contrary, in granting us a shiny new building, King Jesus certifies that he has loftier intentions for this group. He would have us look outwardly with greater earnestness and compassion toward the condition of the culture around us. He calls upon us to shoulder our part in the conversion of this area to his cause.

With the significance of this event in mind, as well as the tremendous work ahead of our congregation, I want us to consider the exhilarating theme: "The Certainty of the World's Conversion." The truth of this proposition is well-attested in Scripture, taught in our Standards, and forms one of the foundational beliefs of this church. Sadly, faith in the power of Christ's gospel to accomplish the conversion of the world is rare today. The announcement of this theme in most assemblies would create a sensation, not because the people love to hear about the victories of Jesus Christ promised in Scripture, but because the majority of Christians view the future with pessimism and despair. For many, the best thing about future history is that Christians will be raptured out of it. If you are to overcome this pessimism, maintain sound doctrine, stand for Christ, plan and labor for the future, and resist compromise and cowardice,

you must passionately believe that the gospel and kingdom of Jesus Christ is destined to convert this entire globe, and progressively usher in a golden age of righteousness, peace, and prosperity that will mean the salvation of the world under the reign of Messiah the Prince. To take the future for Christ, Covenant Presbyterian Church, you must live for it. You will be persuaded to live for it, however, only if you believe that it belongs to Christ, holds glorious things for his people and this world, and that you are his agents to extend the knowledge of his salvation to all the nations of the earth.

My address consists of three parts: a consideration of the biblical evidence for the certainty of the world's conversion; an explanation of the modern loss of faith in the gospel and confidence about the future; and a challenge to this congregation to pray, labor, and evangelize for that great day when the knowledge of the Lord's glory fills the earth as the waters cover the seas.

### **The Biblical Evidence for the Certainty of the World's Conversion**

(1) *The work of Christ our Savior destroyed the power of Satan and his kingdom, thereby guaranteeing the progressive triumph of the gospel.* Scripture teaches this in several ways. First, in Genesis 3:15, we have the gracious promise that a coming Deliverer will *crush* Satan's head. The seed of the woman, whom progressive revelation shows to be Jesus Christ, will deliver a death blow to Satan. In this promise God guarantees that Satan will not prevail in human history. Yes, he deluded Adam and Eve and introduced a principle of evil and revolt against God in the world. Yet a Savior is coming who will eradicate that evil by effectively dealing with its source, the Devil. The New Testament therefore teaches that the *destruction* of Satan is the reason for Christ's *first advent*. "To this end was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8; ASV). Accordingly, Jesus came announcing the defeat of Satan. In John 12:30-33, in what is perhaps the clearest teaching on this subject found in the New Testament, Jesus not only tells us that he will end Satan's tyranny over the world, but also reveals the time of his victory. "Jesus answered and said, This voice hath not come for my sake, but for your sakes. Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself. But this he said, signifying by what manner of death he should die" (John 12:30-33; ASV). The death of Christ ended Satan's stranglehold over the world; he was *cast out* from his former position of power and dominion. Moreover, the New Testament states that through his death, Christ destroyed Satan and brought him to nothing, shame, and degradation. "Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death he might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Hebrews 2:14; ASV). And for this reason, the New Testament presents Satan as currently bound, tied up, or severely limited in his

power and influence. Jesus expressly stated that he was able to do his mighty works, cast out devils, and set up his kingdom because he had bound the strong man, Satan. "But if I by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you. Or how can one enter into the house of the strong *man*, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong *man*? and then he will spoil his house" (Matthew 12:28,29; ASV). Regarding history and the Church, then, Satan is effectively bound. Yes, he still goes about as roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, but he has been defanged. When believers resist him in faith, he must flee. He is a defeated foe. When God effectually calls, he cannot resist the faithful proclamation of the gospel of the risen, enthroned Christ. His house will be progressively spoiled through the course of history. We can now understand the binding of Satan mentioned by John in Revelation 20. Christ bound Satan 2,000 years ago at the inception of his kingdom, so that he might deceive the nations *en masse* no longer. Christ is now King of the nations and Head of the Church. Satan's power is restrained and his dominion broken *so that the gospel might be successful and Christ's kingdom established universal and victorious*. Now, we must insist that the conversion of the world to Christ is the necessary outcome of Satan's defeat. He is crushed, cast out, defeated, destroyed, and bound. Why? So that the kingdom of God might be erected upon the ancient ruins, the desert blossom as the rose, and the world converted to the worship of the one true God, and his Son Jesus Christ.

