

Prepare^{the} Way

Preparing the Bride of Christ for the return of Christ

Issue No. 105
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The seeds of revival

Hyper-grace candy floss

Marks of the
false gospel

Why marriage
won't fix
your lust
problem

Peter Pollock
Those
early days

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COVER: "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain (John 12:24)."

Talk to us..

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Biting the hand that feeds you

by Grant Phillips

WHAT follows does not apply to everyone of course, but let us take the opportunity to examine ourselves to see if it applies to us.

Let's start with children, and realising that many children don't have the luxury of living in a "normal" family household.

Materially, the parents provide clothing, schooling, transportation, meals, medical needs, a place to sleep, a clean house, laundry services, and much more. They also provide the most important things of all; love, loving discipline and security.

The expected response the parents would appreciate is gratitude; shown by love, obedience and respect. (Notice I said "expected response" for those of you who are not parents.) This does happen, but... as the child grows something happens in many households... rebellion.

It has also been called "growing pains." They begin biting the hand that feeds them. Now this attitude can be anything from mild to very severe, but it does happen.

The parents ask, "Why don't they appreciate what we do for them?" The answer I suppose is that they don't see it. They have become so accustomed to everything being furnished for them, it is expected.

In marriages, adults can be the same way. After a while what is provided by one spouse can be taken for granted by the other.

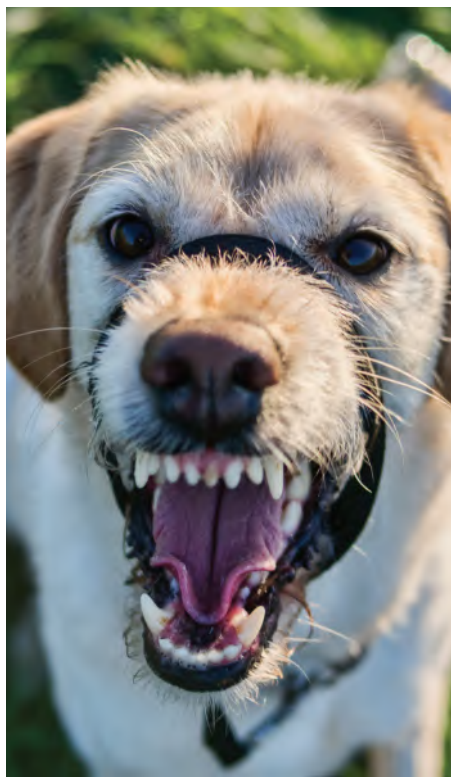
It would make a healthier marriage if both husband and wife would occasionally really consider all the little things their spouse provides for them. However, how often do we not see the blessings because we have grown accustomed to them?

Now let us consider the following passage.

"For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God (Romans 1:20)."

Children spend many years in the household of their parents and become very familiar with all that is provided, even to the point of having eyes but not seeing.

The same is true with adults. As has al-



ready been mentioned, how often we get so used to our relationship; we fail to see the blessings provided by the one who loves us.

Is it possible we may be guilty of taking all the blessings that God has provided us for granted?

Concerning our own body God provides us; eyes to see, ears to hear, a nose to smell, the sense of touch, a mind to think, legs and feet to carry us, arms to hug, and that's just a few things to think about among so much more.

In our home life He provides a spouse to compliment us, children to brag about and emulate us, grandchildren to spoil, a roof over our head, food for our belly, transportation, a job to support us, and much more.

He has given us the beauty of flowers to behold and smell, trees for oxygen, water to quench our thirst, the moon for romance, the sun to keep us warm, a universe that doesn't explode or implode, and this is only the beginning.

The greatest gift of all is God's grace He freely gives. We all rebelled in the Garden of Eden. Along with Adam and Eve, we died spiritually. We are all born with what is called, "an old sin nature." We deserve nothing but eternal death.

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23)."

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 6:23)."

Have you ever been in a situation where someone you love was in serious trouble? Maybe you're thinking of your child. Perhaps someone you love with all your heart was suffering physically. You have said, "If only I could go through that for them. If only I could take it away."

But then there is God's grace.

Even though we are born a sinful people; rebellious and unappreciative, God chose to take our place. Probably all of us at one time or another has desired to take the place of our loved one who is suffering. We can't do that because we're tainted with sin. God can, because only He is holy and without sin. Therefore, He did.

God came into this world, born of a virgin, truly God and truly man. On a Roman cross He bore all our sins. Then three days later He rose from the tomb where they buried Him.

Through this act of infinite love God has taken our judgement upon Himself. All He requires of us is to believe it and accept it. He says,

"Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool (Isaiah 1:18)" and, "Come to me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest (Matthew 11:28)."

That is God's grace.

There is nothing we can do to save ourselves. We can't take the hurt away. We can't take the judgement away. But God can, when we put our trust in His Son, Jesus Christ.

Even though God's grace is available to all, many continue to ignore all that He has done to provide us all we need. He has provided us everything we need materially, and spiritually, and it is all through His Son.

Going back to our first verse in Romans 1:20, if we take the blinkers off and look around us the "individual qualities," "eternal power," and "divine nature" of God is self-evident.

Now we must ask, "Do I see now all that He has provided?" 



Those early days

by Peter Pollock

SO desperately we want God to move! We want revival, true Holy Spirit action.

Often I hear prayer requests asking for a return to those days of the early church. But often we are sadly selective in what aspects of those early days we would want repeated! Even more challenging I would dare to ask, is whether the modern church would actually be up for it?

What we have today is so far removed from what we read in Acts that it would, in fact, be an upheaval and culture shock of too great a magnitude to even contemplate, certainly in the Western world!

“They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and they spoke the word of God with boldness... Those who believed were of one heart and one soul... Neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own... but they had all things in common... With great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of Jesus Christ... and great grace was upon them all...” Just some of the passages in Acts chapter four.

Then in the next chapter, the first 14 verses deals with the testimony of Ananias and Sapphira, an incident, not surprisingly, I have personally never heard anyone preach about. I admit I have occasionally heard it referenced as a sort of fleeting, glancing blow, but never as an indicator or testimony of those times.

It was a Holy Ghost apostolic church,

with gifts and ministries abounding, signs and wonders were commonplace and everyone was absolutely “sold out” for Jesus. This was the true church in all its infant glory.

Ananias and Sapphira (her name, incidentally means grace and beauty) had sold a property but then kept back some of the proceeds. They lied in the process of their carefully planned deception and when Peter discerned, obviously through a word of knowledge, that they had cheated, he confronted them. Yes, Peter took them on!

God had given him the authority and on top of that, he had the conviction, and dare I say, the guts, to do something about it. The consequences were quick. Both members of the guilty party dropped down dead! As always there are consequences with sin.

God is as much in the judgement and separation business as He is in granting pardon and forgiveness to those who acknowledge sin, repent and seek His love and grace in Jesus Christ.

It was out there for all to see. “So a great fear came upon the church and upon all who heard these things... The people esteemed them highly... and believers were increasingly added... multitudes of both men and women” – it’s all there in the scriptures.

Ananias and Sapphira had dared to lie! It was a very serious matter and God shook the place. It was knee-trembling stuff, but it was God and His church in action. And

yes, it was all in the New Testament.

Let’s take a look at the “real church” foundations. It all started at Pentecost and much celebrated in all too few circles, was the arrival of the Holy Spirit and the speaking of tongues. The disciples, unschooled and uneducated in the main, were declaring the gospel in different languages to the glory of God.

This amazed the onlookers for each in their own language understood what was being communicated! Then Peter got up and preached. God had prepared him for the task of delivering the greatest sermon in the history of the church.

We remember the fishing incident early on when Peter responded to Jesus’ instruction to get out there and fish. He had caught nothing that day but suddenly the net was full. He looked into the net, looked at Jesus and in the power of the Holy Spirit came to conviction of sin: “Go away from me, I am a sinful man.”

Jesus responded that now he could become a fisher of men. In other words, you need first to understand your unworthiness before you can truly understand and then preach the Gospel.

The other incident we all remember is when Peter was restored following his denial. Three times Jesus asked him: “Do you love me more than these?” Did Peter love Jesus more than anything else in the world? The answer was affirmative. Now he could feed the sheep!

We need to be truly sold out to Jesus be-

fore when can be effective in the spiritual realm. It's interesting to note that Jesus twice told Peter to "Follow Me." The first early on in their relationship, and the second three years later after his emotional break-down following the denial.

Maybe we can conclude that the first response was a decision of the head, while the second very definitely was a decision of the heart and will. Draw your own conclusions!

So experientially Peter had come a long way in preparation for that day and that sermon. Peter then read from the book of Joel highlighting "judgement" and the "second coming" and then he preached a message that was unashamedly about Jesus and the Cross.

"You put Him on the Cross... You crucified Him!" You can't get much stronger than that. There was not attempt to win friends as he gave it to them straight. After the noisy time of tongues, I should now imagine there was a "holy hush" as jaws dropped and the response came loud and clear. "What must we do?"

Peter gave the only answer: Repent and be baptised in the name of Jesus. It is the only answer we have to give – Jesus! There was a response there and then, and there was fruit thereafter. The Bible tells us that they "came together" in "communion" and "prayer;" they "turned" their backs on the world and its values and daily with "one accord" they fellowshiped.

No pocket money

We have the incident at the city gate when Peter and John confront the beggar and declare profoundly "Silver and Gold, have I none; but what I have I give unto thee." It was about Jesus, not about healing or money.

I once heard a noted "prosperity" preacher saying that we should never use this incident as an argument that Peter was not wealthy. "Of course he was wealthy," said the evangelist, "it's just that he did not have any loose change on him at that time." Absolutely laughable! A total misrepresentation of the truth in terms of what Peter and John were declaring.

It had nothing to do with money and material things. We notice in those early days that the crowds certainly gathered when there were healings. They always do because sufferers want to be relieved of their pain and agony and, quite naturally, human beings are inquisitive when unusual things happen. But it's the cure or the satisfying of their curiosity that attracts.

Sad, but true.

Remember those 10 healed lepers? Only one said thanks.

Anyway, Peter was there and, as ever, swung it around. "You denied Jesus... You chose Barabbas... You killed the Prince of Life." And so we had more who responded by repenting and being converted.

Discomforting the religious leaders

Gospel preaching does stir the atmosphere and certainly discomforts the religious leaders. The Sadducees were distinctly disturbed because they did not believe in resurrection while the Sanhedrin summoned Peter to explain himself.

His defense was gun-barrel straight: "There is no other name under heaven given among men by whom we can be saved." The Pharisees were "amazed" at the boldness of Peter and John.

"Uneducated" and "untrained" were these disciples and everyone marvelled. Perhaps the most profound conclusion was that the whole difference was because "they had been with Jesus."

The Pharisees felt threatened. Their "church business" was at risk, so they commanded the disciples "not to speak or teach in the name of Jesus." Peter responded, "We have to listen to God, not you."

I get goose-bumps just writing this stuff!

Back at the fellowship they prayed asking: "Grant your servants that with all boldness we may speak your word."

Then we read, "And great grace was upon them all." Lands and houses sold, all of their own volition. Radical! Powerful! And truly what happens when Jesus is truly Lord!

Later we read the apostles on trial again. It was a constant way of life for them, but Peter had only one answer, one testimony – the gospel.

Stephen became the first martyr, again with the Gospel booming loud and strong with Paul a spectator. Stephen said "God does not live in temples" made by man. This obviously impressed Paul because years later, when he was called to defend himself on Mars Hill, he re-iterated what Stephen had said about God not living in temples.

Stephen was direct! He did not beat around the bushes and never accommodated worldly compromise.

Paul's life, witness and testimony was exactly the same. His preaching and his ministry challenged everyone. There was commitment. There was cost!

