

Prepare^{the} Way

Preparing the Bride of Christ for the return of Christ

Issue No. 121
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Peter Pollock

**A marriage of
convenience**

**Thou shalt
not judge?**

William Booth

**If I could have
my life over...**

**The blessing
in counting
your blessings**

**The miracle that
won't be repeated**





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COVER: *Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord (Luke 2:10&11)."*

Talk to us...

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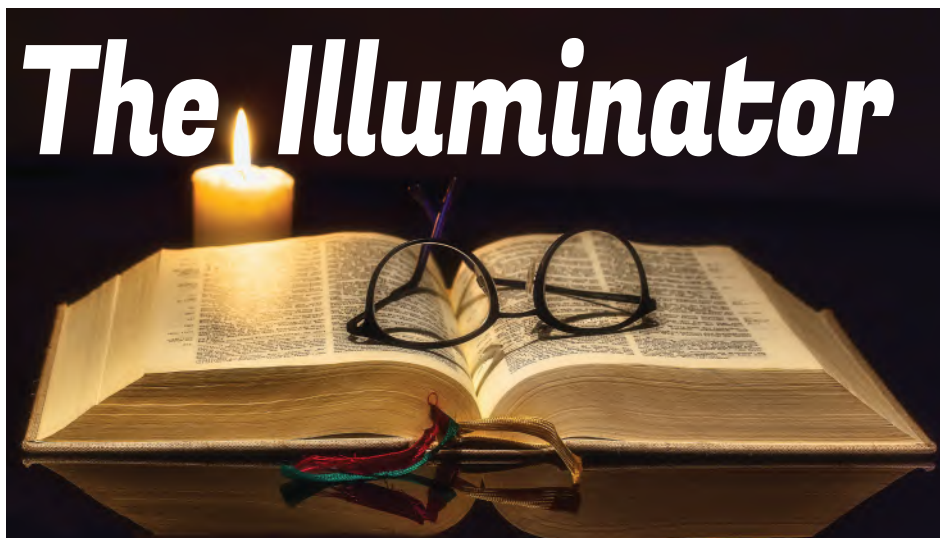
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The Illuminator



by Greg Hinnant

WHEN in 1922 British archaeologist Howard Carter, aided by candlelight, first peered into the dark, hidden, long-sealed tomb of King Tutankhamen, his associate asked him what he saw. “Wonderful things, wonderful things!” was his reply.

Indeed, Tut’s tomb was a treasure chamber filled with unimaginable wealth – ancient, hidden, shrouded in darkness.

Can we not compare it to the Bible?

It, too, is ancient, inscribed thousands of years ago; and its meaning hidden, though in plain sight and under incessant scholarly scrutiny; and shrouded in darkness, specifically, doubts, fears, and heresies inspired by the rulers of darkness to prevent its treasures of truth from being known; and of unimaginable wealth, the unspeakable eternal riches of the knowledge of God that far surpasses the temporal worth of earthly gold and silver.

Just a simple, single candle lit Carter’s way into Tut’s treasure chamber. Once inside, his candle illuminated one wonder after another and another, leaving the rest for the moment in darkness, until eventually all Tut’s treasures were, at least visually, his.

Jesus appointed another Candle, the Holy Spirit, to lead Bible archaeologists into the wonder-filled examination of His treasure chambers of truth. He is our Illuminator. “He shall teach you all things,” Jesus said, and “guide you into all truth,” and “take of mine, and shall show it to you (John 14:26; 16:13, 15).”

Of the Spirit’s life-changing work of illumination, R. C. Sproul wrote: “Though the Scriptures themselves are light for us, there is need for additional illumination so that we may clearly perceive the light. The same Holy Spirit who inspires the

Scripture, works to illumine the Scriptures for our benefit. He sheds more light on the original light.”

And Paul informs us the Illuminator can, if we will, show us even God’s deepest wonders: “The Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God (1 Corinthians 2:10).”

If we first receive Him, and then learn to humbly ask His help every time we read or study Scripture, the Illuminator will spotlight the correct interpretation, key idea or principle, and life application of every text or passage in the Bible.

He does so not only by personally enlightening our minds but also through others specially gifted and called to interpret the Bible. So we need the Spirit’s personal inner tutelage and also the aid of the wonderful Bible translations, study tools, and commentaries Spirit-filled, devoted Christian scholars have made available to us.

Endless discovery

This opens before us a life of endless spiritual discovery.

As biblical archaeologists walking through a 66-room treasure chamber, we will not see all the Bible’s truths clearly at once but we will see them clearly one at a time. One text here, one topic there will become our treasured possession as we patiently and thoughtfully ponder them. Provided, of course, we continue walking with God and studying His Word day by day.

Eventually we will see and understand all its treasures. If we obey the Illuminator. And if our motive is correct.

Why do we study the Bible?

To be known as wise? Wrong reason!

To know more than another believer or minister whose biblical knowledge we

envy? Wrong reason!

To quote scripture impressively? Wrong!

To compose and deliver sermons or write and edit books? Wrong!

To be honoured as a Bible expert? Wrong again!

Jesus said the Illuminator hides the Scripture’s inner meaning from those who are “wise and prudent” in their own view (Luke 10:21). Such motivations snuff out our Candle’s light.

Or do we study Scripture to find something to believe? Right reason!

To more fully know its Author, our Saviour? Right reason!

To get closer to Him? Right!

To more clearly understand His will? To find something to obey? To understand our times? To discover gems of truth and invaluable insights with which to enrich and deliver others? Right, all right!

These right motives also need the right methods.


In our very well-educated generation many take a head-first approach. They imagine the intellectual comprehension of the Bible as human literature is the sole key to unlocking its wonders. If we understand the word meanings, idioms, cultural features, and historical contexts of the Bible, we have discovered all it has to offer. Yet while intellectual or academic study is a part of the process, it’s not the most important.

A heart-first method is most effective. Devotion to Christ leads to knowledge of Christ. Full consecration, utter abandonment to Christ, these lead the way into the treasure chambers where priceless spiritual insights await our discovery.

The Illuminator teaches most those who love most.

Is my Bible study devotionally driven or spurred only by academic curiosity, or worse, rank religious pride? If the latter, the true wonders of the Word are sealed off from us. If the former, we’re on the right track, and among the “babes” (simple, childlike believers) Jesus said His Father has chosen to receive an illumination of the “deep things of God.”

That is, if we continue obeying. If we continue believing. If we continue having the right motives. If we continue refusing to let hard tests end our wonder-filled exploration of God’s biblical treasure chamber.

And if we continue asking the Illuminator’s help. Then, “wonderful things, wonderful things” await us in God’s wonder-filled Word! And, unlike those Carter discovered, ours will never be exhausted. 



by Peter Pollock

SOMETIMES a seemingly tame and innocuous verse will jump out at you from the scriptures. It might well be completely out of context, but for you it's a direct and profound "revelation."

The verse in question for me is Isaiah 4:1. It laid hold of me the moment I read it and the "understanding" or "message" was instant. It was later to firmly cement itself for me when over the years I found out that tried and trusted men of God – David Wilkerson, A.W. Tozer and Finnis Jennings Dakes – shared and had "seen" a similar prophetic insight and interpretation.

Simply, Isaiah chapters 2 and 3 deal with God's judgement on Judah and Israel (also is prophetically viewed as God's concurrent judgement on our world) leading up to Chapter 4, which deals prophetically with the return of Jesus Christ.

People and nations infatuated with themselves and by their own success; worshipping the work of their own hands; the ideals of nationalism and patriotism and the dominance of Eastern ways and soothsayers! An amoral society that does not fear God, endures famines and droughts, mob, majority rule and servants governing, immature youngsters in charge – no respect, just insolence and women calling the shots.

Men have abdicated their roles, and spiritually there is no fragrance or aroma, just a visible "church" that is destitute spiritually. It's a godless world under judgement – an absolute promise of Bible prophecy!

We are in those end times right now. And for me, accurately and symbolically describing that "10 virgins" end time church is Isaiah 4:1: "Seven women take hold of one man saying: we will eat our own food and provide our own clothes on let us be called by your name, to take away our disgrace."

The seven women represent the seven end-time churches in the Book of Revelation. This church "combination" takes hold of one man – JESUS CHRIST – saying that all they want is forgiveness and a ticket to heaven. They don't want anything to do with eating "His food" or wearing "His clothes." Oh, no, thank you very much!

Forgiveness and a good name

All they want is forgiveness, a good name and an assurance of heaven. Symbolically, figuratively and spiritually it's the tragic bottom line. That's the liberal, post-modern, post-truth, synthetic, pseudo, worldly, visible, apostate, seeker-friendly end-time "bride" that dares to call itself the church in these modern days!

It is a self-indulgent, self-absorbed, self-serving new-age church. This bride is not interested in loving Him, obeying Him or being intimate with Him or depending on Him. No sir!