(2) *The Old Testament covenants of promise look forward to the universal triumph of the kingdom of God in history*. God promises Abraham that through his seed, whom we know from the New Testament to be Christ (cf. Galatians 3:16), all the families of the earth will be blessed (Genesis 12:3; 17:16; 22:18). "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. Because thou hast obeyed my voice" (Genesis 22:18; ASV). What God did in Israel, the wise laws, saving promises, and covenant relationship, was intended as a model for all the nations (Deuteronomy 4:6-8). Moses foretold a day when the saving relationship Israel enjoyed with God would be opened up to the Gentiles (Deuteronomy 32:43). Through the prophets, God announced that in the new covenant era, the saving knowledge of the Lord will permeate the earth. "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know Jehovah; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Jehovah: for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more" (Jeremiah 31:34; ASV). Amos looked forward to the rebuilding of the tabernacle of David, not as a Jewish kingdom, but as the worldwide Church of the one true God, in which Jew and Gentile are united in one body under Christ the Head (Amos 9:11). The Old Testament covenants of promise, then, anticipate a day when the saving work of God will be worldwide. God's people understood that the scope of redemption was broader than the tents of Jacob. The world was destined to be

converted to the one true God and to share in the covenant blessings enjoyed by Israel. Jehovah would eventually gather and bless all the families of the earth into one spiritual kingdom, the Church of Jesus Christ.

(3) *Old Testament prophecy promises the progressive conversion of the world under the reign of Messiah the Prince.* In Psalm 22:27,28, David prophesies that all the families of the world will be converted to the Lord and come to worship him. This is not a representative number of families from all nations, but all the families in all the nations. In Psalm 72, Christ is promised dominion over the nations, and all his enemies will lick the dust. Under his reign, the world will know justice, peace, and prosperity. All the nations will serve the Messiah. "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, And from the River unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; And his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall render tribute: The kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; All nations shall serve him" (Psalm 72:8-11; ASV). Numerous Old Testament prophecies reveal that the reign of the Messiah will be universal, comprehensive, and exclusive. Isaiah writes that of the increase of his government and peace there will never be an end (Isaiah 9:7). Daniel promises that the Messiah kingdom's will be established in the days of the Roman empire (Daniel 2:44,45), and that under his reign, all the nations will come and serve him. "I saw in the night-visions, and, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man, and he came even to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Daniel 7:13,14; ASV). Christ came up to the Ancient of Days occurred when he ascended on high, and received from the Father the promised dominion and kingdom as a reward for his obedience, suffering, and death. Micah elevates our conception of the universal glory of the Messiah's reign by stating that he "will be great to the ends of the earth" and bring peace to the nations (Micah 5:4,5). Isaiah and Habakkuk promise that the whole earth shall be filled with the knowledge of God's glory as the waters cover the seas (Isaiah 11:9; Habakkuk 2:14). The Messiah will bring salvation to the ends of the earth (Isaiah 49:6). Kings and queens will gladly reign for his glory and to promote his cause (Isaiah 49:23). The abundance of the world will be converted to the kingdom of God (Isaiah 60:5). So many men will be converted to Christ and his Church become so prosperous that her gates will not be shut day or night because of the continual procession of kings and men into her gates (Isaiah 60:11). The nation that refuses to serve the Messiah will be ground to dust (Isaiah 60:12). All the nations will worship the Lord (Isaiah 66:22). Ezekiel

promises that the growth of the kingdom of God will be like a stream that gets deeper and wider over the course of history (47:1-6). Zechariah writes that under his reign every area of life will be dedicated to the service of Jehovah (14:16-21). Malachi closes the Old Testament period by promising a day when incense will be offered to the Lord in every place, indicative of the universal worship of God, and that the coming Christ will destroy all his enemies, root and branch, and his people made victorious in his train (Mal. 1:11; 4:1-3).