As we turn every page of the Acts account, we read about the fruit of the gospel, because it is the power unto salvation for those who believe. We should read these passages out aloud over and over and allow ourselves to be constantly challenged by what happened then. It's the only way to stay strong and effective.

Ananias and Sapphira lied and they died physically. Today, unfortunately, we have the same lies being bandied about in the church. But we are not seeing God's judgement in action as spectacularly as in those early days.

However, there is no doubt in my mind that spiritual deaths, not physical ones, are an all-too-regular occurrence.

Are you living a lie? What are you keeping back? Are you persisting with that secret sin? Somehow we have got our way around rationalising it all and, dare I say it, even using the Bible or Scriptures out of context or manipulatively to justify ourselves.

I speak from personal experience, but disregard and indiscipline is a dreadful truth hugely undermining the witness of the church.


A huge issue

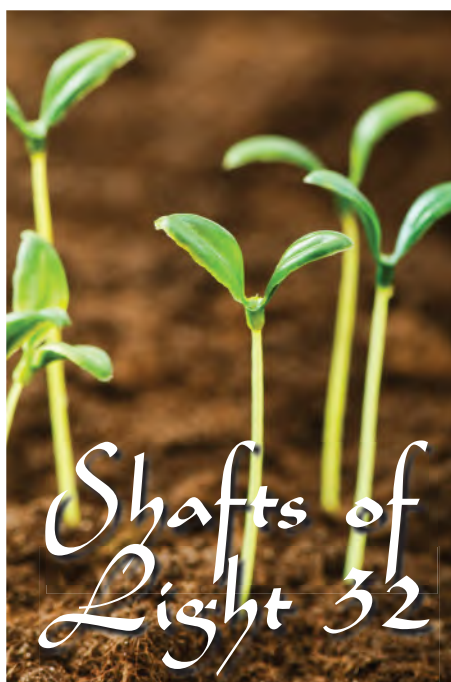
Obedience is a huge issue! If you love God you will do as He says.

What are you reading? There are Christians, even among leadership, who don't think that pornography is such an evil. What movies are you watching? I remember once going to see a film called *Closer*. Julia Roberts was in it and I thought it would be okay. Within the first 10 minutes I knew the reverse. "What are you doing in here?" It was loud and straight. I stood up and walked out feeling sick in the pit of my stomach. These days there is an overdose of blasphemy in the cinemas and on TV.

Who told you that the Holy Spirit makes you comfortable? It's your character not your comfort that gets God's attention as He draws you closer to Him.

Those early days were anything but comfortable times. It was constant uphill and aggravation but, oh, what a time to have been in the forefront of God's real church in action. It was authentic because there was no other way to survive.

It's like running the Comrades – great to talk about and reminisce over, but an incredible test of strength, stamina and commitment when you are involved. No short cuts. No quick fixes. A real-life story – that is the Christian walk! 



by Helen Gardiner

IT is time for the seed of revival to burst out in South Africa.

"My heart is overflowing with a good theme; I recite my composition concerning the King; My tongue is the pen of a ready writer (Psalm 45:1)."

Here is a key Scripture for us, namely Isaiah 35:

*"The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them,
And the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose;*

*It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice,
Even with joy and singing.*

*The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
The excellence of Carmel and Sharon.*

*They shall see the glory of the Lord,
The excellency of our God.*

*Strengthen the weak hands,
And make firm the feeble knees.*

*Say to those who are fearful-hearted,
'Be strong, do not fear!'*

*Behold, your God will come with vengeance,
With the recompense of God;*

He will come and save you.

*Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.*

*The lame shall leap like a deer,
And the tongue of the dumb sing.*

*For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness,
And streams in the desert.*

*The parched ground shall become a pool,
And the thirsty land springs of water;*

*In the habitation of jackals, where each lay,
There shall be grass with reeds and rushes.*

A highway shall be there, and a road,

And it shall be called the Highway of Holiness.

The unclean shall not pass over it,

But it shall be for others.

Whoever walks the road, although a fool,

Shall not go astray.

No lion shall be there,

*Nor shall any ravenous beast go up on it;
It shall not be found there.*

But the redeemed shall walk there,

And the ransomed of the Lord shall return,

And come to Zion with singing,

With everlasting joy on their heads.

They shall obtain joy and gladness,

And sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

This Scripture can be applied to the Lord Jesus Christ and His ministry, but, I think, it is more applicable to revival...

Let's look at it more closely:

Verse 1 says the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. What rose? I believe the Rose of Sharon. Who is the Rose of Sharon? It is not Jesus as most people think. Look at Song of Songs chapter 2:1. Here the Shulamite woman says of herself, "I am the rose of Sharon." The Shulamite woman is a type of the church.

When the church blossoms and comes forth, that, will have an influence on the surroundings. When revival comes to the church, the land will awaken to God.

Notice the emphasis on joy and glory. The two are intertwined.

In verses 3 and 4, the exhortation comes to the weak and fearful, and the exhortation ends with, "He will come and save you."

This salvation is more than the salvation of the spirit, but, is the salvation of the soul. The salvation to the uttermost (Hebrews 7:25). The person is completely renewed and transformed through sanctification. There is too little emphasis in the church today about the process of salvation; so, we end up bringing forth a lot of babes.

Then we have the exciting promises of verses 5 and 6. When that salvation is fulfilled we begin to see the supernatural in abundance. Today we see little of the supernatural in the western church because we are immature, and, we lack the faith of simple folk and are impeded by unbelief.

We are in a spiritual desert, but, God wants to change that, and bring forth verdancy.

Verse 8 speaks of the Highway of Holiness on which the simple and the cleansed will walk. When we are totally renewed, all the promises of Psalm 91 are ours. There will not be danger on the Highway of Holiness.

That Highway has a destination, which is Zion, or the New Jerusalem.

Notice once again, the emphasis, at the end of this chapter, on joy.

God has in recent weeks given me a taste of that joy, and it is unspeakable and full

of glory. That joy is contagious. So revival in the church will awaken the land.

I believe the huge prayer initiative of Angus Buchan recently, is just the beginning. And it is my prayer that he and others will be encouraged to do more and more. It saddened me that Angus was subjected to so much backlash within the church afterwards.



We need another sovereign move of God. So say many. I believe it, too. We are waiting, sadly – we are waiting. Because God is also waiting. He is waiting for us. Waiting for us to take some initiative, even to set ourselves on fire; to turn from our passivity and worldly diversions. Turn, with your face to the wind and let Him help you become ignited and passionate.

I have been greatly inspired by what has been happening at Times Square Church in New York. I urge our readers to look them up, and to see what God is doing, and to become inspired and encouraged. They believe God has given them a short window of opportunity before things turn really bad, and they are seizing it with everything that is in them.

We need to do the same.



God has given me a conglomeration of Scriptures to share in Shafts of Light. Those that are present truth I believe. Here they are:

Esther 5:1&2:

"Now it happened on the third day that Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king's palace, across from the king's house, while the king sat on his royal throne in the royal house, facing the entrance of the house.

So it was, when the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, that she found favour in his sight, and the king held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. Then Esther went near and touched the top of the sceptre."

Are we in the third day of resurrection power? Are we in our royal robes? Have we found favour with God? If so, He will extend to us the golden sceptre and give us what we ask for.

Proverbs 4:18:

*"But the path of the just is like the shining sun,
That shines ever brighter unto the perfect day."*

Are we moving into the perfect day? Potentially it is just around the corner, I believe.

Isaiah 1:16-20:

*"Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean;
Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes.*

Cease to do evil,

Learn to do good;

Seek justice,
 Rebuke the oppressor;
 Defend the fatherless,
 Plead for the widow.
 'Come now, and let us reason together,'
 Says the Lord,
 'Though your sins are like scarlet,
 They shall be as white as snow;
 Though they are red like crimson,
 They shall be as wool.
 If you are willing and obedient,
 You shall eat the good of the land;
 But if you refuse and rebel,
 You shall be devoured by the sword.'
 For the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

We do need to take this very seriously. We may like to take the part about being "devoured by the sword" figuratively or spiritually. But I have come to understand, that if we continue in our sin, He may take us out physically.

Here is a wonderful now word of promise from Lamentations 3:31-33:
*"For the Lord will not cast off forever.
 Though He causes grief,
 Yet He will show compassion
 According to the multitude of His mercies.
 For He does not afflict willingly,
 Nor grieve the children of men."*

We are living in a time of intimacy between the Bride and the Bridegroom.

Let's consider Hosea 2:16,19&20:
*"And it shall be, in that day," says the Lord.
 'That you will call me 'My Husband',
 And no longer call Me 'My Master'.'
 "I will betroth you to Me forever;
 Yes, I will betroth you to Me
 In righteousness and justice,
 In lovingkindness and mercy;
 I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness,
 And you shall know the Lord."*

Nahum 1:15:
*"Behold, on the mountains
 The feet of him who brings good tidings,
 Who proclaims peace!
 O Judah, keep your appointed feasts,
 Perform your vows.
 For the wicked ones shall no more pass through you;
 He is utterly cut off."*

As we are saved and move towards that perfect day, the enemy's influence over our lives is cut off, and we can become everything God wants us to be.

Mark 11:22&23:
*"So Jesus answered and said to them, 'Have faith in God.
 For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea', and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says."*

I, in recent months, stumbled upon a teaching by the late David Wilkerson. It was revelation to me, and I watched it over

and over and over again. David Wilkerson taught that the mountain is the mountain of unbelief. It stands between us the fullness of Christ.

Even although some of us may enjoy victories of overcoming faith, often we are hit, in time, by the mother of all crises – and then our faith wavers and we are overtaken by unbelief.

Wilkerson said the only way of winning through into total victory is by embracing the Gethsemane experience where we can unburden ourselves and reach the place of being able to pray from our hearts, "Yet, not my will, but Your will be done." It is a powerful teaching and it is really worth viewing.

Acts 13:10 (Paul in confronting Elymas the sorcerer says)

"O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord?"

Make sure your church is not perverting the straight ways of the Lord.

Here's something to strengthen your faith from Hebrews 10:35-39:

*"Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:
 'For yet a little while,
 And He who is coming will come and will not tarry.
 Now the just shall live by faith
 But if anyone draws back,
 My soul has no pleasure in him.' (quoting from Habakkuk 2:3&4)
 But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul."*

Notice the emphasis on the saving of the soul. The soul comprises our mind, our emotional centre or heart and our will.

Another important Scripture from Hebrews is 2:5-11:

It starts by initially quoting from Proverbs 3:11&12:

*"My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord,
 Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him;
 For whom the Lord loves He chastens,
 And scourges every son whom He receives."*

"If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?"

But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.

Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?

*For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness.
 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it."*

If we would be His disciples, His children or little ones we will come to know His chastening hand.

Finally, 1 John 3:2&3:
*"Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.
 And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure."*

We do need to realise that despite the absolutely huge grace God gives us all, there is still an onus on us. Basic salvation is all by grace, but there will be rewards for faithful overcomers.

Several years ago we enjoyed a move of the Holy Spirit in our worship team. God downloaded 40 to 50 new songs. They were worship and prophetic, but there was only one "Thus says the Lord," song and the tune and the words were given to an utter novice.

It goes like this:
*"Behold, a new thing I will do
 Behold I make all things new
 Forget all that's past
 A new thing springs forth
 O shall you not know it
 A new thing I will show it.
 Behold, the desert it blooms
 Even as the rose it blooms
 My glory comes forth
 My might is revealed
 O shall you not know it
 My power and my glory I will show it."*

*Behold, blind eyes will open
 Deaf ears are unstopped
 The lame leap as deer
 The dumb ones sing
 O shall you not know it
 My healing and release I will show it."*

*Behold, the highway opens up
 Holiness is the fruit thereon
 The unclean pass by
 But the simple walk on
 O shall you not know it
 My holiness I will show it."*

*Behold, the redeemed of My hand
 To Zion they come with songs
 My eternal gladness
 Is upon their heads
 O shall you not know it
 My joy and gladness I will show it."*

It Is Time For The Seed Of Revival To Burst Open In South Africa! 🐟



by A.B. Simpson

"For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day (2 Timothy 1:12)."

