

UNSHAKABLE THINGS

"And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain."
Hebrews 12:27.

When the New Testament was written rebellion and revolution were evident everywhere. Practically everything was affected thereby. In Rome it was power; in Greece it was culture; among the Hebrews it was religion. But the early Christians were not disturbed by the eruptive forces in their midst.

The Epistle to the Hebrews was written at a time of great national turmoil and anxiety. As the author faced the situation, terrible as it was and even more terrible to be, he saw clearly the significance of it all. He knew how to distinguish between the passing and the permanent, the shadow and the substance, the ephemeral and the eternal. So, he urged all who shared his faith to wait with the reverence that faith inspires and see the revelation of the will of God.

This epistle appeals strongly to the intelligent Christian today. There is a very striking similarity between our generation and that one of the long ago. That age was one of great unrest, and so is ours. Many changes are taking place. The things for which many have died, and which we believed could never be removed, have been blown into atoms. In recent years the world has been shaken to its very foundations. We never dreamed of passing through such a period of shaking. We have witnessed an upheaval of many things -- institutions, governments and economic systems -- unprecedented in the history of our race. There have been stupendous changes in governments, industry, economics, morals and religion. Landmarks we deemed eternal have disappeared one after the other. The kingdoms of this world, the opinions of men, and the faith of many have been shaken. So many things have gone down, or are being shaken now, that men are asking: "What next? Is anything going to remain secure amid these convulsions?"

We are living in days of world upheaval and crisis unparalleled. Even a cursory student of world events is impressed by the political turmoil of the nations in our time. Through attacks from without and borings from within, one foundation after another has crumbled. Our age is turbulent with strife, gluttonous with insatiable greed, and drunk with the desire for power. Thrones have collapsed, empires have broken, national boundary lines have been obliterated, nations have been subjugated, and wealth has been confiscated.

Our world is being shaken from its center to its circumference. What we were assured could never happen has happened. Many excellent customs have been discarded like worn-out garments. Family life is being shaken as never before. The faith of many is seriously shaken. In fact, we are in the midst of a religious shaking. The present state of affairs is unprecedented within the memory of the oldest persons among us. Quite naturally, thoughtful people are apprehensive of the outcome.

However, it is ours to rise above the turmoil and see behind it the things that are eternal. The calm confidence which guarantees victory will be ours, if, enriched with wisdom from above, we distinguish between the transient and the abiding, the essential and the accidental, in matters of faith and conduct. There are some things which no catastrophe can touch. Nothing will be shaken or destroyed except that which is temporal, and it is shaken in order that the eternal may be seen and felt in its immovable grandeur and tremendous power. In such a time as this it gives one comfort, strength and hope to come

upon a sentence like this in the Word of God: "That these things which cannot be shaken may remain." There is both comfort and caution in this verse. We are encouraged and inspired when we consider some unshakable things which have stood the test of the fickleness of human nature, the storms and stress of generations, the wars of time, the rise and fall of nations, and the tides of the centuries. Among these unshakable things are : ---

I. The Throne of God.

We have seen other thrones tremble, topple and tumble. We have seen throne after throne fall, and some of them had long been considered most durable. Even the thrones that remain are marked with instability and insecurity. But no matter what may take place in this world, the throne of God cannot be shaken. In Hebrews 1:8 we read: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." The throne of God will stand at the center of this universe forever. Therefore, we should acknowledge His throne and yield allegiance to the throne and government of the living God. We need to be reminded again and again that each of us must give a personal account to Him for all our words and deeds. Also, that this world is covered with the ashes of peoples who have repudiated God. The present is a call to turn our faces toward God. Other crises in history have brought people to their knees and caused the people of God to cry out for Divine help, but today we seem to think that we are going to squirm out of the present dilemma and find a solution in ourselves for our problems. But the solution of our problems is not in men. It is in God alone. In this hour we need God.

"Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see:
O Thou who changest not, abide with me."

II. The Love of God.

One of the most precious things in life is human friendship and love. History's darkest pages are illumined by the stories of the heroism and fidelity of friends and lovers. Yet the fact remains that human love is among those things which can be shaken. But, not so with God's love.