*(4) The New Testament promises nothing less than the conversion of the world to Jesus Christ and the establishment of the Messiah's kingdom victorious over all.* We learn Jesus' perspective on the future of the kingdom from what are commonly called "the kingdom parables" (Matthew 13:31-33). In both the mustard seed and leaven metaphors, Jesus reveals that his kingdom will fill the earth *pervasively over time*. The world will gradually become converted by his gospel which will permeate every area of human life. The kingdom will not come in one day suddenly, or through a display of military might, as is often claimed by popular premillennialists, but through slow and steady growth culminating in total victory. In the great commission, we learn how such a radical change in world history will occur (Matthew 28:18-20). Because Jesus has fulfilled the Father's will, conquered and cast out Satan, and is now enthroned at the right hand of God, the nations will be converted to him. They belong to him by the solemn oath and covenant of his Father (Psalm 2). He has all authority and all power by which to make them his own. For all intents and purposes, he is the only One left standing on the battlefield. His robes are dipped in blood from conquering his enemies, dispossessing Satan, and laying the foundations of a worldwide kingdom that will progressively change the face of the world (Isaiah 63:3). Christ has now entered his glory and universal dominion over men and nations (Luke 24:26; Ephesians 1:19-23). He is King of every king, Lord of every lord (1 Timothy 6:15). Every knee will bow to him and every tongue confess that he is Lord (Philippians 2:7-8). He will reign from God's right hand until all his enemies are subdued under his feet (1 Corinthians 15:24-26; Hebrews 10:12,13). He will not return from his exalted state until all his enemies are defeated, the gospel successful, and the world converted.

The New Testament is clear. Christ's present enthronement and reign will result in the conversion of the world. Christ gave the great commission to the Church not as busy work, an idealistic dream, or as an exaggerated claim, but as a command and duty. It is his will that the nations be discipled, Christianized, transformed from rebels into worshippers of God. His power and dominion guarantee that this will take place. The two-edged sword coming out of his mouth, a metaphor for the power and authority of Christ standing behind the faithful preaching of his Word, will bring healing to the world and judge all those who refuse to bow to his reign

(Revelation 1:16). Accordingly, it was the apostolic expectation that the proclamation of the gospel would result in obedience to the faith in all nations. "Through whom we received grace and apostleship, unto obedience of faith among all the nations, for his name's sake" (Romans 1:5; ASV). The apostles firmly believed that the preaching of the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, and that it would demolish strongholds and every opposition to the kingdom of Jesus Christ (Romans 1:16; 2 Corinthians 10:5).

The biblical evidence for the certainty of the world's conversion to Christ is compelling and clear. It is one of the most regularly attested doctrines in God's Word, and therefore every man who professes to believe Scripture's teaching must believe that the reign of Christ is destined to conquer the entire globe by the faithful preaching of the gospel. We cannot compromise at this point. Either we will construct our view of the future from the clear texts of Scripture that promise victory and dominion for Christ and the gospel before his return at the conclusion of human history, or we will construct competing systems of eschatology that lack any sanction from Christ and his apostles.

### **The Church's Loss of Faith in the Certainty of the World's Conversion to Christ**

I must insist that the view I have presented to you, known commonly as postmillennialism, has been the historic view of the Christian Church in her more faithful periods, and is certainly the majoritarian view of the Presbyterian Church over the past 400 years. Our own Southern Presbyterian heritage is predominantly postmillennial, not just a theoretical optimism, or a general feeling that everything will turn out fine in the end, but a concrete, systematic, and specific expectation that this world will be converted to Jesus Christ *before he returns again*, through the ongoing ministry of faithful churches dedicated to the Great Commission. Many segments of the Church, Presbyterian and otherwise, have abandoned this hope, and there are several reasons why.