"Kept by the power of God through faith for salvation (1 Peter 1:5)."

THE more precious a treasure is, the more important is it that it be guarded and kept. The figure of our first text is that of a bank deposit and literally reads, "He is able to keep my deposits against that day." When great sums of gold are being conveyed to the vaults of some wealthy bank, squadrons of police may be on hand, and the most impregnable locks, bolts, bars and walls guard the treasure.

Sometimes the figure is used in a military sense. The second text is of this kind and literally should be translated, "Who are garrisoned by the power of God through faith for salvation." What expenditures and armaments are employed to garrison the great strategic points that guard the gates of nations!

Sometimes the figure is used of the shepherd and his flock, "He who scatters Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd does his flock (Jeremiah 31:10)."

But whatever figure or phrase may be employed, the one great thought that God would convey to the hearts of His tried and suffering people is that they are safe in His keeping. He is able to guard that which we have committed to Him against that day. Let us look at some of His gracious promises to keep His people.

1. He will keep us wherever we may go or be.

Listen to the first promise of our Divine Keeper as it was addressed to Jacob in the hour of his loneliness and fear, "Behold, I am with you, and will keep you in all

places where you go... for I will not leave you, until I have done that which I have spoken to you of (Genesis 28:15)."

How He kept that word to Jacob! In many places, providence cast his lot. The land of Laban, the cities of the Shechemites, the land of Goshen – everywhere his covenant-God guarded and kept him.

Jacob was not an attractive figure; he was not deserving of any special consideration. He was the "worm Jacob," but God loved him in His infinite grace and kept him, disciplined him, taught him and prepared him to be the head of Israel's tribes.

Sometimes we may be in strange places, lonely places, hard places, dangerous places; but if we have taken Jacob's God as our covenant-God, we can rest without a fear in that ancient word, "Behold, I am with you, and will keep you."

2. He will keep us as the apple of His eye.

"Keep me as the apple of the eye (Psalm 17:8)." This is a beautiful figure illustrating the sensitiveness of the eye to the approach of any intruding particle. Instinctively the eyelid closes before the object can enter. There is no time to think, for the action is intuitive and involuntary.

The psalmist writes that we are as near to God as our eye is to us, and as much a part of the body of Christ as if it were really the crystalline lens of His very eyes. He is as sensitive to the approach of anything that could harm us as we would be to the intrusion of a grain of dust to our sensitive eye.

3. He will keep us in His pavilion.

"You will hide them in the secret of Your presence from the pride of man: You shall keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues (Psalm 31:20)." It doesn't take God long to erect that pavilion in the most solitary place and hide His children safely within its curtains.

How often we find the psalmist calling out against the envenomed words of men: "What shall be given to you, Or what shall be done to you, You false tongue? Sharp arrows of the warrior, With coals of the broom tree (Psalm 120:3&4)!" But He can shield us even from these and give us a blessing for every bitter blast from human slander.

4. He will keep us in perfect peace.

"You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You: because he trusts in You (Isaiah 26:3)." Literally this reads, "Peace, peace." It is the double peace with God and of God. It is the Old Testament original of the apostle's still more beautiful promise, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:6&7)."

In both verses it is the same peace which is referred to, that deep, divine rest which Christ puts into the heart where He comes to dwell. It is the peace of God, and it passes all understanding. It is not the result of reasoning or sight. It is not because things have changed and we can see the deliverance coming. It comes when all is dark and strange and we have nothing but His bare word.

The beautiful figure of the text in Philippians is that of a garrison, the peace of God which garrisons the heart and mind. The need of the garrison here is not because of outside but inside foes. Nothing can harm us from the outside if we are kept in God's perfect peace.

5. He will keep us by His power.

This is the meaning of our second text – "Kept by the power of God through

faith for salvation.” The apostle has just told us that the inheritance is kept for us in heaven. Now he tells us we are kept for us in heaven. Now he tells us we are kept for the inheritance. The inheritance is reserved for us, and we are preserved for the inheritance.

But while the figure of the garrison is the same as in Philippians, yet it is a different garrison. There it was peace; now it is power. The garrison of peace is to preserve the city from internal foes; the garrison of power is to protect it from its outward enemies. The one garrison polices the streets; the other mans the walls. And it adds to the force of the figure to note that the word power here in the Greek is dynamite. The garrison is armed with heavenly artillery.

God has garrisoned us with heavenly dynamite, the power of the Holy Spirit, and we must have confidence in it, for we are kept by the dynamite of God through faith. We must count upon His mighty strength and always go forth with the battle cry, “Thanks be to God, Who always causes us to triumph (2 Corinthians 2:14).”

6. He is able to keep us in the world and from the evil.

This was the Master’s prayer for His disciples. In John 17:15 we read, “I pray not that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil.” Here is a double keeping. Kept from death and sickness and anything that could take us out of the world, and yet kept from the evil of the world and especially the evil one.

There is no abstract evil, but a great personal devil – the adversary who “as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8).” But the Lord’s power and the Lord’s keeping stand between us and his devouring jaws. He is a conquered foe, and we are to treat him as such and to go forth against him with the prestige of a victor in the name of his Conqueror, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Sometimes the devil assails us by his wiles and sometimes by his fiery darts, but with the shield of faith we shall be able to stand against them both. We must not be too afraid of the devil. The dread of fanaticism has kept a good many well-meaning people from the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Let us boldly come and take all God has for us and trust Him to keep the counterfeit away.

If we ask bread, God is not going to give us a stone, and if we ask fish and really want what He wants, He will not let us have a serpent. In the name of Jesus and through His precious blood, we shall be safe and kept from the evil one.

7. He is able to keep us from stumbling.

Jude says, “Now to him Who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy (Jude 24).”

The English translation is inadequate. The word falling means stumbling. Of course He is able to keep us from being lost. Too many Christians are content to just get through, if it be by the skin of their teeth. That is a poor, ignoble ambition. He is able to keep us even from stumbling and to present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.

8. He is able to keep us from the touch of the adversary.

There is a fine promise in the last chapter of First John. “He who is born of God keeps himself, and that wicked one does not touch him (1 John 5:18).” The only begotten Son keeps the saint who trusts Him and so keeps him that the wicked one cannot touch him.

It is the old familiar picture of the fly on one side of the window and the bird on the other. The bird dashes for its prey and thinks it has it. The fly shudders and thinks so too, but there is a thud and some flustered feathers and a badly frightened bird, but the fly is still there, wondering how he escaped being swallowed up.

But to us the secret is all plain: there was something between the bird and fly that the bird did not see and the fly had forgotten.

Thank God, when the devil makes his fiercest dives, there is Someone between him and us. He has to get through Jesus Christ to get us. If we only abide in simple confidence, the devil will get a good deal more hurt than we.

9. He is able to keep His servants and ministers.

Listen! “I the Lord have called you in righteousness, and will hold your hand, and will keep you, and give you for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles (Isaiah 42:6).” This blessed promise belongs primarily to the Lord Jesus, but secondarily to every other true servant of Jehovah who is abiding in Him and working for Him.

God holds His ministers in His right hand and says, “Touch not my anointed, and do my prophets no harm (1 Chronicles 16:22).”

He is a very reckless man who speaks lightly or acts against any true servant of the Lord. We must be careful how we criticise the Master’s servants. “Who are you that judges another man’s servant? To his own master he stands or falls... for God is able to make him stand (Romans 14:4).”

If we are serving Christ with a true heart, we need not be afraid.

10. He will keep His cause, His Church, His vineyard.

“Sing to her, A vineyard of red wine. I the Lord keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day (Isaiah 27:2&3).” We sometimes believe that we are the keepers of God’s cause and that He has forgotten all about it. We feel we have to shout and cry to get Him to help us look after His own property. Why, the Lord is looking after us and the cause too. “I, the Lord, do keep it... lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.”


No doubt there are dangers, trials, adversaries, but there is one thing more: the Lord. And two little words are stronger than all the D’s in the dictionary, whether they be difficulty, discouragement, division, declension, the devil. Those two words are *but God*.

There is a fine prophetic picture in the opening verses of Zechariah that was written to comfort people in troubled times. First the prophet saw four horns coming from all directions – sharp, cruel, powerful horns. They were pushing and piercing everything before them.

Then the scene changed, and he looked and saw four carpenters coming in the same directions. Each of them had tools – a stout axe, a sharp saw and no doubt a heavy maul. Soon he heard the blows of axes and the buzzing of saws, and the horns had lost their points and were pounded to a jelly and were soft cushions that could not hurt anything.

God has a carpenter for every horn and if the work we are doing is His work, the gates of hell cannot prevail against it.

God is able to keep everything that we commit to Him. “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day (2 Timothy 1:12).”

The great question is this: How much have we really committed? 



The Hyper-Grace Candy Floss

by Dennis Pollock

A FRIEND recently pointed out a particular doctrine she is hearing taught on Christian television quite a bit these days.

She was obviously troubled and concerned about this teaching, and wanted to know what I thought. I was intrigued enough to do a little research on the topic, and what I discovered blew me away.

The subject had to do with grace, or rather the exaggerated, inflated, twisted, and stretched-far-beyond-all-Biblical-limits version of it that a number of popular preachers are proclaiming today. It is grace on steroids, grace twisted beyond recognition, grace amplified to such a degree that it bears no resemblance to the grace declared by Jesus, and explained by Paul, Peter, and John.

The hyper-grace doctrine that is popular today is often identified by the catchphrase: “God forgave all of your sins when you came to Christ: past, present, and future.”

Some may feel that this statement is accurate enough. After all, are we not justified through Christ, and regardless of any sins we may commit, don’t we still remain children of God? And if so, does that not imply that even our future sins are forgiven?

But the hyper-grace folks push this further – in fact, a whole lot further.

They suggest that it is never necessary for a Christian to confess their sins or ask forgiveness of God. After all, they say, God forgave us once-and-for-all when we were saved, and never again will we need

to ask forgiveness. If you blow it, and do something extraordinarily stupid or wicked, just go about your business and don’t trouble God about it. The matter is already settled in God’s eyes.

The only Christians who ever ask forgiveness or bother to repent of sins are those who are carnal and ignorant of the grace of God. Real Christians never repent, or to paraphrase the theme of the movie *Love Story*: “Grace means never having to say you’re sorry.”

Gyrations of logic

In order to sustain a theory which is so blatantly contradictory of the Scriptures, the defenders of hyper-grace are forced to resort to all sorts of gyrations of logic, twisting and transforming the plain meaning of enormous chunks of the Bible.

They also are forced to essentially throw out the majority of the Scriptures. The Old Testament, for example – the Old Testament is so forcefully anti-sin, with its thunderous demands for repentance, that the hyper-grace preachers are uncomfortable with it. To solve this problem they simply insist that the Old Testament has virtually no relevance for us today.

One of them has even written a book explaining why the God of the Old Testament is most definitely not the God of the New Testament. So if you really want to be one of their disciples, you can start with tearing the Old Testament out of your Bible, and paying no heed to it ever again.

But they don’t stop there. They don’t really like the teachings of Jesus much

either. Now I know that sounds hard to believe, and they certainly won’t put it in those terms, but it is the truth.

They will insist that most of the teachings of Jesus you read in the gospel accounts were for the Jews of His day. They dismiss the entire Sermon on the Mount. In their minds the Sermon on the Mount was “law” and not grace, and therefore we have no obligation to keep any of those commands, and probably ought not to read it, lest we end up moving away from grace and back to the law.