All she wants is forgiveness. Love is not an issue for this bride. Just a good name, some security and a healthy inheritance. It's an arrangement. Nothing to do with falling in love, serving, cherishing, obey-

ing and honouring. Simply an arrangement, without intimacy or devotion.

All this bride/church wants is forgiveness and relief from guilt and condemnation. Being forgiven is the entire focus, a church of cheap grace. It ties in with the seven churches in Revelation who variously: lost first love; are lukewarm; have committed adultery and soiled their bridal outfits; and who need salve to address their nakedness and open their spiritual eyes!

God has always offered to clothe us, to dress us in white in Jesus Christ. Symbolically this is represented by marriage, in all its commitment, obedience and intimacy.

But no ways! We only want the glory side of the marriage, the title, the sex and the goose bumps. Yes, Mister Preacher, don't tell us about dying to self, holiness, separation from the world's values, sanctification, besetting sin, heaven, hell, damnation, judgement, a narrow road and few being saved!

And we certainly don't want to hear from those "remnant" and "rapture" radicals! Modern leaders, some of whom profess to be apostles, respond: "People don't want a hard gospel. We are giving them what they need in troubled times."

Yes, truth is now a hard gospel. And sin has fancy names. False prophets abound with their "peace, peace" messages and their ear-tickling teachings and sermons.

OUR OWN FOOD? Our own gospel, the feel-good gospel; the gospel of permissive love with no reproof, no smiting conviction and no repentance. It's a modern gospel that has undermined and even

removed the “fear of God.” The true house of God will have none of this!

OUR OWN CLOTHES? Dress as we please. Do our own thing. Cheap grace. Unlimited love and mercy! Humanism – that’s all it is. No intimacy. No love. No companionship. No submission. No fasting. No praying. No time seeking His presence. No secret place. No passion. None of these!

Rather, shallow religion and cheap grace. It’s just what Jesus can do for me. I just want to be called a Christian. I just want to be forgiven and get to heaven. I just want a saviour, not a Lord.

It’s a marriage of convenience, seeking a Sugar Daddy!

Revelation 12 tells us that the devil knows his time is short. So how do we survive these end times? Simply by the blood of the Lamb; by the word of our testimony and that we do not love our lives unto death!

We need to come to the end of ourselves, give up our independent right to ourselves, acknowledge our sin and wretchedness, repent and take up the cross daily.

Once we have truly met Jesus, we will have a testimony because when Jesus comes into a life that life changes. If there is no change there is no Jesus! And there will be opposition, adversity and maybe even martyrdom, but for me the most important “death” is dying to self. That is top of the slate because it all has to start right there.

Success in the spiritual realm is only in the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit underlines this truth by convicting us on sin, righteousness and judgement and always glorifying Jesus.

But, steadfastly and obstinately we still prefer our “own clothes” and our “own food,” even though we attend church regularly and proclaim to be believers. We don’t want the “burden” of the Lord or the ever-convicting presence of the Holy Spirit because it’s downright uncomfortable to be constantly reminded of our wretchedness and inadequacies.

But compromise and disobedience produce powerlessness in the Christian walk, and when I talk about “power” I am not talking about signs and wonders, ministries and “gifts,” but about the real power of a true testimony – and that is the “Habakkuk 3” power that produces joy and peace despite all else collapsing around you.

Sadly, as we look around there is a absence of spiritual authority and maturity, leadership and growth – and, quite frank-

ly, an absence of true life in the Spirit.

Indeed, it is quite easy to “talk up,” “act up” and “praise up” a storm! With money and music, skill and professionalism, we can certainly hype up the action. There is an overdose of “faith” in the concept of faith and unholy presumption in much that is being preached.

But, bottom line, the Spirit is not moving, nothing is happening and there is just no revival. When the Holy Spirit truly moves you will know. There are no arguments or questions when there is real revival. People get saved! There is conviction and repentance, “holy hushes” and weeping as lives are challenged and changed – never to be the same again.

It’s not about goose bumps and good feelings, noise and action. It’s about people flat on their faces before an awesome God. True revival changes people, families and communities in the name of Jesus.

A naked intent towards God

Holiness is separation unto God to a life of obedience. It is naked intent towards God as we become bondservants, slaves of righteousness and not just “hearers” but “doers” of the Word and the will of God.

As God writes His law on our hearts, our consciences become quickened and the sanctification process well and truly gets under way. We begin to pray earnestly and feed our spiritual computers with God’s mind, all set into motion as we avidly read our Bibles.

As we start feeding our spirits, we counter the dominance that worldly lust of the mind and body has exerted upon our lives since the day we were born. It’s a tough battle – one that needs total consecration and commitment.

As the days and years go by, the spirit becomes stronger and stronger so that, hopefully, we get to the point of being not only being spiritually-minded men and women but spiritually-dominated in the way we think and the things we do.

Temptations don’t stop – they might even increase – but the sanctification process ensures that we are better able to recognise them, deal with them and even grow and mature out of them.

God has ordained that we need to listen and be participant in the obedience process.

When I first got saved, God’s message came home loud and clear. I was to stop drinking! I could not imagine life without a couple of beers, so I was not a very willing listener. Reading that Jesus turned water

into wine, Timothy was encouraged to have a little wine with the meal, and that it was “not about eating or drinking but the circumcision of the heart” helped stir my rebellion. Then finally one day, the penny dropped – and on my knees before the cross at a local church, I repented and was delivered of alcohol. I would never be the same again, a true testimony turning point.

But oh how I had argued, debated, made deals and crawled through every nook and cranny of disobedience and rebellion before getting there. Jesus requires OBEDIENCE!

Sorry, but it is an absolute. No debate, and no discussion. Just a need to hear admonition and respond obediently. Often in counselling discussions, I am told that people are “working through” an issue! Sorry again, but that’s a cop-out for disobedience.

God’s commands are not suggestions or requests. If you love ME you DO as I say. Obedience actually establishes faith, not merit, because if you truly believe you will “listen” and “do.”

“Believe” is a continuous Greek verb that means “listening” and “obeying” at the same time, and on an ongoing basis. Discussion and debate, dare I say, do tend to undermine and hinder the teaching and preaching of God’s Word.

Timothy was strongly exhorted to “preach the Word” – not “from” or “about” it. The Word is so clearly and categorically laid out for us. Tell it as it is! If God says so, it is so. It’s not just a starting point for a series, a debate or an opinion.

And there are consequences! Yes, there are bad fruits out of disobedience. One of the most tragic consequences is “hard hearts” in the house of God. These hard hearts are not atheists and unbelievers, but “listeners” who refuse to become “doers.”

The Synagogue of Satan! Revelation explains they are those who “say they are believers but are not.” Goats, not sheep, tares not wheat, existing alongside the true believers down the pews and aisles of Sunday mornings.

It is possible to love hearing God’s Word; even appreciate and approve it; yet grow incurably hard while listening. True conversion produces fruit, change, growth, obedience, patience, humility and death to self. It is a passion, an attitude, a way of life.

Otherwise, it is just another loveless, Lord-less, divorce-bound, marriage of convenience! ☹️



Sons of the cross

by **Jessie Penn-Lewis**

"To the chief Musician upon Gittith, A Psalm for the sons of Korah. How amiable are thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts (Psalms 84:1)!"

IN a sermon the Rev. C. H. Pridgeon gives some very helpful renderings of these words in the title of Psalm 84.

Speaking on the 6th verse of the Psalm – "Who passing through the Valley of Baca make it a well" – the preacher pointed out the suggestiveness of the title, "Upon Gittith." He specifically emphasised its meaning concerning the winepresses, signifying that the psalm was probably sung at the time the wine was being pressed out of the grapes.

The words, too, "A psalm for the sons of Korah," are equally instructive, because "the word Korah is about equivalent to our word Calvary – the place of a skull. Spiritually, therefore, these 'sons of Korah' may be termed the 'sons of the Cross.' Some of the ancients so read these words..."

Summarising these points the psalm may, therefore, be said to be a psalm written for the use of the "sons of the Cross," who are passing through the winepress in the Valley of Baca.

A psalm for the Valley of Baca! A psalm to sing in the winepress! Only "sons of the Cross" can sing in the winepress, for they

know the secret of the ways of God – that out of death comes life; out of suffering, heavenly joy; out of nothingness, the very fullness of God. Therefore, they do not see the winepress, and the cross, in their outward pain and loss, as men see them, but from the viewpoint of the "tabernacles of the Lord of Hosts" – from the sanctuary of the heart of God – and they can sing in the winepress when they see the "wine" of the life of heaven pressed out of them in life-blessing to the souls of men, and know that He Who trod the winepress alone for their sakes is satisfied.

A psalm to sing in the winepress

A psalm to sing in the winepress! And what do they sing? "How lovely are Your tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts," "My soul longs – yes, even faints – for the courts of the Lord."

When earth is darkest in the winepress, then heaven is opened, and God becomes all in all. And they sing – these sons of the Cross – of the blessedness of the one whose strength is in God, and not in circumstances, or earth-born helps and props.