*(1) To our shame, we have lost our faith in the transforming power of the gospel.* Few Christians sincerely believe that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the most powerful force on this planet. We are willing to give the gospel a certain relevance and power in a few scattered individuals, but what we see it do in a few, we do not believe it can do in the majority. In so thinking, we self-consciously believe that the forces of evil are too powerful to be dislodged, unbelief too stubborn to be overcome, and unbelieving human authorities too numerous and well organized to be resisted on a broad scale successfully. This loss of faith in the power of the gospel is outright rebellion against Christ, treason against our Prince, and faithlessness to our solemn charge. If Christ has given us a command and instructed us to have a certain expectation,

not to obey and believe is sin, betrayal, and cowardice. The fruit of our unbelief is the pagan culture of these United States. Christ has not done a mighty work here in recent times because of our unbelief. We have a culture of our own creation, the creation of an unbelieving, ashamed, and compromised Church that would rather be tolerated, respected, and prosperous than confront wickedness in high places, call heresy heresy, and unashamedly stand for Christ's interests regardless of how the newspapers, general public, or even its members respond.

(2) *We have constructed various eschatologies that undermine the historic faith of the Christian Church, our Standards, and the plain teachings of Scripture.* Of course, I am speaking here specifically of premillennial and amillennial eschatology. These have in common their lack of faith that the gospel of Christ will convert the world to Jesus Christ prior to his Second Coming. The central error of historic premillennialism is its the reign of Christ awaits a future millennium period, and that the world right now remains under the practical domination of Satan and evil. Jesus must return to earth before his kingdom can be set up. The most obvious error here is the New Testament's constant teaching that Christ actively reigns now and its insistence that the Spirit and Word of God are more than sufficient to demolish every stronghold raised in opposition to Christ. Moreover, there is no gap between the Ascension of Christ and his active rule over the world in New Testament eschatology. The moment Christ ascended to his Father, he took the helm of world history, and has been charting a course of gospel success and kingdom growth until he returns to consummate his work, deal with the last enemy, death, and turn over a victorious kingdom to his Father.

Amillennialism errs not with respect to the timing of Christ's kingdom, for with postmillennialism it affirms that the millennial reign of Jesus Christ is ongoing, but it has mistaken views of its nature and effects. For it would so spiritualize the reign of Christ as to make it invisible. The millennial reign of Christ, amillennialism claims, goes on in the hearts of believers, and especially with the disembodied souls of believers who reign in heaven with Christ, but it has little if any ramifications for human history. The wheat and tares will grow side by side until there are only a few strands of wheat left. Scripture, history, and experience unite to refute this notion of Christ's kingdom. Old Testament prophecy portrays the reign of Christ as bringing righteousness, peace, prosperity, and longevity to men and nations *this side of heaven*. Every area of life will be Christianized under his reign. History is replete with instances when the Christian faith waxed bold and confident and gained the ascendancy. What has occurred in those times? Periods of kingdom growth does not merely result in prayer, Bible study, and church attendance, but in an increase in social justice, Christian morality, scientific advantages, and health standards. And what of our own experience? Whenever men enter the kingdom of Christ,

it is not just their inner life that is changed. It is true that all change begins there for only a good tree can bring forth good fruit. But what sort of fruit? Men practice honesty and industry in their vocations. They tithe, avoid unnecessary debt, and save for the future. They love their wives and train their children. They resist evil in the political realm, create new parties, institutions, and civilizations based on the law of God, and call all men to base their thinking and living on the principles of God's Word. There is no such thing as an invisible rule of Christ, if by invisible one means a rule with little manifestations beyond those in the private lives of believers.