Forget about turning the other cheek, pay no attention to doing your charitable deeds privately, erase from your memory Jesus’ insistence to love and forgive your enemies, to be a peacemaker, to avoid lusting after women, to pray secretly in our rooms, to lay up treasures in heaven, to trust our heavenly Father to provide for us, to seek first God’s kingdom, to enter by the narrow gate, or to do our Father’s will lest He tell us in the last day that He never knew us...

All of these things were written for Jesus’ generation only, according to this bizarre and absurd theory, and have no relation to the grace-Christian today.

Of all that Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, the thing that is most galling to the hyper-grace proclaimers is Jesus’ command for us to ask the Father to forgive our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

In their minds this surely demonstrates that this sermon is not for us!

There is no need for us to ask forgiveness for trespasses – in fact, God never even

sees our little moral boo-boos.

Of course the Sermon on the Mount is only the tip of the iceberg. As you read through the Gospels you find Jesus saying all sorts of things about sin and repentance and so forth. And so these deluded folks have decided that it is safer to simply say that nearly everything Jesus said before dying on the cross was for Jews and has nothing to do with the grace life.

So, while you are tearing pages out of your Bible, you will need to go to the accounts of Jesus dying on the Cross – and *everything* to the left of that must go! It has nothing to do with you.

The idea that when God looks at a Christian He only sees Jesus has been around for a long time, and there is some truth to that – in a legal sense.

Legally we are indeed the righteousness of God in Christ. We have been given the gift of righteousness and God accepts us on that basis. If this is what is meant by “God only sees Jesus when He looks at me” – well and good.

Living in a dream world

But if by that you mean that the Creator of Heaven and Earth is incapable of observing your sins, faults, and foolishness, and has no clue what you have been up to as you have engaged in all sorts of mischief – you are living in a dream world.

The Bible tells us that “All things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account (Hebrews 4:13).” This warning is given in a letter clearly written to believers, not an evangelistic sermon presented to the ungodly.

If God cannot see our sins, mistakes, and follies, how could He possibly discipline us? And yet the Bible unequivocally declares that “...whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.”

Any person who has been in Christ for some time and has never felt the chastening hand of God is suspect. In fact the Scriptures tell us, “But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons (Hebrews 12:8).”

Without question, our holy God sees us, and hears our words, knows our thoughts, observes our actions, and finds some pleasing and others distinctly displeasing. The apostle Paul declared, “Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him (2 Corinthians 5:9).” If Paul made it his aim to please God, he

must have been convinced that it would be possible to live in such a way that you displeased God.

But according to the hyper-grace preachers, God is always well pleased with every Christian, whether they have recently been sharing Christ, or committing adultery with their best friend’s wife. After all, when He sees you He sees Jesus, so He is always well pleased with you, never upset, and really has no idea what you’ve been doing anyway!

Those espousing this teaching hate the idea of repentance. And if they mention it at all, they will suggest that repentance merely means changing your mind, but has nothing to do with feeling bad for your sins (something Christians should never do) and certainly never hints at changing your behaviour.

Repentance is for sinners (maybe – although some go so far as saying that even sinners have no need of repentance: only believe) but it is surely never for Christians!

It is astonishing to me that anyone could make and believe such a statement. In the second and third chapters of the Book of Revelation, Jesus addresses the churches – and He breaks nearly every rule and contradicts nearly every tenet of this monstrously anti-Biblical teaching.

To one church He threatens to remove their lampstand unless they repent – but then I guess Jesus never read the hyper-grace manual. To another He threatens rebellious church members with sickness and death. And to the church at Laodicea He says (Revelation 3:17): “...you say, ‘I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,’ and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked...”

And then He has the audacity to tell them “Therefore be zealous and repent.”

Somehow Jesus missed the memo which instructs preachers to declare to Christians that God never sees their sins, that there is no need to ask forgiveness for sins, and that God is pleased with His children all the time!

Not only do these preachers hate the idea of repentance; they even pronounce that God can never even get angry with the nations, as He did in those old law-based days. The pre-eminent hyper-grace TV preacher wrote: “I have also heard some believers pronouncing, ‘If God does not judge America for all its sins, God has to apologise to Sodom and Gomorrah.’ Well, let me say this with honour and respect: If God judges America today, He has to

apologise to Jesus and what He has accomplished on the cross!”

So God has been so neutralised, made so morally feeble and blind, so “wimpified” that He is unable to discern the wickedness of the nations today, and if He does somehow observe a little bit of their wickedness, He would never dare punish them for it.

This same preacher is unwilling to admit that we should ever confess our sins to God, despite the verse which states: “If we confess our sins God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).”

To try to escape the obvious meaning of the verse, he insists that this was written to the Gnostics rather than believers! How strange that John used the pronoun “we!”


Saturated with absurdity

This doctrine is so saturated with absurdity and the refutation of everything the apostles, the prophets, and the great reformers and revivalists of the church have always believed and preached, it would take a huge volume to cover it all.

That there are preachers who have strayed from the truth is not all that surprising. There have always been strange and bizarre doctrines that surfaced in the church in every generation. The thing that is especially troublesome concerning this doctrine and our generation is the fact that so many Christians seem to be swallowing it, no questions asked or suspicions raised.

How is it that millions can follow these teachers and believe every word that comes from their deluded hearts and deceitful mouths?

The only possible answer is that many Christians today are not Bible readers. With all our Christian bookstores and our multiple versions of Bibles available, with all our Bible software and scores of Bible commentaries, few Christians seem to have developed the habit of actually sitting down quietly for 15 or more minutes a day and actually reading the Bible. We often would rather hear what someone has to say about the Bible than to read the Bible for ourselves.

May our gracious God and His Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, lead us back to the Scriptures where we may learn the ways of our God. For when God’s people are Biblically well-informed, heresies like this one will not thrive. 

How's Your Walk with the Lord Going?

by T.A. McMahon

"If you continue in my word, then you are my disciples indeed; And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free (John 8:31&32)."

YEARS ago, we had a board member who also pastored a church not too far from where our ministry is located. His name was Bob Zachary, and he was a true shepherd of his flock. He was highly respected in his community, and it seemed as though everyone knew Pastor Zachary.

When I would go places with him, we would often run into former members of his fellowship who were now living in our area. His amiable greeting was always charged at some point with these words, "How's your walk with the Lord going?"

What a wonderful question that was, revealing his love and concern for his sheep, former and present, and opening the door for encouragement or conviction or correction. Bob was graciously "old school" – or perhaps I should say old "biblical" school – not influenced by the social correctness of the day or given to small talk.

His conversations were concise gems of ministry, as he focussed upon Jesus and His Word. He deferred to the Holy Spirit to have His way in the communication, knowing that he was simply a planter of spiritual seeds for thought or sometimes a waterer of seedlings, encouraging their growth (1 Corinthians 3:7), and that any fruitfulness that might come would be produced by God himself.

Churches in our day sorely need pastors like Bob Zachary, who is now home with the Lord, enjoying the rewards of his labour in Christ. In these times, where consumerism reigns in fellowships, where seeker-sensitive/seeker-friendly approaches, marketing surveys and strategies, and self-oriented psychotherapies are implemented for church growth, questions like "How's your walk with the Lord going?" are anathema.

Why? Because they may bring about conviction of sin, which is a turn-off for the "consumer Christian," one who is led by things that primarily make him or her feel good. When that doesn't happen, the consumer goes elsewhere.

This is the paradigm of our times. It's a shift from objective truth to subjective feelings and is apparent in the world and in the church as both unwittingly contribute to the development of the "self is a god" religion of the Antichrist.

Joel Osteen didn't produce the largest church in America by preaching sin and repentance. Quite the contrary! Consumer Christians must hear what makes them happy – or, again, they're gone.

The irony of the Church Growth Movement was that its stated intention to woo the lost or "unchurched" to church didn't increase their numbers by conversions. They simply enlarged their congregations by offering the most attractive programmes! That increase, in fact, was drawn from smaller churches that couldn't afford "feel good" offerings, such as a video arcade for the youth, a food court, theatrical programmes, sports programmes (including "Christianised" yoga), etc.

Winning souls to Christ through conviction of sin and repentance has no place in church-growth marketing schemes. Neither does a worldly approach solve a believer's problems that arise from living on this fallen planet.

A rapid exit

Asking someone how his walk with the Lord is going has been, in my experience, the basis for a rapid exit in more than a few counselling sessions where I've ministered. Over the years, as I've had opportunities to help brothers in Christ and couples who profess to know the Lord, my initial approach has been to pass over the problems they want solved and focus on the status of their walk with Jesus.

That didn't gratify those who were merely interested in a quick fix. They missed the fact that nearly all of our problems are actually symptoms created by an anaemic or worse relationship with our Lord.

The basis of that alienation can be summed up in our Saviour's own words: "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say (Luke 6:46)?"

Those seeking help for their marriages most often want the faults of their spouses addressed and corrected ASAP! Even if that were to take place (I've yet to see it happen swiftly), it never gets to the root of their problems. And by "root," I'm *not* referring to their family history, childhood traumas, economic conditions, low self-esteem, lack of self-love, or the myriad of fabricated psychotherapeutic therapies.

No! The root of my concern for them is *where they are in their obedience and love*

for Jesus.

Jesus declared: "If a man love me he will keep my words (John 14:23)..."

That's hardly complex, nor does it demand months and years of "inner" therapy. If they are on track with the Lord's exhortation, then I can guarantee that problems are going to get solved and things are going to get better for them.

How quickly? That depends on the willingness of those involved to do things God's way. Relationships don't usually go south overnight and therefore may take time to be restored. The restoration, however, doesn't come through session after session with a counsellor – Christian, biblical, or otherwise.

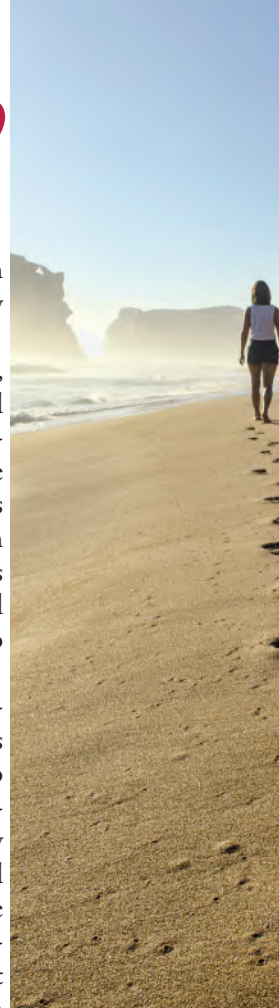
It comes through reading what God's Word says... and doing it. The good news is that although we may drift away from Jesus, He is always there for us (Hebrews 13:5). Furthermore, the believer has the Holy Spirit resident within to enable him or her to repent and then do things God's way with His help.

As believers, we need to continually evaluate where we are in terms of doing things according to God's Word: Scripture exhorts us to "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? – unless indeed you are disqualified (2 Corinthians 13:5)."

We are told that we as followers of Jesus are *in* the world but not *of* the world. Our programme is not the world's programme. Consequently that difference will create problems for us – problems that may come along *for the sake of Christ*. As difficult as that may be for us, such conditions are fully covered by God's grace.

In other words, nothing that happens can displace God's loving kindnesses, tender mercies, compassion, blessings, and even the joy He has for us. James tells us that we are to "count it all joy" when we undergo trials and tribulations in the testing of one's faith (James 1:2&3). Without the supernatural help of God's grace, that joy would be impossible.

On the other hand, grace does not exempt the believer from the repercussions of doing





his own thing (i.e., walking his own walk rather than following Jesus). Even so, God's mercy is always available for His children. Sin does have consequences: "The wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23)," meaning the resulting separation of a believer in his relationship with Jesus as well as reaping what he has sown.