The Hebrew word means "might"

or "endurance." "Blessed is the man whose 'might' – or power of endurance – is in YOU."

"Behold, we count them happy who endure," writes the apostle. "You have heard of the endurance of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord (James 5:11)."

Yes, happy Job, that he had strength to endure until the hour came when his captivity was turned, and he received of the Lord "twice as much as he had before." For the "end of the Lord" is double for all the pain of the winepress. And the length of the time in the winepress valley is the measure of the power of endurance which the soul has in God, and the foreshadowing of the "double" which will come forth in winepress blessing to others.

And they sing; yes, they sing, these sons of the Cross, when they find that in the winepress their hearts have been "melted like wax in the midst" of them (Psalm 22:14). Like their Lord upon His Cross, in the melting, the old limitations have passed away, and their once-closed hearts have become "highways to Zion" for others seeking after God.

No longer closed to the sorrows of others, shut up in narrow bounds of sympathy and love, but hearts now enlarged and open to the needs of a dying world, for

“whoever sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart of compassion from him, how does the love of God abide in him (1 John 3:17)?”

Oh, the closed hearts among the people of God! Oh, the high walls over which none can leap, surrounding their sympathy and love!

It is worth the winepress to have the exterior of the “grape” bruised and broken, if thereby the “wine” of the love of God can be freed to pass out to a world needing more sympathy than preaching, more love than law.

Blessed is he “in whose heart are the highways to Zion” for a needy world – a heart open for all in need of God, to enter, and march through it to Zion – even unto God.

But more than all, the “sons of the Cross” can sing in the winepress valley, because there they find that they themselves have become a “place of springs” for the water of life to others.

They had sought with earnest longings to be channels for “rivers of living water” to flow out to others, and they had “believed” and “believed,” according to the letter of the word (John 7:37), but still these “rivers” did not flow.

But at last the secret was revealed by the Providence of God. They found themselves one day in the winepress valley, and then the rivers flowed! It was an hour when all men seemed to trample with their feet these “grapes” in the winepress of God, when lo, a spring of divine love, pure as crystal and sweet with the sweetness of heaven, opened in their hearts to the trampling souls, and they knew that they were in the “place of springs” – the heart of God – the heart of God revealed in the heart of Christ upon the Cross of Calvary.

“If You are the Son of God, come down from the Cross,” they cried, “come down from the Cross.” Come out of the winepress! But, how then shall others be saved? How then shall the life of God be given to the souls of men?

And even thus must the “sons of the Cross” follow the Lamb into the winepress of Calvary, if through them shall be given the “wine” of the life of Christ to a dying world.

The Psalmist speaks of only a “passing through” the winepress valley; and truth to tell it can be only a “passing through” from time to time, as the “sons of the Cross” press on in following the Lamb.

But as the divine life is increasingly imparted, and divine strength is given, those

who know the “place of springs” rejoice each time they are counted worthy to be given winepress joy – yes, the joy of the Lamb, Who on nearing His Cross could say to His little company of sorrowing friends: “My joy I give to you.” The joy which was set before Him for which He could endure the Cross and despise the shame. The joy which can only be known in seeing Calvary from the heart of God; from the viewpoint of heaven.

These souls who thus know the winepress valley as a place of springs, go from “strength to strength” (or, in the Hebrew, “force to force”) and “every one of them appears before God in Zion.”

Yes, in New Testament language, every one of them emerge into that hidden life with Christ in God, for these are the “overcomers” who are “lifted above all” by the loss of all!

From “force to force” they go, through the winepress valleys; more and more losing the earth-life as they are driven on out of extremity into resources which are to be found alone in God, more and more detached from all that earth holds dear to dwell in the heavens with the reigning Lord.

The purpose of Pentecostal fullness

This conformity to the Son of God in His path of the Lamb, is the purpose of the Pentecostal fullness of the Spirit, rather than the “signs and wonders” which dazzle the eyes of men.

“You shall receive power to be martyrs,” was the promise of the Risen Lord to His disciples, and this surely means in one aspect that just as “through the Eternal Spirit” He offered Himself to God, so all His followers would need the power of the Holy Spirit to follow Him and be conformed to His image – the image of a Lamb.

There are two spheres of service which follow the knowledge of the fullness of the Holy Spirit – the one of mighty works, and the other of being a life-channel for the life of God to quicken other souls.

The one is the result of “doing,” and the other of suffering.

The one stage may be likened in the life of Christ to His mighty works after the baptism in Jordan, and the other as the result of His poured-out life at Calvary.

The Cross may be the “terminus” in the experience of the believer, in the sense of

death with Christ to sin and the world; but as that “terminus” attitude of death with Christ is maintained by faith and obedience, the believer is then led on by the Spirit into a fellowship with Christ’s death for life to others.

These are the “Sons of the Cross” who joyfully consent to enter into fellowship with their Lord, that His life in them may be poured forth in springs of life to needy souls.


It is of the deepest importance that we co-operate with the Spirit of God in the stage of the divine life which He has brought us into. It is possible to be turned back in our spiritual progress by seeking an experience which may look more advanced than the path indicated by the apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 4:10-12: “Always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus’ sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death is working in us, but life in you.”

The highest purpose of God in the believer is not to make him so much a powerfully-used instrument, as to bring forth in him the fullest manifestation of Christ in every aspect of His character, and this can only be done in the winepress valley of fellowship with His sufferings.

He was “crucified through weakness.” There were no mighty signs and wonders wrought by Him to thrill the multitude at Calvary; but in His weakness and Lamb-silence in suffering and His poured-out life, He did more for the world than when He healed the sick and cast out demons in Galilee.

Oh that this pure and lovely pattern may be unveiled to the eager children of God at this time who are seeking intensely what they term “God’s best” – the pattern of the Christ in His Lamb-likeness conquering the hosts of darkness, not by fighting but by death.

And this beautiful Lamb-likeness of the Lord Christ will not be wrought in us by “visions” of Calvary, nor by sudden and mystical experiences of entering into the sufferings of His Cross – but by the daily and hourly choosing of the will of God in the discipline of life.

The “answering not again” when accused of many things; the hidden and silent path of sacrifice unknown to men; the doing good and suffering for it as evildoers worthy of death... 



Error and truth travel the same highways

by A.W. Tozer

THERE are areas of Christian thought – and because of thought then also of life – where likenesses and differences are so difficult to distinguish that we are often hard pressed to escape complete deception. So skilled is error at imitating truth that the two are constantly being mistaken for each other.

It is therefore critically important that the Christian take full advantage of every provision God has made to save him from delusion. These are: prayer, faith, constant meditation on the Scriptures, obedience, humility, hard, serious thought and the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

These are the times that try men's souls. The latter times are upon us and we cannot escape them; we must triumph in the midst of them (1 Timothy 4:1&2)."

Strange as it may seem, the danger today is greater for the fervent Christian than for the lukewarm and the self-satisfied. The seeker after God's best things is eager to hear anyone who offers a way by which he can obtain them, particularly if it is presented by someone with an attractive personality and a reputation for superior godliness.

Now our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, has not left His flock to the mercy of the wolves. He has given us the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit and natural

powers of observation. "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good," said Paul (1 Thessalonians 5:21). "Beloved, believe not every spirit," wrote John (1 John 4:1). "Beware of false prophets...you shall know them by their fruits," our Lord warned (Matthew 7:15&16).

For those who want a rule by which they can test everything I make available here a little secret by which I have tested my own spiritual experiences and religious impulses for many years.

Briefly stated the test is this: This new doctrine, this new religious habit, this new view of truth, this new spiritual experience – how has it affected my attitude toward and my relation to God, Christ, the Holy Scriptures, self, other Christians, the world and sin?

By this sevenfold test we may prove everything religious.

1 One vital test of all religious experience is how it affects our relation to God, our concept of God and our attitude toward Him. Any doctrine, any experience that serves to magnify Him is likely to be inspired by Him.

The heart of man is like a musical instrument and may be played upon by the Holy Spirit, by an evil spirit or by the spirit of man himself. Religious emotions are very much the same, no matter who the player may be.

Many enjoyable feelings may be aroused

within the soul by low or even idolatrous worship.

The nun who kneels "breathless with adoration" before an image of the Virgin is having a genuine religious experience. She feels love, awe and reverence, all enjoyable emotions, as certainly as if she were adoring God.

The mystical experiences of Hindus and Sufis cannot be brushed aside as mere pretence. Neither dare we dismiss the high religious flights of spiritists and other occultists as imagination. These may have and sometimes do have genuine encounters with something or someone beyond themselves.

In the same way, Christians are sometimes led into emotional experiences that are beyond their power to comprehend. I have met such and they have inquired eagerly whether or not their experience was of God.

The big test is, What has this done to my relationship to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (Revelation 4:11)?

2 The next test is: How has this new experience affected my attitude toward the Lord Jesus Christ? Whatever place present-day religion may give to Christ, God gives Him top place in earth and in heaven.