Both of these views have infected the Church with their errors, dangers, and implications. When she adopts premillennialism, she gives up history this side of the Second Coming to Satan, and wistfully awaits for some additional exercise of the Saviour's power that will accomplish what his Spirit and Word cannot. When she chooses to dwell in the halfway house of amillennialism, she lessens the comprehensiveness of Christ's claims upon all men in all walks of life and inevitably encourages pietism in her members and relativism in her society. There are many Christian men who hold to these positions. I am not judging men but their systems. Both of these systems are found wanting when measured by the Bible. Both abandon the Scriptural contention that Christ has given the Church everything she needs to make disciples of the nations and convert this world to himself. Neither can consistently encourage strenuous evangelistic efforts, personal piety, and national submission to Jesus Christ. It is my prayer that the Lord will soon bring his Church out of the malaise that these two views generate, and restore her to a rigorous faith in the power and all-sufficiency of his Word to make every citadel of unbelief a bastion of righteousness.

*(3) We lack a love for Christ and his gospel that will motivate us to believe and obey him.* We love many things: computers, movies, pizza, cars, vacations, and 401(k)'s. Our lives are often centered around them as if they were the reason for our existence. We live in a self-absorbed culture, and many professing Christians live self-absorbed lives. However, the sincerity of your claim to be a Christian is questionable at best if self, pleasure, ease, and fun is your dominating principle. Believers balance legitimate earthly concerns with genuine interest and involvement in the cause of Christ. Like Christ, the believer has the world on his heart, and he is first and foremost a servant and soldier of his kingdom. Every time men commit iniquity, judge unrighteously, fornicate, lie, and steal, they strike a blow against Christ, his kingdom and gospel. They rebel against the enthroned Monarch. The Christian feels this insult against Christ *personally*, and it *stirs him up to stand for the interest of his dearly loved Master*. No true believer can sit idly or carelessly by while the wicked blaspheme, ignore, and disobey the Lord. Love for Christ stimulates the believer to labor, action, and energy. It leads him to obey Christ,

spread his Word, and labor to see all men within the sphere of our influence bow the knee to him. What characterizes the Christian community? Unfortunately, as iniquity has increased, the love of many has diminished. Instead of standing for Christ in the face of wickedness, we have compromised with the world. When faced with pluralistic claims, we water down the gospel, preach tolerance, ignore his law, revise our catechisms, and present a kinder, gentler Jesus. When in the presence of known wicked leaders, we do not rebuke, confront, and persuade of the need of faith and repentance, and call upon the kings of the earth to kiss the Son. When teaching contrary to apostolic doctrine arises in our congregations, we do not resist error for fear of hurting feelings. The ways in which the modern Church shows a general indifference to Christ and his claims is truly astounding. How can we stand for One we do not love? Will we be willing to lose friends if Christ is not our most prize possession? Will we suffer reproach when we love the praise of men more than the commendation of Jesus? Will we preach his Word faithfully, consistently, and uncompromisingly when we are told that sermonettes, drama, and concerts work better? If we are to influence our corner of the vineyard for Christ, we must love him passionately, devotedly, and supremely.

(4) *We lack a sense of history.* When arguments fail, opponents of postmillennialism reach for the newspaper. "Things are just too bad for your view to be true." Praise the Lord that he does not run history by the newspapers but by his sovereign counsels, and that our faith is never the limit of his power and activity. Scripture teaches that God gives his enemies all the advantages: power, prestige, and position. The wicked spreads his arms like a great tree. He digs a pit for the righteous. He schemes against Christ. He mocks heaven. It looks as if he will certainly prevail. God, however, loves to look like a fool in the eyes of his enemies. He loves it when the wicked become assured of victory *and his people begin to feel their own impotence to do anything about it.* Why? So that when he comes down in history to blow them over, cause them to fall into their own pits, and bring all their counsels to nothing, he will receive all the credit, praise, and glory for himself. He will not share his glory with another. I would hold to you that it is at such a bleak time in history that we are in a position to see God work. For every Christian certainly feels the weight of evil in the world today. Wickedness is entrenched and exalted on every side. The gospel is making no great inroads into this culture. What can the righteous do, is the universal cry? "Much" is the biblical answer. We can remember that God's power is made perfect in our period of weakness. We must repent of our failure to stand for Christ, indifference to his kingdom, and unbelief in his gospel. We must cry out to God for mercy, deliverance, and intervention. We must humbly remind the Father that the interests of his Son's kingdom are at stake, his people scattered, and his truth trampled. And then we must