Even so, by God's mercy, the repentant believer is delivered from what he has done in disobedience to God's Word, at least to some degree. God's mercy notwithstanding, walking our own disobedient walk will bring nothing but grief to our lives and to our loved ones,

directly and/or indirectly.

The prophet Jeremiah underscores what our own sins do to us:

"Have you not brought this on yourself, in that you have forsaken the Lord your God, when he led you by the way?... your own wickedness shall correct you, and your backslidings shall reprove you... Your way and your doings have procured these things to you; this is your wickedness, because it is bitter, because it reaches to your heart (Jeremiah 2:17,19; 4:18)."

The Word of God gives instructions that must be obeyed if our lives are to bear fruit. As we examine problematic areas in our lives, we need only check to see if what we are doing lines up with the Scriptures. Yes, some things that occur may be out of our control, but for most things, we can discover the answer regarding our problems in what we are *doing* or *not doing*.

How are we ministering to our children? Why are they creating havoc in our family? Might it have something to do with our own walk, which they are observing? Are we reflecting the light and life of Christ?

How are we treating our spouses? That's one condition that can hinder answers to prayer (see 1 Peter 3:7).

Are we self-serving? Has the fruit of the Spirit gone AWOL, either partially or altogether? What of Love? Joy? Peace? Longsuffering? Kindness? Goodness? Faithfulness? Gentleness? Self-control? The simple truth is that doing things man's way leads to destruction (Proverbs 14:12; 16:25).

Doing things according to God's instruc-

tions, and with His help, leads to a fruitful temporal life and eternal rewards.

Referring to those who have received the gospel of salvation, Jesus said that the free gift was made free for us by His paying the full penalty for our sins: "I have come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly (John 10:10)."

That *must* include every believer's life here on earth as well as our future life throughout eternity, or else biblical Christianity is nothing more than powerless moral and ethical platitudes, a self-help programme of supposed good works.

God's rewards

Scripture speaks continually of God's rewards in heaven for a believer's commitment and service to Him on earth. "Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:10&11)."

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ (Ephesians 1:3)."

Yet it also tells us of God's blessings here on earth for those who obey His instructions. John 10:10 makes it clear that Jesus came not only to give us eternal life but life that may be lived "more abundantly."

Reactions to the lies of the so-called prosperity teachers have caused many Christians to either jump aboard their health-and-wealth gospel or disregard what the Scriptures actually teach about prosperity. When John writes in 3 John 1:2 about prosperity, his focus isn't upon financial blessing for a believer but rather for one's whole life in Christ – body, soul, and spirit.

Wealth may indeed come, but only as it enriches the saint's overall life in Christ. Moreover, affluence, according to God's Word, is a more difficult condition in which to submit to the teachings of Christ. The rich young ruler of Matthew 19:16-24 and the seed of the Word being choked out by "the deceitfulness of riches" in Mark 4:19 indicate as much.

It's not impossible, but it's not a path that many want to pursue in their desire for wealth. What we may be missing here is of what the *abundant life in Christ* may truly consist.

Do wealthy people have problems? Perhaps not related to finances, but there are many other problems that a more-than-adequate bank account can't fix.

Everyone has problems. Yet they can all

be solved in Christ through the abundance of what He has provided for every believer. Consider what was mentioned earlier – the fruit of the Spirit. As those qualities are truly manifested in a believer's walk with the Lord, think of the all the consequences of sin they will remedy: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law (Galatians 5:22&23)."

"For you were sometimes darkness, but now you are light in the Lord: walk as children of light: For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth. Proving what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them (Ephesians 5:8-11)."

We need to be reminded of Jeremiah's words here: "Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withheld good things from you (Jeremiah 5:25)

"God indeed has good things for believers that the world can neither prevent nor acquire. Beyond solving our personal problems, He wants us to be fruitful in this world, in our families, in our communities, in our workplaces. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God has prepared beforehand that we should walk in them (Ephesians 2:10)."

Good works, as I hope we all know, can't save anyone. No one is saved by them. We are saved *by Jesus*. Yet, as His workmanship, He saved us *for* good works, enabling us to live a life that is fruitful, productive, a blessing to others, and most of all – pleasing to God. All of those things are contingent upon our relationship with Jesus, our walk with Him.

So... How's *your* walk with the Lord going? As we've indicated, that question is definitely not rhetorical. It demands self-examination. It demands a soul-searching answer, and your answer will reveal those things that you need to *maintain, obtain, restrain*, and, in some cases, from which you must *abstain*.

Paul's prayer for those in the church at Colosse is a prayer that we should pray continually for ourselves, for our loved ones, and for all who claim to follow Jesus. *"For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy (Colossians 1:9-11)."* ☞

Lorenzo Dow: They called him crazy

LORENZO Dow (1777-1834), from Connecticut, USA, took eccentricity to a new level. From childhood he knew sweeps of emotion beyond his fellows, higher highs and deeper lows. His conversion experience was unusually dramatic too: in a dream, he was carried off to hell by a demon, and cried to God that he deserved it – but begged for mercy.

He knew amazing peace and joy and woke up loving God.

At 21, he was accepted as a circuit preacher by the Methodists. Later he was an independent evangelist. He quickly gained a reputation, both for his appearance and his methods. He and his wife Peggy embraced poverty for the Gospel's sake. They would often sleep rough in the woods.

Lorenzo usually had just the clothes he stood up in, which he wore until they were so unsightly that some person in the audience would donate a replacement – which might not be the right size. He had a beard down to his chest and never combed it. He didn't always wash.

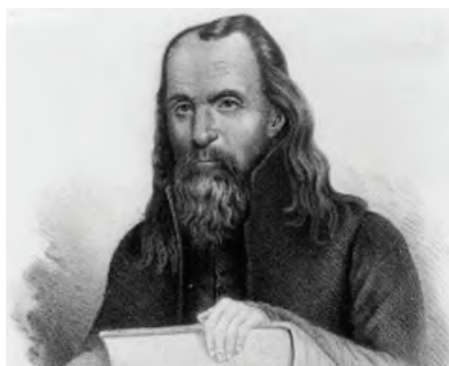
After his death, one obituary said: "Who will forget his orang-utan features, his outlandish clothes, the beard that swept his aged breast, or the piping treble voice in which he preached the Gospel of the Kingdom."

Dow's preaching mannerisms were a revelation. A generation before, the great open-air preacher George Whitefield was passionate but serious and measured. Lorenzo Dow shouted, screamed, wept, begged, insulted, and challenged people's complacent beliefs. He told stories and jokes. It is recorded that he could hold an audience of 10 000 spellbound. He gained the nickname "Crazy Dow" and happily accepted it.

He had a keen eye for the theatrical. He loved to turn up at a public event, go on to the stage (uninvited) and announce loudly that he would preach on that spot in one year's time.

One famous episode took place in Westminster, Maryland, and he repeated it elsewhere. Seeing a boy with a trumpet, he enlisted his help: after the start of a service in a meeting hall, the lad was to climb an adjoining tree and wait for a signal.

Inside, Dow preached a "fire and brim-



stone" message. In a great crescendo he cried: "If Gabriel were to blow his trumpet announcing the day of Judgement is at hand, would you be ready?" It was the signal. The boy blew the trumpet! People screamed and rushed to the front to seek mercy and make peace with God. The boy made a quick getaway!

His engagement to Peggy was suitably unusual. He would marry her, he said, but "if you should stand in my way in the service of the Gospel, I will pray to God to remove you!" Stout-hearted Peggy said yes nevertheless, and they married in 1804. She accompanied him on many of his travels, which were long and arduous. They would camp in the woods without a tent, hearing wolves but trusting God. This they did out of love for the hundreds of settlers, born and bred in the wilderness, and now adult, who had never seen a preacher.

One record exists of Dow arriving at a village in Alabama: his pantaloons were worn through, and for several hundred miles he had ridden without a cloak, for he had sold it. He was barefoot and his umbrella was held by just three spokes. Small wonder that Peggy entitled her autobiography *Vicissitudes in the Wilderness*. When Peggy died, Lorenzo married Lucy, who was every bit as feisty as he: at their wedding she promised "to be a thorn in his flesh and a sword in his side"!

Despite their grinding poverty, however, Dow made a point of refusing lavish gifts from well-wishers, accepting only the

bare essentials. Such a lifestyle took a toll on his health. He had asthma and malaria and, like the great Methodist circuit preacher Francis Asbury, could not stand for a whole preaching but had to lean on something.

Dow was a phenomenon, a source of entertainment as well as awe. Many a child was christened Lorenzo in his honour. But he also provoked opposition, especially in southern states, where he opposed slavery. He was sometimes pelted with stones, eggs, and rotten vegetables. That never stopped him; he simply walked to the next town and gave the same sermon again!

At Jacksonborough, Georgia, he was abused and attacked so badly that, on leaving, he "shook off the dust from his feet (Matthew 10:14)" and cursed the place. Within a few years, all that was left of Jacksonborough was the home of his hosts – the rest had been abandoned and fallen into ruin.

In all, Dow made three trips to Britain, where he longed to preach the gospel to Roman Catholics. He was received as something of a curiosity but his preaching was respected everywhere. He introduced a group of Methodists to the American-style "camp meeting", where revivalist preachers spoke to crowds in giant open-air congregations, which might last three days. As a result, Hugh Bourne and the Primitive Methodists began holding them in England.

The editor of his journal continued: "His eccentric dress and style of preaching attracted great attention, while his shrewdness, and quick discernment of character gave him no considerable influence over the multitudes that attended his ministry. Who has not heard of Lorenzo Dow? He was one of the most remarkable men of his age for his zeal and labour in the cause of religion. It is probable that more persons have heard the Gospel from his lips, than any other individual since the days of Whitefield." 🦋



Contemporary print of Dow preaching. Note the trumpeter behind the stage.



Why marriage cannot cure your lust problem

by **Dustin Renz**

"I thought that when I got married, this lust problem would go away."

THAT thought process is echoed in many of the testimonies of the men who come through Pure Life Ministries. It is not uncommon for people who find themselves in bondage to lust to think that marriage is the solution to their problem. Their logic is simple: "Since I have a sex problem, if I could get into a marital relationship where I can have sex often without guilt or shame, my issue would be solved."

While this line of thinking may seem to be accurate, it is based on a faulty perception of lust.

Many sex addicts incorrectly view their struggle as a sex problem. Those who are single often tend to view marriage as the "easy-button" fix for their issue. Due to the fact that they are unable to satisfy their lust in a healthy way, they assume that, if only they were married, then they could get free.

But the truth is that lust isn't a sex problem; it's a sin problem. And the only way to conquer sin is through repentance.

Jesus tells us in Matthew 5:27&28: "You have heard it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery;' but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

Jesus takes this Old Testament commandment that focussed on the outward action of adultery and focuses in on the very root of the issue. You see, long before an adulterous act is committed, a person's heart is already given over to lust. Adultery is only the outward manifestation of the sinful lust of the heart.

The same can be said of any type of outward sexual sin. Before sin finds manifestation in someone's life, it has already

taken root in their hearts. In another passage, Jesus repeats this thought when He says, "For out of the heart come evil thoughts – murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander (Matthew 15:19)."

The Bible is quite clear: sexual lust is a sin problem, and it is found in a person's heart.

While marriage may provide an opportunity to have sexual relations without the guilt that accompanies masturbation or fornication, it doesn't fix heart issues.

Unfortunately, many find this truth out the hard way. After the excitement of the wedding and the honeymoon die off, they find that their lust is just as active as before they walked down the aisle. Their fantasy life is still thriving and they long for more than healthy marital relations can offer.

They would be rare

They have created an appetite for sexual perversion that will not simply disappear because they have tied the knot. If it were true that marriage was enough to fix the problem, then pornography and adulterous affairs would be rare. But as we all know, these issues are all too common in our day.