He must stand at the centre of all true doctrine, all acceptable practice and all genuine Christian experience. Christless Christianity sounds contradictory but it

exists as a real phenomenon in our day.

Again, there are psychic experiences that thrill the seeker and lead him to believe that he has indeed met the Lord and been carried to the third heaven; but the true nature of the phenomenon is discovered later when the face of Christ begins to fade from the victim's consciousness.

If on the other hand the new experience tends to make Christ indispensable, if it takes our interest off our feelings and places it in Christ, we are on the right track.

Whatever makes Christ dear to us is pretty sure to be from God (Matthew 3:17, Acts 2:36, 4:12, John 14:6).

3 Another revealing test is: How does it affect my attitude toward the Holy Scriptures? Did this new experience, this new view of truth, spring out of the Word of God itself?

Whatever originates outside the Scriptures should for that very reason be suspect until it can be shown to be in accord with them. However high the emotional content, no experience can be proved to be genuine unless we can find chapter and verse authority for it in the Scriptures (Isaiah 8:20).

Whatever is new or singular should also be viewed with a lot of caution. In recent years quite a number of unscriptural notions have gained acceptance among Christians by claiming that they were among the truths that were to be revealed in the last days.

The truth is that the Bible does not teach that there will be new light and advanced spiritual experiences in the latter days; it teaches the exact opposite. Beware of any man who claims to be wiser than the apostles or holier than the martyrs of the Early Church.

While true power lies not in the letter of the text but in the Spirit that inspired it, we should never underestimate the value of the letter. The text of truth has the same relation to truth as the honeycomb has to honey. One serves as a receptacle for the other.

But there the analogy ends. The honey can be removed from the comb, but the Spirit of truth cannot and does not operate apart from the letter of the Holy Scriptures. For this reason a growing acquaintance with the Holy Spirit will always mean an increasing love for the Bible.

4 Again, we can prove the quality of religious experience by its effect on self-life. The Holy Spirit and the fallen

human self are diametrically opposed to each other (Galatians 5:17). Before the Spirit of God can work creatively in our hearts He must have our full consent to displace our natural self with the Person of Christ.

This displacement is carefully explained in Romans 6, 7 and 8.

A good rule is this: If this experience has served to humble me and make me little and vile in my own eyes, it is of God, but if it has given me a feeling of self-satisfaction it is false and should be dismissed as emanating from self or the devil.

Nothing that comes from God will minister to my pride or self-congratulation.

5 Our relation to and our attitude toward our fellow Christians is another accurate test. Sometimes an earnest Christian will, after some remarkable spiritual encounter, withdraw himself from his fellow-believers and develop a spirit of faultfinding. He may be honestly convinced that he is now in an advanced state of grace, and that the *hoi polloi* in the church where he attends are but a mixed multitude.

This is a dangerous state of mind, and the more dangerous because it can justify itself by the facts. The brother has had a remarkable experience. It is not that he is mistaken in his facts that proves him to be in error, but that his reaction to the facts is of the flesh. His new spirituality has made him less charitable.

Any religious experience that fails to deepen our love for our fellow Christians may safely be written off as spurious (1 John 3:18&19, 4:7&8, 5:1, John 13:35).

6 Another certain test is this: Note how it affects our relation to and our attitude toward "the world." I do not mean, of course, the beautiful order of nature. Neither do I mean the world of lost men (John 3:16).

Certainly any true touch of God in the soul will deepen our appreciation of nature and intensify our love for the lost. I refer here to the world of carnal enjoyments, of godless pleasures, of the pursuit of earthly riches and reputation and sinful happiness – in short, unregenerate human society romping on its way to hell, the exact opposite of the true Church of God (1 John 2:15-17, 2 Corinthians 6:14).

Any spirit that permits compromise with the world is a false spirit. Any religious movement that imitates the world in any of its manifestations is false to the cross of

Christ and on the side of the devil.

7 The last test of the genuineness of Christian experience is what it does to our attitude toward sin. Whatever makes holiness more attractive and sin more intolerable may be accepted as genuine (Titus 2:11-13).

Jesus warned, "There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they should deceive the very elect (Matthew 24:24). These words describe our day too well to be coincidental.

The farther we push into the sanctuary the greater becomes the danger of self-deception. The deeply religious man is far more vulnerable than the easy-going fellow who takes his religion lightly. This latter may be deceived but he is not likely to be self-deceived.

Most men, indeed, play at religion as they play at games, religion itself being of all games the one most universally played.

The unattended garden will soon be overrun with weeds; the heart that fails to cultivate truth and root out error will shortly be a theological wilderness.


A bit of healthy disbelief is sometimes as needful as faith to the welfare of our souls. It is no sin to doubt some things, but it may be fatal to believe everything.

Faith never means gullibility. Credulity never honours God. The gullible mentality is like the ostrich that will gulp down anything that looks interesting.

I have met Christians with no more discrimination than the ostrich.

The healthy soul, like the healthy blood stream, has its proper proportion of white and red cells. The red corpuscles are like faith: they carry the life-giving oxygen to every part of the body. The white cells are like disbelief: they pounce upon dead and toxic matter and carry it out to the drain.

Thus, the two kinds of cells working together keep the tissues in good condition. In the healthy heart there must be provision for keeping dead and poisonous matter out of the lifestream. This the credulous person never suspects. He is all for faith.

Along with our faith in God must go a healthy disbelief of everything occultic and esoteric. Numerology, astrology, spiritism, and everything weird and strange that passes for religion must be rejected. All this is toxic matter and has no place in the life of a true Christian. He has Christ, and He is the way, the truth and the life. 

Thou shalt not judge?



by *Evangeline Smock McKay*

FROM a young age, I have ministered open-air on America's college campuses with my parents. I preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to unbelieving students, convicting them of sin, righteousness and judgement. The college students immediately take offence when told that God has condemned them for their sin.

Soon, a few students will huddle together and search frantically for Bible verses to prove me wrong. They rush back with, "Judge not, lest you be judged (Matthew 7:1)."

This common occurrence has provoked me to Biblical study and research on the subject of judging. My intention is to prove that Christians not only may, but must judge.

First, I will demonstrate that it is impossible *not* to judge, and second, that the Bible commands believers to judge.

The fact that it is impossible not to judge must be seen by examining everyday activities. All people judge and could no more avoid it than they could avoid breathing.

Judging as defined in the *American Heritage Dictionary* is: "To form an opinion or estimation of after careful consideration: judge heights; judging character."

Some examples of judging are: telling someone he is a great person, choosing friends, deciding what church to attend, saying Hitler was a bad man, choosing whether to walk or to run, or choosing what to have for dinner.

All people must make choices, and every choice is a judgement. Even by choosing

not to judge, one is making a judgment; one is simply judging that it is wrong to judge.

Therefore, if you do not judge, you judge, and if you do judge, you judge. Judging is an inevitable part of human life. For instance, one must judge whom to marry or even whether to marry. Judging is a necessity. I challenge anyone to try to go one day without judging. It is impossible; the very attempt is in itself a judgement.

After hearing the above argument, some will respond, "That is just logic; show me Bible verses to prove this." It is easy to find Scriptures that command Christians to pass judgement.

Rebuked for not judging

Six times, in his first letter to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul instructs believers to judge, and twice he rebukes them for not judging. "But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is judged of no man (1 Corinthians 2:15)."

So, if someone is truly saved he has the responsibility to judge good and evil. Later, in chapter 6:3, Paul questions the Corinthians, "Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more things that pertain to this life?"

The apostle reasons that because God considers Christians able to judge angels, the same believers are also qualified to judge people, who are lower than the angels.

Finally, in verse 5, Paul reproves the believers for their lack of judgement. "I

speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? No, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?" The apostle indicates that a wise man will judge.

Paul is not the only Biblical writer who commands believers to judge. Jesus exhorts in Luke 12:57, "And why do you not even on your own initiative judge what is right?" The Lord expressed frustration that men will not judge right from wrong.

In Leviticus 19:15, Moses writes "In righteousness you shall judge your neighbour." Here is another one of the numerous verses directing judgement.

Whether in church life or personal life, sound discernment is always a necessity. For example, what if a man asked a woman for a date? Should that woman not judge him, when she has evidence that he is not of a good moral character? It would not be wise for her to say, "I must not judge, so I will go out with him."

In contrast, is it not also true that by deciding not to judge, and going on the date, she would be judging in his favour?

Though many ministers preach from the pulpit, "You shall not judge," all mainline denominations have some form of excommunication and church discipline.

In Matthew 18, Jesus gives the proper procedures to follow to reprimand those who sin. To allow sin to remain in the camp is historically and Biblically corrupt. However, one should always keep in mind that the purpose of chastisement is so that the wayward member will repent and then be restored to favour.

If the civil authority punishes those who

break the law and rightly so, how much more should the church?