rededicate ourselves to the great work to which he has called us, in faith, not trusting in our own wisdom, strength, or ability, but in the promises and power of God to defend his own name, build his Church, and convert even his enemies. My dear congregation, these dark days in which God has raised you up are exciting for the potential they hold for the extension of Christ's kingdom and gospel. Philosophy has admitted defeat. It no longer asks the big questions because it assumes there are no certain answers. Medicine and science have made the world not a better place, but a depersonalized one that lacks meaning and purpose, where human life is snuffed out at its conception and the gene pool has become a playground for would-be gods. Statism has fared no better. For while every new social problem results in a new state department, segments of our population now realize the futility and danger of a messianic state. It is at just such an hour that you come positing a new and old worldview, one in which human life has dignity, purpose, and meaning, the state enjoys success in submission to Messiah the Prince, and philosophy grounds its pursuit of knowledge in the self-attesting authority of Scripture. You alone possess a world and life view that gives meaning to human experience, secures freedom for mankind, and provides coherence, order, and rationality for man.

### **The Role of Covenant Presbyterian Church in the Conversion of the World**

*(1) The conversion of the world will require your faithfulness as an ambassador for Christ.* As a member of Christ's Church, you serve under the banner of the King. You are his emissary to an apostate culture. You may not be a preacher, missionary, or teacher. But you are all missionaries in the sense that the Church functions as a great missionary society, the divine institution headed by Christ through which he intends to convert the world to himself. Where God places you, there you must stand. Your life, labors, and testimony are "for me to live is Christ." Your prayer is to see men converted by the gospel, our national institutions bow to Christ, and our Church filled with God-fearing men and women. You are Christ's representative, his agent for the salvation of the nations. This is an identify, calling, and command that must go with you in every sphere of your life. I challenge us to recommit ourselves to evangelism this morning. Every man under the sound of my voice must immediately vow to do more to confront men with the saving claims of Jesus Christ. For some of you, this will require you to overcome your fears of witnessing for Christ. For others, it will mean increased financial aid to this Church and her missions programs. For all of us, it will mean increased prayer for faithful pastors, missionaries, and the general success of the gospel.

*(2) The conversion of the world will require a big view of God, Christ, and the gospel.* I have given you what is seemingly an impossible task. The glory of the Christian faith, however, is that we do not measure God by the boundaries of our imagination and reason. He is able to do

exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or image. It is true that conversion of the world to Christ, an unparalleled era of gospel increase, social righteousness, and world peace is hard to comprehend in our world today. To be Christ's faithful ambassador, you must believe that weakness of God is stronger than men. You must believe that Christ is able to exert his rule in men's hearts and cultures today as he once did in the barbarian hordes of northern Europe, changing them from idolaters, bloodthirsty savages into a Christian culture that ruled Europe for a millennium. You must believe that the power of God is able to change the course of human history as it did 500 years ago when the tyranny of the medieval papacy gave way to the gospel under the simple preaching of Huss, Wycliffe, Luther, Calvin, and Bucer. Again, you must believe that the gospel can do here what it did in London during the great revivals of Whitefield and Wesley, here under the powerful preaching of Samuel Davies and the Tennents, and most recently in the establishment of a Christian culture as we enjoyed in our beloved South. In short, you must believe that God is more powerful than Satan, grace than sin, and truth than error. Boldness, courage, diligence, conviction, and single-mindedness of purpose are just a few of the character traits that are produced by a God-centered view of life and history. God uses men and women of courage and conviction to change the world for Christ and lay lasting foundations for cultures based self-consciously on the Word of God.