At the heart of lust is covetousness. Rex Andrews described it as, "taking virtue from someone who doesn't belong to them."

Marital intercourse – which is a blessing from God when it occurs in a pure love relationship – will not satisfy that longing for forbidden fruit in a lustful person's fantasies.

I fell for this lie myself. After having met my wife, a wonderful Christian woman, I assured myself that my days of bondage to pornography were behind me. But it was not long into the marriage that I found my

lust problem had followed me to the altar.

No matter how sincere I was when I recited my vows, that commitment alone was not enough to set me free. I wound up wasting many precious years of marriage in secret bondage, unable to escape the misery of sexual addiction.


Modern-day psychologists scoff at the idea of calling sexual addictions sinful, yet there is a liberating aspect of calling sin by its name. The very fact that it is sin means that a way of escape has been provided. I thank God for the power of true repentance and the cross of Christ!

It was only the Lord Who could accomplish the needed work in my heart, bringing me into freedom.

There is hope for those who are in bondage today. That hope cannot be found in a spouse or in a marriage, but it lies in finding true heart repentance. The same power that raised Christ from the dead is available to those who will turn to Jesus with all of their hearts and allow Him to change them from the inside out.

I thank God that He is still in the business not only of setting men and women free from sexual sin, but also that He is able to resurrect the marriages that have been affected by it.

I can testify that I truly cannot imagine where I would be today if it were not for the process that the Lord brought me through in the residential programme of Pure Life Ministries. It was there that the Lord showed me that my only hope was in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ!

And now I am free to enjoy my marriage the way God intended it to be. 

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5 Marks of a False Gospel



by Jeff Maples

THE Gospel, or “good news,” is essentially the revelation of Jesus Christ to the world for the purpose of reconciling God’s people to Himself. Sadly, there is much perversity masquerading as the Gospel, yet it’s designed to lead man away from the truth, and into a false sense of relationship with the Creator. Many cults and false religions have arisen contrary to the faith that was once-for-all delivered to the saints (Jude vs 3), but there are far more subtle attacks on the biblical Gospel that, in many cases, go unnoticed, and are poisoning the church today. Let’s review five telling marks that a Gospel being preached is false.

“I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different Gospel – not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the Gospel of Christ (Galatians 1:6&7).”

1.) The Gospel exalts man.

This may sound like an obvious one, but sadly, so many preachers today preach a Gospel that exalts man. Arminianism is perhaps the most notorious of these. Man is said, contrary to Scripture, to have within himself some level of “goodness” to

be able to “choose” God. Scripture teaches that man cannot choose God (Romans 3:11) because we are dead in our trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1).

Others may teach that God has chosen to save man, not solely according to the purposes of His own will (Ephesians 1:11), but because of some inherent value in us. Sure, we have some value to God – we are created in His image. We were also created to glorify Him. But Scripture clearly teaches that it is not because of any value or goodness in us that God has chosen to save us, He chose to save us to display His own glory (Romans 9:23).

This mark of a false Gospel places our hope in something false – a hope in something other than Christ alone. It places our hope in something within ourselves, and God will not share His glory with any other.

2.) The Gospel teaches that you are saved from temporal afflictions.

This is mostly found in the Prosperity, Health and Wealth, and Word of Faith movements. Essentially, it teaches that when you are saved, you no longer have to suffer from worldly calamities such as poverty, sickness, and disease. Further, it teaches that if you do suffer from these things, that your faith simply isn’t strong

enough. Often, your level of faith is purportedly reflected in how much money you give to the organisation propagating this false teaching.

This teaching can certainly lead people astray, giving some who are not truly born again a false sense of security in practices such as tithing and seed-faith offering. Once again, Christ as the sole object of our faith is diminished and our faith is placed in our good works and is evidenced by our prosperity.

The apostle Paul teaches worldly struggles are not only likely but that God uses them for His glory, in which our purpose is to glorify God.

“But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong (2 Corinthians 12:10&11).”

3.) Emphasis is placed on the Holy Spirit more than Jesus Christ.

Many charismatic churches teach a Gospel that emphasises the work of the Holy Spirit more than the work of Christ. Certainly, the Holy Spirit, equal with

the Father and Christ, is worthy of our acknowledgment. But the Work of the Holy Spirit is always to point to Christ and not to Himself (John 16:14&15). Yet these churches, in many ways, teach that the Holy Spirit is the primary end of our salvation and that He is only manifested through signs and wonders performed by those who have “received Him.” This often results in aberrant teachings such as that speaking in tongues is a necessary evidence of salvation.

Jesus Christ, however, is the primary ends of our salvation. As stated in 2 Corinthians 2:10&11 above, His grace is sufficient. Seeking for signs and wonders, Christ said, is evidence of a wicked and adulterous people (Matthew 16:4).

“Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:9-11).”

4.) It is attractive to the world.

Another sign that a Gospel being preached is false is that it is attractive to the world. Many false Gospels contain half-truths and, even in some ways, may sound very much like the Gospel. But the world is impatient with the inward work of regeneration and sanctification through Christ.

They seek fulfilment through entertainment and other carnal means which give them a false impression of their own piety. The message of Christ’s bloody death on the cross and his endurance of God’s wrath is watered down to the point that it is meaningless, while rock bands, laser light shows, and music devoid of any theological substance are echoed throughout the churches that teach this way. In other words, if the world is not offended by the Gospel message being preached, it is false.

Scripture teaches that Christ is offensive, even calling Him the “rock of offence (1 Peter 2:8),” and that the Gospel is foolish to the world.

“For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God (1 Corinthians 1:18).”

5.) The Gospel is not derived from Scripture.

Many false churches teach that Scripture is insufficient to receive the knowledge of

the grace of God. This is most prevalent in the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches. Most cults have some form of this aberrant teaching as well, however, there are plenty of other churches, “evangelical churches,” that have strayed from the doctrine of Sola Scriptura (Scripture Alone) as well. We have seen in recent years pastors like Andy Stanley stray away from the authority of Scripture as well. This opens the door to all sorts of error, most of it significant and eternally damning.


The Scriptures themselves are the testimony of Christ and His plan of redemption. They are the complete revelation of Jesus Christ sovereignly preserved by the Holy Spirit to teach, reprove, and equip the saints for everything necessary in this life. There is nothing else that we need in order to be made complete in Him.

“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be

complete, equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16&17).”

Yet, false Gospels that are not derived from Scripture always end up being a teaching that is contrary to the biblical Gospel. It always ends up being a Gospel of meritorious works as opposed to grace, or a Gospel of some other (co)saviour and (co)redeemer as opposed to Christ alone. It always minimises the exclusivity of Christ as the only Lord and gives many a false hope in other beliefs and religions.

It is Christ alone who saves and it is Christ alone who is King. If your church is teaching another Gospel or if you notice any of these signs of a false Gospel in your church, it may be time to move. Don’t just sit there and put up with it.

“For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different Gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough (2 Corinthians 11:4).” 



A family prayer for the morning


by J. R. Miller

GOD, as the morning has risen upon us, may the Sun of righteousness also rise upon us. Chase away the shadows of darkness from us, and may we be light in the Lord. Enable us to put off all the works of darkness, whatever belongs to the old evil nature, and to put on the garments of light, doing the works of the day and not of the night.

May our light shine before men, that seeing us, they may glorify You.

We desire to grow in grace. As the deer pants after the water-brooks, so our souls long after You. Our souls thirst for God, for the living God. Nothing else will satisfy them. This world has in it nothing to meet the needs of our immortal spiritual natures. Let us not try to feed ourselves on that which is not bread – but may we learn to bring all our needs to You who alone can satisfy them.

We come to You to begin the day – that we may have Your blessing upon it. Nothing is complete without You. As the flowers need the dew and the sunshine to make them fragrant – so do our lives need Your blessing to make them truly happy. Lay Your hand upon our heads as we bow before You. Direct our feet in all the day’s paths. We want to carry out Your plan, not our own. Order our steps in Your Word. Give us our work as we go on. Help us to be truthful, honest, and diligent in all our words and conduct.

We go out now in our Saviour’s name, and we ask You to take us and use us to do Your will and to bless others. We ask all for Jesus’ sake. Amen. 



Real revival or ruin

by John A. Cerrato, Jr.

THROUGHOUT the history of man the church has frequently experienced periods of spiritual decline. By God's undeserved mercy those dark intervals were periodically followed by times of powerful spiritual renewal. Again and again, God's church has shined forth as a brilliant light in a dark place... The church was never perfect, but the documented spiritual and moral transformative results of the presence and power of God stand unchallenged.

Historically, when God has been pleased to send a supernatural visitation, the first effect has been that the hearts and minds of His people have found new life and delight in the beauty and perfections of Christ, *then* the saving love of God came with power upon the hearts of the lost. "...The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved (Acts 2:47)."

During the Great Awakening in New England in the 1730s, Jonathan Edwards wrote in *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God*:

"Those among us who had been formerly converted, were greatly enlivened, and renewed with fresh and extraordinary incomes of the Spirit of God..."

"God's work has also appeared very extraordinary in the degrees of His influences; in the degrees both of awakening

and conviction, and also saving light, love, and joy, that many have experienced. It has also been very extraordinary in the extent of it and its being so swiftly propagated from town to town..."

"And the work of conversion was carried on in a most astonishing manner and increased more and more; souls came by flocks to Jesus Christ. From day to day, for many months together, might be seen evident instances of sinners brought out of darkness into marvellous light and delivered out of a horrible pit... and set upon a rock, with a new song of praise in their mouths.

"...When God in so remarkable a manner took the work into His own hands, there was so much done in a day or two that during ordinary times – with all the endeavours that men can use, and with such a blessing as we commonly have – is done in a year."

In His own hands

The accounts of the great revivals of the past should be a subject familiar to every follower of Christ. It is vital that believers inspire their hearts and minds with the written records of those times when God graciously responded to the heart-cries of His people and was pleased to "take His work into His own hands."

Historical documentation is clear, abundant and undeniable. The results

were as real and spectacular as when Jesus walked this earth. In fact, it was nothing less than His blessed presence here again in the Spirit.

In 1900, when young Evan Roberts compared the church of his day, in Wales, to what he read in the New Testament, he could not stop thinking, "The church is a failure!" He began crying out to God for a supernatural awakening. Unbeknown to him, many others also were being moved to pour out their hearts in prayer for a fresh move of God in their beloved land. Soon Evan experienced an increasing, and nearly overwhelming, sense of the presence and power of God in his life.

After quitting Bible School and returning home, he felt led to hold meetings with local Young People's Groups. Suddenly in the autumn of 1904, for no human reason, hundreds, and soon thousands, of people began filling the churches seeking and finding the Lord.

Evan became the human instrument, igniting the hearts of God's people.

In a matter of weeks more than 100 000 converts were recorded. In some areas crime virtually disappeared. Magistrates ceremoniously handed white gloves to their successors to indicate there had been no convictions during their terms of service. Drunkenness, which had become a national scourge, with many social problems, became rare, and the "economy

of Wales soared."Wales became a healthy and joy-filled nation...

"I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High. I will remember the works of the Lord: surely I will remember Thy wonders of old. I will meditate also of all Thy work, and talk of Thy doing... Who is so great a God as our God? Thou art the God that doest wonders: Thou hast declared Thy strength among the people (Psalm 77:10-14)."

"The Judge is at the door (James 5:9)."

During those dark times between these divine visitations, which were generally marked by a slow but steady spiritual decline, it appeared that without the recurrence of the Spirit's renewing presence, the light of the Gospel might be extinguished in the world. (For those with eyes to see, we are living in such a time.)

Also, for those who have experienced that light in their hearts, the inward assurance of the truth of the Word of Christ renders that impossible. "...I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18).