"The local congregational leadership does well to remember that the Lord requires of their hands an accounting of the blood of each member. What the disciplined member does becomes his responsibility; what the leaders fail to do is permanently theirs," L. DeKoster writes in *The Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*.

Held accountable

Many people believe that though as Christians they may judge other Christians, they should not judge unbelievers. Ezekiel wrote to the contrary. The following verses show that the righteous who fail to judge the wicked will be held accountable to God for their souls:

"When I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, that same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. Yet, if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul (Ezekiel 3:18&19)."

Assuredly, God considers it very important that the righteous should judge the wicked.

To fulfil the Great Commission to preach the Gospel to all the world, Christians must warn the unbelievers that they are condemned. "And Jesus said to them, 'Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he who does not believe shall be condemned (Mark 16:15&16).'"

Does this verse mean that Christians are to preach God's mercy and forgiveness to the lost, without mentioning that if they reject this good news, they will be damned to hell for eternity? I think not. It would not be right nor fair to fail to tell people the whole truth.

Jesus' final words in Matthew 28:19-20 are, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

If disciples are to teach a new way of life, they have to warn that the old life is wrong.

Anyone who evangelises discovers that one of the few verses that every sinner knows is Matthew 7:1, "Judge not, that you be not judged."

It is unfortunate that this verse is often taken out of context by those who care nothing for God or his commandments. Reading the next few verses, one can see that the correct interpretation of this passage is very different:

"For with what judgement you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye;' and look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye (Matthew 7:2-5)."

Jesus is telling the hypocrite not to judge. For instance, the thief should not condemn his neighbour for stealing. But Jesus is by no means forbidding the Christian to judge. In fact, in verse 5 he again says to judge. Jesus directs the hypocrite to first cast the beam (sin) out of his own life; then he may judge justly.

When a sinner repents and turns to God, it is then his duty as a good Christian to judge.

"And Jehoshaphat said to the judges, 'Take heed what you do: for you judge not for man, but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgement. Therefore let the fear of the Lord be upon you; take heed and do it (2 Chronicles 19:6&7).'"

A faithful duty

This verse tells the faithful that it is their duty to judge rightly because they are God's representatives. They must remember to be careful to remain true to God's Word, for they are not actually judging for themselves, but simply teaching the Bible.

Evangelists should judge people according to Scripture rather than by their own personal convictions.

People commonly argue that it is not loving to judge others, but consider Leviticus 19:17: "Do not hate your brother in your heart. Rebuke your neighbour frankly so you will not share in his sin."

A reproof might seem unloving on the surface, but this verse teaches that one who does not judge actually hates his brother.

The Bible teaches that those in sin are

condemned to hell. If Christians do not tell their fellow human beings this, they may burn forever in hell. Is it not loving to warn them before it is too late?

In conclusion, not only is it impossible not to judge, but it is by far the most right and loving thing to do. I challenge Christians to do their duty and judge in this present world. It is a Christian's obligation to judge!

If believers do not judge, they are partly responsible for the sinner's damnation. For when all else is said, "Open rebuke is better than secret love (Proverbs 27:5)."

Therefore, remember that Christians fulfil their duty more with a loving word of rebuke and judgement when needed than with a cruel word of undue flattery. 🐟



Morning dedication

Almighty God, as I cross the threshold of this day I commit myself, soul, body, affairs, friends, to Your care. Watch over, keep, guide, direct, sanctify, bless me. Incline my heart to Your ways. Mould me wholly into the image of Jesus, as a potter forms clay. May my lips be a well-tuned harp to sound Your praise. Let those around see me living by Your Spirit, trampling the world underfoot, unconformed to lying vanities, transformed by a renewed mind, clad in the entire armour of God, shining as a never-dimmed light, showing holiness in all my doings.

Let no evil this day soil my thoughts, words, hands. May I travel miry paths with a life pure from spot or stain. In needful transactions let my affection be in heaven, and my love soar upwards in flames of fire, my gaze fixed on unseen things, my eyes open to the emptiness, fragility, mockery of earth and its vanities. May I view all things in the mirror of eternity, waiting for the coming of my Lord, listening for the last trumpet call, hastening unto the new heaven and earth. Order this day all my communications according to Your wisdom, and to the gain of mutual good. Forbid that I should not be profited or made profitable. May I speak each word as if my last word, and walk each step as my final one. If my life should end today, let this be my best day.

by Robert Murray McChesney

"Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee (Psalms 85:6)?"

IT IS interesting to notice the time when this prayer was offered. It was a time of mercy. "Lord thou hast been favourable unto thy land". It was a time when God had led many to the knowledge of Christ, and covered many sins. "thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people." It was now they began to feel their need of another visit of mercy – "Wilt thou not revive us again?"

The Thing Prayer For

"Revive us again," or literally, return and make us live anew. It is the prayer of those who have received some life, but feel their need of more. They had been made alive by the Holy Spirit. They felt the sweetness and excellence of this new, hidden, divine life. They pant for more – "Wilt thou not revive us again?"

The Argument Presented

"That thy people may rejoice in thee." They plead with God to do this for the sake of His people, that their joy may be full; and that it may be in the Lord – in the Lord of their Righteousness – in the Lord their Strength.

When is the Prayer needed:

In A Time of Backsliding

There are many times when, like Ephesus, many of God's children lose their first love. Iniquity abounds, and the love of many waxes cold. Believers lose their close and near communion with God. They go out of the holiest, and pray at a distance with a curtain between. They lose their fervency, sweetness, and fullness in secret prayer. They do not pour out their hearts to God.

They have lost their clear discovery of Christ. They see Him but dimly. They have lost the sight of His beauty – the savour of His good ointment – the hold of His garment. They seek him, but find Him not. They cannot stir up the heart to lay hold on Christ.

The Spirit dwells scantily in their soul. The living water seems almost dried up within them. The soul is dry and barren. Corruptions are strong; grace is very weak.

Love to the brethren fades. United prayer is forsaken. The little assembly no more appears beautiful. Compassion for the unconverted is low and cold. Sin is unrebuked, though committed under their eye. Christ is not confessed before men. Perhaps the soul falls into sin, and is afraid to return; it stays far off from God, and lodges in the wilderness.

It is a fearfully dangerous time. Noth-

ing but a visit of the Holy Spirit to your soul can persuade you to return. It is not a time this prayer – "Wilt thou not revive us again?"

Sometimes the soul of a believer is exposed to hot persecution. Reproach breaks the heart; or it beats like a scorching sun upon the head. Sometimes they are God's children who reproach us, and this is still harder to bear.

Sometimes it is flattery that tempts the soul. The world speaks well of us, and we are tempted to pride and vanity.

Sometimes Satan strives within us, by stirring up fearful corruptions, until there is a tempest within. Oh, is there a tempted soul that reads these words? Jesus prays for you. Nothing but the oil of the Spirit will feed the fire of grace when Satan is casting water on it. Send up this cry, "Wilt thou not revive us again?"

In A Time Of Concern

"Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time if the latter rain." When God begins a time of concern in a place – when the dew is beginning to fall – *then* is the time to pray, Lord, stay not Your hand – give us a full shower – leave not one dry. "Wilt thou not revive us again?"

Who needs this revival?

Ministers Need It

Ministers are as naturally hard-hearted and unbelieving as other men (Mark 6:14), so that Christ has often to unravel them. They must receive from God all that they give. In order to speak the truth with power, they need a personal grasp of it.

We cannot speak of the hidden manna unless we have the taste of it on our mouth. We cannot speak of the living water unless it is springing up within us.

Ministers are far more exposed to be cast down than other men; they are standard-bearers, and Satan loves it when a standard-bearer faints. Oh, what need of full supplies out of Christ's fullness! Pray, beloved, that it may be so. "Wilt thou not revive us again?"

God's Children Need It

The divine life is all from above. They have no life till they come to Christ. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." Now this life is maintained by union to Christ, and by getting fresh supplies every moment out of His fullness.

"He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me, and I in Him." In some believers this life is maintained by a constant inflowing of the Holy Spirit – "I will water it ever moment" – like the constant supply which the branch receives



from the vine. These are the happiest and most even Christians.

Others have flood-tides of the Spirit carrying them higher and higher. Sometimes they get more in a day than for months before. In the one of these, grace is like a river; in the other, it is like a shower coming down in its season. Still, in both there is need of revival.

The natural heart is all prone to wither. Like a garden in summer, it dries up unless watered. The soul grows faint and weary in well-doing.

Grace is not natural to the heart. So the child of God needs to be continually looking out, like Elijah's servant, for the little cloud over the sea. You need to be constantly pressing near the Fountain of living waters; yes, lying down at the well-head of salvation, and drinking the living water. "Wilt thou not revive us again?"

Those Formerly Awakened Need It

A drop fell from heaven upon their hearts. They trembled, wept, prayed. But the showers passed by, and the rocky heart ceased to tremble. The eye again closed in slumber; the lips forgot to pray.

Ah, how common and sad is this case! Ah! This is a fearful state! To go back to death, to love death, and wrong your soul. What can save such a one, but another call from Jesus? "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." For your sake most of all I pray, "Wilt thou not revive us again?"