(3) *The conversion of the world is attainable through faith, prayer, and diligence.* It will take great faith, however; faith in the power of God, the all-sufficiency of his Word, and the power of his Spirit. It will take prayer. When a generation of the Church arises that learns how to pray biblically, for Jerusalem to be a praise in the earth, the forces of the Gentiles converted, the Jewish nation saved, and the will of God to be done on earth as it is in heaven, there will be a monumental leap in the progress of the gospel. You cannot expect the world to be converted to Christ as long as your prayer life is exhausted on your own needs and desires. The success of Christ's kingdom must be your daily cry to God. He will hear, answer, and come to your aid speedily. You must be diligent. I hope you are committed to battlefield Christian living. Christendom is crying out for dedicated soldiers to resume the battle for the subjugation of the planet to Jesus Christ. Her breath and cries come in short gasps. The Augustine's, Wycliffe's, and Machen's of bygone days are conspicuously absent. The appointed watchers are sitting at the fires of the enemies, making ideological and ethical treaties with her enemies. The enemy is numerous, crafty, and well-qualified to carry out the work of his desperate commander. It is through much tribulation that the great work of the kingdom will continue in our day, and it is my prayer that the Lord will raise you up, members of Covenant Presbyterian Church, to fight the good fight of faith.

*(4) The conversion of the world is worthy of your sacrifice.* The effort is worth it. The glory of the triune God is the goal of the world's conversion to Christ. This ought to serve as a sufficient motivation for you to do your part in the great task ahead of us. For as lover of God, your highest reward is to see men bowing to Christ, repenting of their sins, and believing the gospel. More than material advantages, you want to see our nation recognize the Lordship of Jesus Christ, repudiate ungodly laws, abandon imperialism, and our leaders become nursing fathers and mothers to the Christian Church. Your friends and neighbors will certainly be impacted by the gospel. Home Bible studies will break out over the land. Prayer will be offered up in every place. Eventually, we shall see the tide turn. The dominion of Christ, power of his gospel, and presence of the Holy Spirit guarantee it. And if all of these things are still insufficient reasons for you to enlist fully in the great work of discipling the nations, may I remind you that the commendation of the Master awaits you for a lifetime of faithful service in his cause. His words, "Well done, good and faithful servant," is worth all the pain, sacrifice, and abuse we will take in our efforts to see this world converted to the gospel. It is my prayer that the Lord will give us the faith to see this great day from a distance, and a heart to throw ourselves fully into the fray. It is a glorious battle; we serve a glorious Commander; and the outcome is certain.

In conclusion, I again place before you a solemn charge from one of our greatest forefathers in the faith, James Henley Thornwell of the Southern Presbyterian Church. His words remain as compelling and exciting to contemplate as they did when he first penned them over 140 years ago. May they cause our hearts to pulse with love for Jesus Christ and his wondrous gospel of grace, and stimulate us to increased action.

If the Church could be aroused to a deeper sense of the glory that awaits her, she would enter with a warmer spirit into the struggles that are before her. Hope would inspire ardour. She would even now arise from the dust, and like the eagle plume her pinions for loftier flights than she has yet taken. What she wants, and what every individual Christian wants, is faith - faith in her sublime vocation, in her Divine resources, in the presence and efficacy of the Spirit that dwells in her - faith in the truth, faith in Jesus, and faith in God. With such a faith there would be no need to speculate about the future. That would speedily reveal itself. It is our unfaithfulness, our negligence and unbelief, our low and carnal aims, that retard the chariot of the Redeemer. The Bridegroom cannot come until the Bride has made herself ready. Let the Church be in earnest after greater holiness in her own members, and in faith and love undertake the conquest of the world, and she will soon settle the question whether her resources are competent to change the face of the earth.

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