From the beginning man disregarded the benevolent purpose of God. Consequently, the record is one of repeated backsliding, repentance and reinstatement. Without fail, when the bitter experiences were over, the redeeming love was present to heal. Even when the Lord had been shamefully disregarded, His mercies slighted with ingratitude, and the indifference of His people had made a reconciliation seem hopeless, the repeated entreaties of His love were expressed.

God's love is one thing which cannot be shaken. It can never die. When the beloved Apostle, who understood his Master best, gave his final description of God, he simply wrote, "God is love." That is His eternal nature, and nothing human or temporal can change the eternal being and nature of God. In Jeremiah 31:3 we read: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." His love is unshakable. After all, the most precious, most comforting, and most unshakable truth is simply this: "God is love." There is not a day so long, a night so dark, a need so great, a sorrow so pungent, a burden so heavy or a temptation so alluring, but that His grace and love are sufficient.

III. The Word of God.

In Psalm 119:89 we read: "For ever, O Lord, Thy Word is settled in heaven." The Bible is the world's greatest book. It is indestructible. Through the ages men have attempted to destroy the Word of God; but the Bible cannot be destroyed because it came from God and is eternal. In matthew 24:35 we read: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My Words shall not pass away." Isaiah 40:8 tells us that "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the Word of our God shall stand forever." Build your life upon the Word of the Living God. It cannot be shaken. It is the anvil of truth continually wearing out the hammers of criticism that beat upon it. An unknown author left us the following appropriate poem: --

THE ANVIL --- GOD'S WORD

Last eve I paused beside the blacksmith's door,
And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;
Then looking in, I saw upon the floor,
Old hammers, worn with beating years of time.

"How many anvils have you had," said I
"To wear and batter all those hammers so?"
"Just one," said he, and then, with twinkling eye,
"The anvil wears the hammers out, you know."

And so, thought I, the anvil of God's Word,
For ages skeptic blows have beat upon;
Yet, though the noise of falling blows was heard,
The anvil is unharmed, the hammers --- gone.

In his last lingering illness, Sir Walter Scott grew weary of being confined to his bed, and asked for the privilege of sitting once more in his library surrounded by his favorite books. He was placed in a wheel-chair and taken through his favorite study into his library. There he found great satisfaction. Then, he returned to his bed. On the following day he asked for the same privilege. Because he had grown weaker, he was advised not to make the effort. So, turning to his son-in-law, he said, "Then, bring me the book." When he was asked to what book he was referring, he replied, "There's only one book now; it is the Bible." It is still the Book that all men need. Thank God, it is unshakable and eternal.

IV. The Power of the Cross.

Since the day Christ was nailed to the cross on Calvary until the present men have tried to deny the power of the cross. The chief priests and scribes said, "Let Christ descend from the cross, that we may see and believe." The cross has always been offensive to those who sought to make life easy. One of the robbers who was crucified with Jesus said, "If Thou be the Christ, save Thyself and us." He wanted Christ without the cross. This world is becoming more pagan for the same reason. But, we must never forget that a bloodless gospel is a powerless gospel. Christ would not come down from the cross. He had gone there to disclose the criminality of sin, to reveal the redeeming love of God, and to redeem man from sin. Our only hope of redemption from sin is in Jesus Christ, "the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world." We rejoice to say with Paul, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

Christ Jesus is as able to save as He was nineteen centuries ago. He is in no way affected by the march of the centuries. The cross upon which He gave Himself in death for us has lost none of its ancient power. By His glorious gospel and the Holy Spirit, He is still convincing men of sin, drawing them to Himself, and imparting to them pardon and peace, liberty and joy. He has not failed; He is not failing today; He will not fail tomorrow. He is the same in His work yesterday, in His grace today, and in His glory tomorrow. Let us see to it that the messages of our lips and of our lives center in and radiate from the cross that will endure

"Till the sun grows cold,
And the stars are old,
And the leaves of the Judgment Book unfold."