Barren Fig Trees Need It

Some of you have been planted in this vineyard. You have enjoyed sun and shower. You have passed through all this time of awakening without being moved. You are still dead, barren, unconverted, fruitless.

Ah! There is for you no hope but in this prayer. Ordinary times will not move you. Your heart is harder than that of other men. What need have you to pray for a deep, pure, effectual work of God, and that you may not be passed by.

Many of you have grown experienced in resisting God, and quenching the Spirit. Oh, pray for a time that will remove mountains.

None but the Almighty Spirit can touch your hard heart. "Who art thou, O great mountain?"



For Revival

Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain.” “Wilt thou not revive us again?”

For whom revival comes:

It is *God* who must revive us again. It is not human work. It is all divine. If you look to men to do it, you will only get that curse in Jeremiah 17. “Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm.”

The Lord has all the means in His hands. The Son of Man holds the seven stars in His right hand. The Lord has given the fullness of the Spirit to Him. The Father has entrusted the whole work of redemption into the hands of Jesus, and so the Spirit is given to Him.

It is He who keeps all His own children alive from day to day. He is the Fountain of living waters, and His children lie beside the still waters, and drink every moment eternal life from Him.

It is He that pours down the Spirit in His sovereignty on those that never knew Him. “I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplications.” Truly, the whole work from the beginning to end is His.

Every means will be in vain until He pours the spirit down, “Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high.” We may preach publicly, and from house to house, we may teach the young, and warn the old, but all will be in vain; until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, briars and thorns shall grow.

The children of God should plead with Him. Put your finger on the promise, and plead, “When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, I the Lord will hear them (Isaiah 41:17).” Tell Him you are poor and needy. Spread out your wants before Him. Take your emptiness to His Fullness. There is an infinite supply with Him for everything you need, at the very moment you need it.

Psalms 68:28; “Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.” Are you a rebel? Go and tell Him so.

Oh, if you are willing to be justified by Him, and get your rebel heart changed, go and ask Him, and He will give you living water. Prov-

verbs 1:23; “Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.”

Go and tell Him you are a “Simple one, a scorner”. Ask Him to do what He has promised in Ezekiel 34:26; “And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing.” Oh, cry, “Wilt thou not revive us again?”

The Effects of A Revival

The Lord’s children rejoice in Him. They rejoice in Jesus Christ. The purest joy in the world is joy in Christ Jesus. When the Spirit is poured down, His people get very near and clear views of the Lord Jesus.

They eat His flesh and drink His blood. They come to a personal cleaving to the Lord. They taste that the Lord is gracious. His blood and righteousness appear infinitely perfect, full, and free to their souls.

They sit under His shadow with great delight. They rest in the cleft of the rock. They lean on the Beloved. They find infinite strength in Him for the use of their soul – grace for grace – all they can need in any hour of trial and suffering to the very end.

Then go by Him to the Father. “We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” We find a portion there – a shield, and exceeding great reward. This gives joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Now, God loves to see His children happy in Himself. He loves to see all our springs in Him. Take and plead that. Oh, you would pray after a different manner if God were to pour water on the thirsty. You would tell Him all, open to Him all sorrows, joys, cares, comforts. All would be told to Him.

Many flock to Christ. “Who are these that fly like a cloud, and like doves to their windows?” “To him shall the gathering of the people be.” Just as all the creatures came into the ark, so poor sinners run in such a time. Laying aside their garments (Mark 10:50), their jealousies, they flee together into the ark Jesus.

Oh, there is not a lovelier sight in all this world.

Souls are saved. “Is this not a brand plucked out of the fire?” “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. They are passed from death unto life.”

It is glorifying to God. “He that receives Christ, sets to his seal that God is true.” He confesses the holiness of God, His love and grace. His mouth is filled with praise. “Bless the Lord, O my soul!” He begins to long for the image of God, to confess Him


before men, to walk in His ways. It gives joy in heaven, and joy in earth. Oh, pray for such a time.

There is an awakening again of those who have gone back. If we do not have a time of the outpouring of the Spirit, many who once sought Christ, but have gone back, will perish in a dreadful manner; for they generally turn worse than before. Satan is all the worse, that he once was an angel. So they become all the more wicked who have gone back. They generally go deeper into the mire of sin. But if God graciously pours down His Spirit, the hardened heart will melt. Pray for this.

There is an awakening of fresh sinners. It is a sad state of things when sinners are bold in sin, when multitudes can openly break the Sabbath, and openly frequent the tavern. It is an awful sin when sinners can live in sin, and yet sit unmoved under the preaching of the Word, cast off fear, and restrain prayer before God. But if the Lord were pleased to revive us again, this state of things would change.

I am sure it would be a lovelier sight to see you going in company to the house of prayer, than thronging to the tavern, or the haunts of sin and shame, that will bring down eternal ruin on your poor soul. It would be sweeter to hear the cry of prayer in your closets, than to hear the sounds of oaths and profane jesting, and your hard speeches and reproaches of God’s children.

Sweeter far to see your hearts panting after Christ, His pardon, His holiness, His glory, than to see them turning after the world and its vain idols.

Oh, lift up your hearts to the Lord for such a time. Plead earnestly the promise, “I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh.” Then this wilderness will become a fruitful field, and its name be, Jehovah-Shammah – the Lord is there. 

Robert Murray McCheyne was born on May 21, 1813, in Edinburgh, Scotland. He was licensed to preach at the age of 22, ordained to the pastorate of St. Peter’s Church, Dundee, Scotland, at 23, and died six years later. McCheyne rarely preached outside his native land. He wrote no books and was extremely frail in health. However, the impact of the “prophet of Dundee,” as he was known, lives on to this day. History records that the entire land of Scotland was shaken by him, and at his death, it wept.

This is a message McCheyne preached during his brief ministry. It gives us a look into the heart of a man totally yielded to the Master, who lived personally in revival and knew how needed the message was for the church.



Count your blessings

by Rob Pue

IN these times of trouble and tribulation with all that's happening in the world today, it's easy to succumb to a spirit of hopelessness, despair, and grief – for the deceived, lost and perishing people around us, and yes, even for ourselves. It's especially grievous when those deceived, lost and perishing are people we know and love. Perhaps even our own spouses, children and grandchildren.

We look around and see how Satan and his demons seem to be in charge of everything now, and how truth is now regarded as “hate speech,” having fallen in the streets long ago. We see how successful the enemy has become at twisting hearts and minds and fundamentally changing our society and culture and the entire world all around us; and it's easy to become discouraged. There are so many lies, so much hatred, so many who have departed from the faith and have chosen instead to follow doctrines of demons. Yes, it can become very disheartening.

But here's what I know: “God's Word is truth (John 17:17).”

And the Bible He has given us, from Genesis to Revelation, is filled with all we need to know about the history – and the future – of this world.

It is filled with all we need to know to live our lives as God's own children, to raise our children to know and love Him, and to learn to disciple others and share the Good News of the Kingdom and Jesus' redeeming work on the cross with them as well.

It's also filled with warnings about what not to do, how not to live in this world... as well as instruction on how to fight the spiritual battles that threaten to ensnare us every day.

In short, God's Word is FILLED with everything we need to equip us to live here on this earth and to prepare us for eternity. We need no other instruction than that which He has already graciously given.

Having said that, I'd like us to consider today just how much joy, praise, and beauty we also find in God's holy Book. And though it's easy to take our eyes off our Creator and dwell on the negative, there are virtually countless Scriptures that talk about God's goodness, His peace, the Comfort of the Holy Spirit, and especially giving thanks.

Just as we appreciate it when our earthly children are thankful to us for all we provide and do for them, our Heavenly Father wants us to be thankful to Him as well. And we have so much to be thankful for!

You know, you cannot be discouraged or depressed *and* thankful for all the many blessings you've received from the Lord at the same time... it's just not possible. So I encourage you to be thankful today... and every day to the One who Created us and this amazing “habitat” called “Earth” that He designed as our temporary home.

I'm reminded of the old hymn by John Oatman, written in 1897, titled *Count Your Blessings*. It goes like this:

“When upon life's billows you are tempest-tossed, when you are discouraged, thinking all is lost; Count your many blessings, name them one by one, and it

will surprise you what the Lord has done. “Are you ever burdened with a load of care? Does the cross seem heavy you are called to bear? Count your many blessings, every doubt will fly, and you will keep singing as the days go by.

“So, amid the conflict whether great or small, do not be discouraged, God is over all; Count your many blessings, angels will attend, Help and comfort give you, to your journey's end.”

Often, when I find myself loaded down with burdens and cares, I'm not able to sleep at night, or to calm my troubled mind. So I spend time in prayer, and then I begin to count my many blessings.

A word of caution here: if you do this – (begin to count your blessings) – instead of helping you fall into peaceful sleep, oftentimes I find myself unable to name all the many blessings God has so graciously given me, and I find I'm actually so filled with thankfulness and wonder and awe at what God has done for me, I'm too excited to sleep!