Victory is certain

On the basis of this, and many other Biblical statements, the ultimate victory of Christ's kingdom is certain. Meanwhile the word of God that should cause the church to tremble is this inescapable truth: "Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee (Deuteronomy 8:5);" "For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God (1 Pet. 4:17)?"

We must know that all efforts made to deliver our culture from its death-slide will be in vain unless God performs a radical change in the hearts of individuals, beginning with those called by His name. This change is effected by the one thing needful, the basic defining factor in all genuine historical revivals and awakenings – the felt presence of God. This begins and is carried on by the effectual, fervent, intercessory prayer of God's holy remnant and spread to God's people by the Holy Spirit.

"For I will pour water on him who is thirsty, and floods on the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit on your descendants, and My blessing on your offspring (Isaiah 44:3)."

"I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; they shall never hold their peace day or night. You who make mention of the Lord, do not keep silent, and

give Him no rest till He establishes and till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth (Isaiah 62:6&7).

The attested record of God's presence and power unleashed in the great revivals of the past, when His people paid the price of prevailing prayer, challenges and condemns us. Have we forgotten the God of the apostles, the Church Fathers and martyrs, the true saints of the Middle Ages, the Reformers, Moravians, Wesleys, Whitefield, Edwards, Finney, Spurgeon, Moody and the countless thousands in between and since who in the holy name of Christ pulled down strongholds, threw back the forces of evil, and brought spiritual transformation to millions of lives and entire cultures?

Not one of them would have dared make any claim to personal greatness or individual heroics but were fully aware that it was: "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of hosts (Zechariah 4:6)." Do we realise that their God is our God, if we will have Him, and allow Him to have us?

When we read God's Word we see that in His programme, problem-solving begins with prayer-power. No matter how pathetic and powerless the church has become or how insane and chaotic the world around us, God is working out His eternal purpose and seeks those who will pay the price for power in prayer. Whether national, local, or personal, the release of the original power of Pentecost is always preceded by persevering prayer.

If we truly desire to see the glory of God poured out upon His church, we have the ability and the responsibility, to begin by asking God for the Spirit of prayer (see Zechariah 12:10; Luke 11:13; Acts 4:23-31; Romans 8:26&27).

What could God do today if His people cried to Him to begin a work in their hearts to settle for nothing less than a consuming desire for Him to do again what He did in Wales in 1904 and 1905 and in the Awakenings in America?

Every true child of God has the potential, and if willing may begin immediately, to become an intercessor, and join that holy, (and in most cases, hidden) fellowship of spiritual warriors who have contributed more to the survival and salvation of civilisation than most preachers, politicians and diplomats together.

In this hour of divine judgement, it is the critical need.

The ministry of intercessory prayer is a pivotal element in man's God-given dominion over this world. It is a key part

of his responsibility and an inestimable privilege to become one of those whom God uses to pray down the life-giving, sin-destroying presence and power of His Spirit.


The believer's willingness is the basic qualification for becoming a prayer warrior. Intellect, education, gifts and talents, length of time as a Christian, are all inconsequential. It is strictly a matter of the heart's desire for full surrender to God's highest calling. "The times are too tragic, God's sorrow is too great, man's night is too dark, the Cross is too glorious for us to live as we have lived, in anything short of holy obedience (Thomas Kelly)."

Christians are described as priests five times in the New Testament (1 Peter 2:5, 9; Revelation 1:6, 5:10, 20:6). The chief function of the priest is to represent man to God, and to intervene for God's mercy to sinful man. When the Israelites rebelled against God's just judgement on Korah and his followers, and the Lord threatened to destroy the congregation, Moses and Aaron fell on their faces to intercede for God's mercy. Then Aaron the priest was told to take the burning censer, representing the prayers of intercession, and stand between the dead and the living, "...and the plague was stayed (see Numbers 16:46-48)."

How His power is released

Today God delivers individuals from eternal death by revealing Himself through the regenerating power of His Spirit. God has ordained that this power is released through persistent, prevailing, intercessory prayer. Any and every true follower of Christ is called to pray for the lost. What greater ministry can there be in light of eternity?

What greater joy than to experience undeniable, direct answers to prayer, and what greater blessing than to see a widespread outpouring of God's miraculous regenerating power flowing into the hearts of precious souls all around us? It has happened in great revivals throughout history and it is occurring in some parts of the non-Western world today.

Do we realise what is happening, and not happening, or what could be happening, among us, through us, and around us, here and now, if we would beseech the Lord of harvest to grant us His Spirit of prevailing prayer? 

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The Holy Spirit's triumph in revival

by Jonathan Goforth (1859-1936)

*Jonathan Goforth was a missionary of the Canadian Presbyterian Church for a number of years in China. He and his family miraculously escaped with their lives during the Boxer Rebellion of 1900, at which time hundreds of missionaries and thousands of Chinese Christians were killed. After returning to ministry in China, Jonathan Goforth was marvelously used of God not only as an evangelist to the unsaved but also in revival movements which brought much blessing to the Chinese church. The following is a brief excerpt from Goforth's book, *By My Spirit*, in which he writes of God's working in great power.*

THE Christian community in Shinminfu had been terribly persecuted during the Boxer uprising of 1900. Fifty-four had suffered martyrdom. The ones who were left prepared a list containing 250 names in all, of those who had taken part in the massacre. It was hoped that someday the way would be opened for them to wreak complete revenge upon these murderers.

The crisis of the revival meetings held in Shinminfu was reached on the afternoon of the fourth day. Again I had the feeling that I was a witness at a scene of judgement. After the meeting had continued for about three hours I pronounced the benediction.

Immediately cries went up from all over the audience: "Please have pity on us and let the meeting go on. For days we haven't been able to sleep. And it will be just the same for another night if you don't give us a chance to get rid of our sin now."

I asked a lady missionary to take the women and girls over to the girls' school and to continue with them there until the movement subsided. I did not see any hope of the meeting ever ending otherwise.

As the women and girls were filing out, one of the evangelists came and knelt down in front of the platform. He confessed several sins with seeming genuineness, but still the burden which was plainly weighing upon him appeared to be in no way removed.

I said to him: "Since you have confessed your sins, God is faithful and just to forgive you your sins and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness. Go in peace."

"But I haven't confessed the worst sin of all," he cried brokenly. "I won't forgive."

"Then, of course," I replied, "God can't forgive you."

"But it is humanly impossible for me to forgive," he went on. "In the Boxer years a man came and murdered my father, and ever since then I've felt that it was my duty to avenge his death. Just the other day a friend of mine wrote to me, saying, 'Where's your

filial piety? Your father has been murdered, and you are living without avenging him. You aren't worthy to be my friend!' Why, I simply can't forgive that man. I must destroy him."

"Then I am afraid," I said, "that it is clear from God's Word that He can't forgive you."

He did not say anything more, but just continued on his knees, weeping.

Then a schoolboy got up and said: "In 1900 the Boxers came to my house and killed my father. All along I have felt that there was no other way open to me but that I should grow up and avenge that wrong. But during these last few days the Holy Spirit has made me so miserable that I haven't been able to eat or sleep or do anything. I know He is urging me to forgive the murderers for Jesus' sake. Do pray for me."

Another boy told how the Boxers had come to his home and killed his father and mother and elder brother. In fact, as many as nine boys went up in that way and told how their mothers and fathers and brothers and sisters had been murdered before their eyes, and how that ever since then they had lived in the hope that some day they would be able to take revenge. But they all confessed that they were utterly miserable, and asked us to pray for them that they might have grace to forgive those who had wronged them.

After the women and girls had left, the meeting continued for two and a half hours. There was just one stream of confession to the very end. And all the time the evangelist who wouldn't forgive was kneeling there by the platform, weeping. At the conclusion of the meeting he finally rose to his feet and faced the congregation. His face was drawn and haggard.

"My mind is made up," he cried. "I will never rest until I have killed the man who murdered my father." I thought that would be the last I would see of him.

When I entered the church next morning, there he was standing by the platform, his face shining like the morning. He asked for permission to say a few words before I began my address.

Turning to the schoolboys he said, "Will the boys who confessed last night and asked for grace to forgive the murderers of their loved ones please come up here to the front?" The nine boys left their seats and went and stood in a row in front of him.

"I listened to your confessions last night,



boys," said the evangelist. "I heard you say that you were willing to forgive those who killed your loved ones. Then you heard me, a leader in the church, declare that I couldn't forgive and that I would not rest until I had taken revenge on the man who murdered my father."

"When I went home after the service I thought of how the devil would be sure to take advantage of my example and put you boys to ridicule. People would say that you were too young to know your own minds. Then they would point to me as an intelligent man who surely ought to know his own mind, and say, 'He doesn't believe in that foolish talk about forgiving one's enemies.'"

"So, lest the devil should mislead you, I have bought these nine hymn books and I am going to present one to each of you, in the hope that every time you open it to praise God from its pages you will recall how that I, an evangelist, received from Him grace to forgive the murderer of my father."

Just then the list containing the names of those upon whom the Christians had planned to take revenge was brought up to the front and torn into bits and the fragments trampled under foot.

In Newchwang

A modest tombstone in Newchwang marks the resting place of William Burns (1815-1868). It was here that he last laboured for his Lord. It seems that everywhere this great Scottish evangelist went, both in the homeland and

in China, all with whom he came in contact were brought to a saving knowledge of Christ. Even the heathen carpenter who made his coffin was no exception, and was an elder in the church when I arrived there.

After the Lord had moved so mightily at Mukden, one of the missionaries there said to me: "God has certainly blessed us here, but I am afraid that He won't be able to do anything at Newchwang. The church there is so dead it ought to be buried out of sight!"

I replied: "You now know the power of God. Just pray that mercy may be shown to Newchwang."

At the close of the meetings at Liaoyang I heard the same story. "We praise God," the missionaries said, "for what He has done for us. But there's no use you expecting anything from Newchwang. It's too far gone to be revived."

And again I replied: "But you have seen God's power. Why not pray for it?"

At Kwangning and Chinchow and Shin-minfu it was just the same. Newchwang was too dead for anything, they said. It was past hope.

Mr Hunter of Kwangning had gone ahead of me to Newchwang to conduct a series of special prayer meetings. When we met at the dinner table shortly after my arrival, I could see that he was bursting with news.


"Strange things have been happening here," he cried, his face alight with joy. Just

that day at the prayer meeting, he said, a woman who had denied her Lord in 1900 in order to save her life had been terribly broken. She had prayed that another opportunity might be given her for her to offer up her life for her Master.

A Christian contractor, too, confessed in tears how he had cheated a certain concern out of \$200, and vowed that he would pay the money back before the day was out.

The meetings began the following morning. On entering the pulpit, I bowed as usual for a few moments in prayer. When I looked up it seemed to me as if every man, woman and child in that church was in the throes of judgement. Tears were flowing freely, and all manner of sin was being confessed.

What was the explanation? How was one to account for it? This was the church which had been reported to be dead and beyond all hope. Yet, without a word having been spoken, or a hymn sung, or a prayer offered, this remarkable thing had happened!

What other explanation can one offer but that it was the Spirit of God working in answer to the prayers of His revived children at Mukden and Liaoyang and elsewhere. They had seen what God could do and in the light of that vision had interceded on behalf of their needy sister church. 

Will you help us be a blessing?



Did you know that *Prepare the Way* is sent free of charge to church leaders in many African countries, as well as overseas missionaries and prisoners? But this **only** happens through the support and donations of people just like you.

If you have a heart for the nations and a desire to see churches built up through sound, Biblical teaching, then please would you consider supporting this ministry?

Prepare the Way is a 100% non-profit ministry. No-one associated with the magazine draws **any** form of salary or income from the magazine – so, very simply, every cent you give goes straight towards sending out more magazines! The more gifts we get in, the more magazines we give away – it's as simple as that.