I think of God's beautiful Creation – the entire universe, designed and set in motion and sustained by His mighty hand. Through a powerful telescope on a dark, starry night, I've seen with my own eyes the rings of Saturn, and other planets, close up; not to mention our own moon – created by God and placed in just the right spot to not just light our way at night but also to help sustain life on our planet.

And this beautiful, wondrous earth. I have been blessed to be able to see and enjoy more of it in my lifetime than I ever thought I would... I've been to the highest mountain peaks in North America... as well as the lowest point called “Death Valley.”

The sheer beauty of it

I've swam in both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, I've been to tropical rain forests and desolate, wind-swept deserts. I've seen the raging rivers and the awesome power of Niagara Falls. Living in Wisconsin, I've spent much time taking in the splendour of the Great Lakes.

I'm constantly amazed at God's creation. Just the sheer beauty of it is beyond description. And I often wonder what Eden must have been like, before the fall. When everything was perfect. As incredibly beautiful as our earth is today, none of us can even begin to imagine what it once was – and will one day be again – when the New Heaven and New Earth appear.

Before Adam sinned, everything was perfect. But once mankind disobeyed God and brought sin and death upon us, our earth began producing thorns and thistles. There were no thorns before that... just beauty and perfection.

I think of what Christ did on that old rugged cross for those who repent and call upon His name... and how His tormentors tortured Him so cruelly before nailing Him to that Tree... they even went “the extra mile” by fashioning a crown of thorns and jamming it into His head.

Think of that: Thorns... the very thing that was brought upon this earth by our own disobedience and unbelief. Those thorns were part of the curse when God cursed the ground because of our sin.

But now think of this: Jesus Christ, our Lord, reversed that curse and conquered sin and death for us as He wore that crown of thorns on His head! Truly, those who murdered Him knew not what they were doing – and Satan perhaps even thought he had “won.” But God worked even that wretchedness together for good for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.

Yes, He wore the crown of thorns – He bore the curse and He reversed the curse for all who will repent and turn to Him.

Yes, I’m very thankful for this beautiful world God made for us. And all the animals and birds and flowers He filled it with for our pleasure. Each one an incredibly amazing, unique creation.

If you just look at the incredible design of birds alone – the many different ways each one is designed... some colourful and bright, “painted” with such creativity and splendour by the Master Craftsman Himself.

Each one is beautiful, and each is designed with everything it needs to live and survive, and each is fed by the hand of God. Now think of all the other animals the Lord made; then think of the “lilies of the field.” Some designed to be our food; some just for the pure beauty of seeing them, because God liked them!

And I have to wonder, looking around just at creation, how anyone could ever even question the fact that there is a God in heaven who made all this.

Romans 1 tells us, “the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead...”

Yes, those who doubt God are, indeed, without excuse.

The human body is also a miracle of Creation. There is nothing else like it, designed for our souls to live in on this earth, but also blessed with the senses of sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste.

Did you ever consider God did not have to give us all these things? But He wanted us to be able to experience all these wondrous aspects of His creation – and in the New Heaven and New Earth, I can only imagine the wonders He has in store for our new, restored bodies!

Then, think of the changing seasons. The warmth and beauty of summer. The spectacular colours and crispness in the air at harvest time. The restoration time when the world sleeps during the winter, and then the rebirth that comes in the spring.

If you look around, you’ll see there is such beauty and magnificence in this world that God provided for our earthly home. It’s hard to believe there are so many who continue to hate Him, deny Him, persecute those who love Him, and seek to destroy all that is beautiful, lovely, and good.

Yes, there is great beauty, but also great ugliness. On one side you have the things of God and His incredible creation, His amazing design for mankind. You have the natural family, one man and one woman, designed to be united for life in holy matrimony, a covenant union, producing beautiful babies that we are to nurture, train up and teach all we know about our Heavenly Father, teaching them to honour and revere their Lord, too.

On the other side you have darkness, evil schemes, greed, lies, deceit, treachery, sorcery, demonism, hedonism, and death. Spiritual warfare continues, and daily we are to put on the armour of God that we might stand firm in our faith and resist the wiles and temptations of the enemy.

Much easier when we count our blessings

And again, the work of spiritual warfare – which we are all, as Christians, called to engage in, serving as a restraining force against evil in this world – is much easier for us when we count our blessings and remain thankful to God for each one.

Psalm 95:2, “Let us come into His presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to Him with songs of praise!” Psalm 106 and 107 both begin with the same words: “Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good. His steadfast love endures forever.” And in case you didn’t catch

the gist of those Scriptures, look at all of Psalm 136!

Philippians 4:4, “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice!” And we all know Philippians 4:6&7, “Do not be anxious about anything but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God, and the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

And continuing on in Philippians, in Verse 8: “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”


We have so much to be thankful for. Yes, the world around us may be dark and growing darker every day. We may very well be at the closing end of days here on this earth, and we may be precariously perched on the precipice of the Great Tribulation when the wrath of God is unleashed on all those who hate Him.

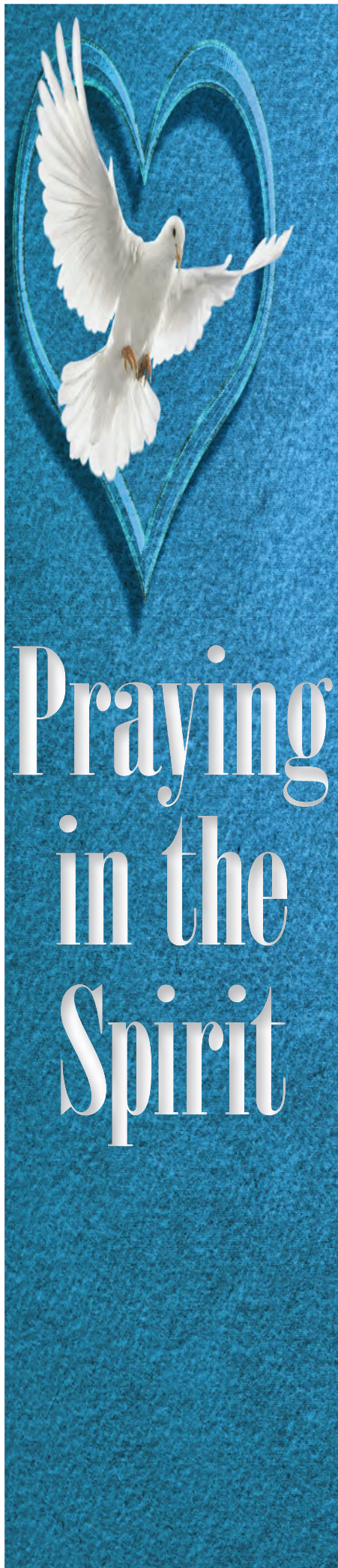
But while we are still here, while we still have breath in our lungs, there is still good work for us to do. And our job is to be His Church, to be the salt and light of the world, to serve as His restraining force against the evil of the enemy, to preach the Gospel and make disciples, and to always be thankful to our Creator and Sustainer and to praise Him in all circumstances. There is no greater calling and no greater purpose.

When the enemy of our souls has you discouraged and depressed – again, simply begin to count your blessings and name them, one by one. Thank the Lord for all He’s given you; and then with a grateful heart for the privilege of serving your King, pick yourself up, dust yourself off and get back to work.

Use your talents wisely because there comes a day, perhaps soon, when no man will be able to work; so let us be about His business as good stewards of the faith and press on, rejoicing always and thanking God for His abundant love and grace toward us.

Let there never be found among us any hint of grumbling or murmuring or ungratefulness.

Our Lord has made us His own children, and we’ve been blessed beyond all measure. Thank Him, every day, and let’s do everything we do as service unto our Lord. 



by Samuel Chadwick (1860-1932)

EARLY in the year 1882 there came to me an experience that lifted my life to a new plane of understanding and of power. The demands of an impossible task awakened me to a sense of need. I had neither power nor might in either service or prayer.

I began to pray for power for service, and God led me to the answer by way of equipment for prayer. I thought I knew how to pray and had prayed much over the work to which He had sent me. When I began to seek power, my ears were opened before my eyes began to see.

I heard testimonies to which I had been deaf. Others had been driven to God baffled by lack of power, but they always associated the gift of power with an experience of holiness about which I was not keen.

It was power I wanted. I wanted power so that I might succeed, and my chief concern for power was the success it would bring. I wanted success that would fill the church, save the people and bring down the strong fortifications of Satan with a crash.

I was young, and I was in a hurry. Twelve of us began to pray. God led us to Pentecost. It awakened my mind as well as cleansed my heart. It gave me a new joy and a new power, a new love and a new compassion. It gave me a new Bible and a new message. Above all else, it gave me a new understanding and a new intimacy in the communion and ministry of prayer; it taught me to pray in the Spirit.