If you are able to help, please fill in the form below, or simply do a direct deposit into the magazine's account (Prepare the Way, Standard Bank, Howick Branch, Branch code 058325, Account number 052449815)

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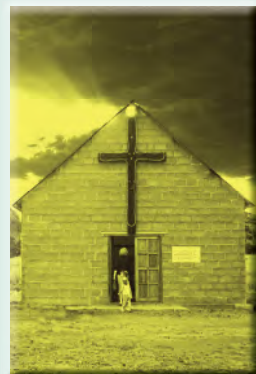
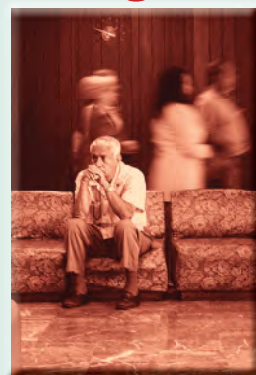
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‘Operation Moked’

Celebrating the Anniversary of Jerusalem’s Reunification

by Tim Moore

“In that day I will make the clans of Judah like a firepot among pieces of wood and a flaming torch among sheaves, so they will consume on the right hand and on the left all the surrounding peoples, while the inhabitants of Jerusalem again dwell on their own sites in Jerusalem (Zechariah 12:6).”

FIFTY years ago this June, Israel realised one of the greatest military victories in modern history. Threatened with annihilation by the surrounding Arab nations, the Jewish state instead overcame incredible odds to secure the borders we know today. The overwhelming victory propelled the end-times clock forward, and it continues to reverberate even today.

Following its declaration of independence in 1948, Israel was immediately attacked by five Arab armies. The fledgling Jewish state was miraculously able to repel those numerically superior forces.

After eight years of almost constant terrorist activity, open conflict erupted again in 1956. Israel was victorious once again. Following those embarrassing defeats, Arab leaders were determined to antagonise and escalate as they awaited another opportunity to attack.

In the 1960s, a populist general from Egypt fanned the flames of Arab nationalism. President Gamal Nasser declared himself the head of the United Arab Republic and used impassioned hatred for the “Zionist entity” to rally Arabs throughout the Middle East. He boasted and blustered until he was able to secure military alliances with Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan – effectively surrounding Israel.

In early 1967, Nasser repeatedly broadcast his intention to destroy Israel. Some historians claim that his vitriolic speeches were meant simply to arouse and inspire the “Arab street,” but, whether through intention or blundering, he indeed propelled the Arab nations toward war.

On May 16, Nasser ordered the UN Emergency Force (stationed in Sinai to ensure Arab-Israeli compliance with the 1956 ceasefire) to withdraw. In an act of diplomatic capitulation, UN Secretary General U Thant acquiesced to this demand immediately.

On May 22, Nasser laid siege to Israel by blockading the Straits of Tiran – the only access to Israel’s port at Eilat and the conduit for all of its oil. Such an aggression is recognised throughout the world as a “casus belli” – a justification for war – but Western nations, including the United States, urged Israel to restrain itself.

Making matters worse, Nasser mobilised his forces and staged them in the Sinai, substantiating his stated intention to march north through the heart of Israel.

Israel responded by mobilising its reserves – an economically crippling action to any small nation if sustained indefinitely. On June 5, waves of Israeli Air Force planes launched toward Egypt – leaving only 12 aircraft in reserve to defend the skies over Israel. Flying as low as

10 metres to avoid Egyptian radar and following carefully crafted attack plans based on painstaking intelligence, the Israelis caught the Egyptian Air Force by total surprise.

Within a matter of hours, more than 300 Egyptian aircraft were destroyed, versus only 19 Israeli planes.

Nasser claimed that Egyptian forces were overrunning the Israelis on every front and demanded that his Arab allies join the fray.

Responding to Nasser’s insistent propaganda, Syria, Jordan, and then Iraq launched aircraft on hesitant sorties against Israel – leading to devastating counter blows by the IAF. When the onslaught by air turned into a rout on the ground, Nasser continued to claim overwhelming victory.

This landmark war lasted six days and is remarkable still today for its brevity. It was ended at the insistence of the United Nations, although ironically that only occurred when the Arab nations demanded relief from the “belligerent Jews.”

The war left two significant marks on history, fulfilling Bible prophecy.

Although Israel encouraged Jordan to stay disengaged from the ground war, Arab pride required King Abdullah to enter the fray. When he did so, Israel quickly seized the West Bank territory that had been annexed by Jordan in 1948. That territory remains a political hot-potato today, with Jewish settlers eager to build on the land of Judea and Samaria while Western nations remain determined to carve out a Palestinian state.


The second momentous development occurred in the final hours of the war. Israeli political and military leaders finally authorized IDF paratroopers to rush into Old Jerusalem and reclaim Israel’s ancient capital from the Jordanian occupiers. After raging gun battles at the Jaffa Gate, IDF Chief Rabbi Shlomo Goren joined his paratroopers at the Western Wall, blew a shofar, and declared, “I proclaim to you the beginning of the Messianic Age.”

Western nations still wring their hands over Israel’s acquisition of the West Bank and Jerusalem. Their leaders have tried again and again to force Israel to relinquish its birthright to the land. Just before he left office, President Obama lifted the U.S. veto and allowed a United Nations Security Council resolution to pass which declared that Israel has no right to East Jerusalem – including the Old City and the Western Wall.

But we know that God has declared that Israel would return to

its ancient homeland, re-establish itself as a nation, and never again be removed. We also know that as the time of the Gentiles closes and Jews once again occupy Jerusalem, the King of kings is poised to return at any moment.

The air campaign that launched the Six-Day War 50 years ago was called “Operation Moked (Focus).” It demonstrated once again God’s faithfulness to His promises. As recorded in Amos 9:15: *“I will also plant them on their land, and they will not again be rooted out of their land which I have given them,” says the Lord your God.*”

Those for whom Bible prophecy resonates, know that our focus is ever and always on Jesus Christ. Just like Operation Moked caught the Egypt Air Force unprepared 50 years ago, Jesus’ arrival will come as a total surprise to those who are unaware, unprepared, and un-alert. Make sure you are ready when the trumpet sounds! 



WATCH & PRAY

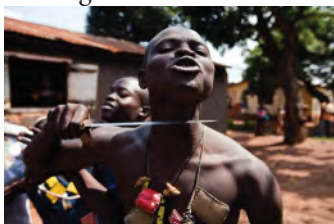
Thanks to
Elizabeth Kendal

IN IRAN, PEOPLE WANT CHANGE

There was a high turn-out to the Iranian elections on May 19 when the incumbent, President Hassan Rouhani, was comfortably re-elected. Most significantly, Rouhani won despite his opponent, hard-liner Ebrahim Raisi, being the regime's preferred candidate.

Hard-liners only ever won when reform-minded Iranians boycotted elections. But those days are over; the people are making their will known. However, nothing can change while Iran's unelected powers – the supreme leader Ayatollah Khamenei and his Revolutionary Guards – retain ultimate power. Human rights abuses, including persecution of Christians, will continue and may even be exacerbated by U.S. President Trump's overt support for, and enormous arms deal with, the Wahhabist, anti-Shi'ite, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. (Like Iran, Saudi Arabia is a leading sponsor of international terrorism.)

May God intervene to the blessing of his Church.



CHURCH IN THE FIRE IN CAR

Central African Republic (CAR) is 76 percent Christian and 13,8 percent Muslim. In March, 2013 an Islamic army

seized control of the capital Bangui. Since then CAR has seen the rise of the "anti-balaka," traditional village defence militias turned anti-Muslim vigilantes.

The fabric of society has unravelled, there has been an outbreak of sectarian conflict and the *de facto* partitioning of the country into a Christian south and Muslim north. Democracy has been restored, but violence continues as does the humanitarian crisis. From the outset, CAR's Church has been at the very centre of all humanitarian and reconciliation work, despite its risks.

Anti-balaka fighters adorned with occult charms routinely threaten to burn churches and kill pastors who shelter Muslims. The devil has established a foothold; CAR and its Church needs our prayers.

NIGERIA: 82 GIRLS FREED

In October, 2016 21 Chibok girls were released from captivity in exchange for four militant commanders. On May 7 this year, 82 Chibok girls were released in exchange for five militant commanders and reportedly millions of dollars. Boko Haram split in August, 2016 and the girls released in October had been in the custody of the Islamic State faction. This faction has declared its intention to focus on bombing Nigeria's churches.

The Chibok girls not yet released are held by the Boko Haram faction which has this year markedly escalated its

use of female suicide bombers. While we thank and praise God for the release of the girls, we must not become complacent in our prayers for Nigeria and its Church. The threat is far from over.



'BLASPHEMY,' DEATH AND INJUSTICE IN PAKISTAN

On April 12 a "humanist" Muslim university student became embroiled in a debate over religion while on campus. The next day hundreds of Islamist students stormed his room accusing him of blasphemy. Images of the horrendous lynching appearing on Facebook caused a media storm.

On 18 April Pakistan's National Assembly passed a resolution condemning the lynching and resolving to insert

"strong safeguards" into the blasphemy law to prevent future abuse. The Senate called for amendments to provide punishments to those who fabricate false blasphemy accusations. Subsequently, fundamentalist Islamists renewed their call for Asia Bibi (a Christian woman on death row for alleged blasphemy) to be executed, claiming that pogroms and lynchings are merely the consequence of Muslim frustration over the delay in Bibi's execution.

UGANDA: PASTOR TERRORISED

Christopher James Kalaja pastors the Agape Sanctuary International Church in Nakabale Village, Kaliro District, in Uganda's Muslim-dominated Eastern Region. Morning Star News has learned that on March 27, a band of nine Muslims invaded Kalaja's property and, to shouts of "Allah Akbar" (Allah is greater), hacked down the trees on his farm and tore down the church on his land.

Manna for mahala!

If you'd like to receive Peter Pollock's Daily Manna devotional, which will also take you through the whole Bible in a year, then go to our website (www.prepare.co.za), and on the home page go to the "Daily Manna Sign-up" at the top, fill in your details and we will e-mail it to you every morning. What's more, it's absolutely free!



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Prepare the Way Day: November 5

This is the date for this year's remaining *Prepare the Way* days at 9.15 a.m. at Mount Zion Church in Mervale (near Howick). Peter Pollock will be preaching – and, what's more, you're invited to stay for lunch, too!



The fellowship of the unashamed

I am part of the fellowship of the unashamed. I have the Holy Spirit's power.

The die has been cast. I have stepped over the line.

The decision has been made – I'm a disciple of His.

I won't look back, let up, slow down, back away, or be still. My past is redeemed, my present makes sense, my future is secure.

I'm finished and done with low living, sight walking, smooth knees, colourless dreams, tamed visions, worldly talking, cheap giving, and dwarfed goals.

I no longer need pre-eminence, prosperity, position, promotions, plaudits, or popularity. I don't have to be right, first, tops, recognised, praised, regarded, or rewarded.

I now live by faith, learn in His presence, walk by patience, am uplifted by prayer, and I labour with power.

My face is set, my gait is fast, my goal is heaven, my road is narrow, my way rough, my companions few, my Guide reliable, my mission clear.

I cannot be bought, compromised, detoured, lured away, turned back, deluded, or delayed.

I will not flinch in the face of sacrifices, hesitate in the presence of adversity, negotiate at the table of the enemy, pander at the pool of popularity, or meander in the maze of mediocrity.

I won't give up, shut up, let up, until I have stayed up, stored up, prayed up, paid up, preached up for the cause of Christ.

I am a disciple of Jesus. I must go on until he comes, give until I drop, preach until all know, and work until He stops me.

And, when he comes for his own, he will have no problem recognizing me... my banner will be clear. 