The work of the Holy Spirit is always in co-operation. He never works alone. He depends upon human co-operation for the mediation of His mind, the manifestation of His truth and the effectual working of His will. He indwells the Body of Christ, as Christ dwelt in the Body prepared for Him by the Holy Spirit.

Revelation came from the Spirit of Truth as men of God were inspired by Him. The Word is His, but the writing is with the hands of men.

This two-fold action runs through the whole of redemption by Christ Jesus. Our Lord was born of a woman, but conceived by the Holy Spirit of God. He grew in stature and in knowledge in the house of Joseph, instructed and guided by the Holy Spirit.

His teaching and ministry were in the

power of the same Spirit. He offered Himself without blemish unto God through the Eternal Spirit, and it was the Spirit that raised up Christ from the dead.

There is the same co-operation in all the experience of salvation. There is always a human and a divine factor. There is a two-fold witness, a two-fold leading, a two-fold work, and a two-fold intercession. We pray in the Spirit, and the Spirit makes intercession for us.

The Holy Spirit does nothing *of* Himself, neither does He do anything *for* Himself. His mission is to glorify Christ, and all He does is based upon the finished work of Christ.

No Coronation, no Pentecost

He could not be given until Jesus was glorified, and in experience there can be no Pentecost until there is a Coronation. The Spirit is the Coronation gift of Jesus, whom the Father had made to be both Lord and Christ.

The fellowship of the Spirit in prayer is made possible by an experience in Christ. The sequence is set forth in the eighth chapter of Romans (verses 9-27). Those who pray in the Spirit must be in the Spirit, and if the Spirit of God is to make intercession for us He must dwell in us.

If we live after the flesh we die, if we are led of the Spirit, and do not walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit – then the Spirit dwells in us, lives through us, and works by us.

Then comes to pass that which is written, “Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities: for we do not know what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God (Romans 8:26&27).”

The Holy Spirit searches the deep things of God; He takes the things of Christ and reveals them to us. God knows the mind of the Spirit; we pray in the Spirit, instructed and inspired by Him, and He makes intercession for us in wordless intercession.

Though I did not know it until years after, that is what happened to me when God gave me a new understanding, a new joy, and a new power in prayer.

A new Personality entered a new Temple, and set up a new Altar.

As I live, yet not I; so I pray, yet not I. I pray in the Spirit, and the Spirit Himself also makes intercession. The Spirit in my spirit prays.

The Spirit instructs and inspires all true prayer. There is no truer word than that “we do not know what we should pray for as we ought.” There is no realm in which we so soon come to the end of what we know as in that of prayer.

Our petitions urge wants that are immediate, obvious, and urgent. We cannot see deep enough or far enough to know what is our real need.

Most people would like good health, home comfort, congenial conditions, happy friendships, a little more money, and better success – but who can tell if these would be for their ultimate good? God sees deeper and farther, and He may will otherwise.

The Holy Spirit knows the mind of Christ and the will of God, and He teaches us how to pray and what to pray for. If any man lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, and He will give him more than wisdom; He will give Him the Spirit of wisdom to instruct, strengthen, and guide.

The Holy Spirit creates the conditions of prayer. We may ask amiss, not only in what we ask, but also in the reason for asking. He sanctifies desire and directs it into the will of God, so that we desire what God wills to give.

That is how it comes to pass that if we delight ourselves in the Lord, we can be sure that He will give us the desires of our heart. We want what He wills. The Spirit brings to expression the unutterable things of the soul.

Quickens desire, purifies motive

His groanings are before our praying, and our prayers are born of His travail. In Him is the supply of life and desire, wisdom and faith, intercession and power. He quickens desire, purifies motive, inspires confidence, and assures faith.

This is the inner meaning of prayer. It is more than asking, it is communion, fellowship, co-operation, identification with God the Father and the Son by the Holy Spirit.

Prayer is more than words, for it is mightiest when wordless.

It is more than asking, for it reaches its highest glory when it adores and asks nothing. When a child entered his father's

study and walked up to him at his desk, the father turned and asked, “What did you want, sonny?” The little boy answered, “Nothing, daddy, I just came to be with you.”

This mystery of the Spirit is the key to other mysteries. The secret of the Lord is made manifest to those who pray in the fellowship of the Spirit.

There are stages of prayer. In one stage we pray and ask Him to help. There is a more wonderful way in which He prays and we assent, and His praying is ours. He makes intercession within the Temple of our hearts, and our Lord ever lives to make intercession for us at the right hand of the Father.


The Spirit within our spirits prays, working in us to will and to do the will and

good pleasure of our Father which is in heaven. He is God the Spirit representing God the Father, and God the Son, and the Three are one God.

He is the power that works in us. He it is that unifies hearts in prayer and makes them an irresistible unity in intercession. The assurance of answered prayer comes from Him and it is He Who makes prayer the mightiest force in the universe of God.

The secret of it all is in Him. The power of it all is by Him. The joy of it all is with Him.

The biggest thing God ever did for me was to teach me to pray in the Spirit.

We are never really men of prayer in the best sense, until we are filled with the Holy Ghost. Therefore, Lord, teach us to pray in the Spirit! 



Come, Holy Spirit!

by Isaac Watts

*Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove,
With all Thy quickening powers;
Kindle a flame of sacred love
In these cold hearts of ours.*

*In vain we tune our formal songs,
In vain we strive to rise;
Hosannas languish on our tongues,
And our devotion dies.*

*Dear Lord, and shall we ever live
At this poor dying rate?
Our love so faint, so cold to Thee,
And Thine to us so great!*

*Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove,
With all Thy quickening powers;
Come, shed abroad a Saviour's love,
And that shall kindle ours.*



My God will hear me

by Andrew Murray (1828-1917)

"Therefore will the Lord wait, that He may be gracious to you... Blessed are all who wait for Him... He will be very gracious to you at the sound of your cry; when He hears it, He will answer you (Isaiah 30:18&19)."

"The Lord will hear when I call to Him (Psalm 4:3)."

"I have called upon You, for You will hear me, O God (Psalm 17:6)."

"I will look to the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me (Micah 7:7)."

THE power of prayer rests in the faith that God hears it. It is this faith that gives a man courage to pray. It is this faith that gives him power to prevail with God.

The moment I am assured that God hears me, too, I feel drawn to pray and to persevere in prayer. I feel strong to claim and to take in faith the answer God gives.

One great reason for lack of prayer is the lack of the living, joyous assurance: "My God will hear me!"

If God's servants received a vision of the living God waiting to grant their request, and to bestow all the heavenly gifts of the

Spirit they are in need of for themselves or those they are serving, how everything would be set aside to make time and room for this one only power that can ensure heavenly blessing – the prayer of faith!

When a man can and does say in living faith, "My God will hear me!" surely nothing can keep him from prayer. He knows that what he cannot do or get done on earth, can and will be done for him from heaven.

Let each one of us bow in stillness before God, and wait on Him to reveal Himself as the prayer-hearing God.

"My God will hear me"

What a blessed certainty! We have God's Word for it in numberless promises. We have thousands of witnesses to the fact that they have found it true. We have had experience of it in our lives.

We have had the Son of God come from heaven with the message that if we ask, the Father will give. We have had Himself praying on earth, and being heard. And we have Him in heaven now, sitting at the right hand of God and making intercession for us.

God delights to hear prayer. He has allowed His people a thousand times over to be tried, that they might be compelled to cry to Him, and learn to know Him as the Hearer of Prayer.

Let us confess with shame how little we have believed this wondrous truth, in the sense of receiving it into our heart and allowing it to possess and control our whole being.

Beseech God to reveal Himself to you. Bow in silence each time before you pray to worship this God, to wait till there rests on you some right sense of His nearness and readiness to answer.

So will you begin to pray with the words, "My God will hear me!"

"My God will hear me"

Think of God in His infinite majesty, His altogether incomprehensible glory, His unapproachable holiness, sitting on a throne of grace, waiting to be gracious, inviting, encouraging you to pray with His promise: "Call to Me, and I will answer you (Jeremiah 33:3)."

Think of yourself in your nothingness and helplessness as a creature; in your

wretchedness and transgressions as a sinner; in your feebleness and unworthiness as a saint.

But think of how you are not left to yourself, and what you can accomplish. God has united you with Christ; in Him and His Name you have your confidence. On the throne Christ prays with you and for you; on the footstool of the throne you pray with Him and in Him.

His worth, and the Father's delight in hearing Him are the measure of your confidence, your assurance of being heard. Think of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God's own Son, sent into your heart to cry, "Abba, Father" and to be in you a Spirit of supplication when you know not what to pray as you ought (Romans 8:26&27).

Think, in all your insignificance and unworthiness, of you being as acceptable as Christ Himself. Think in all your ignorance and feebleness, of the Spirit making intercession according to God within you and cry out, "What wondrous grace! Through Christ I have access to the Father, by the Spirit. I can, I do believe it!"

"My God will hear me"

There are difficulties that cannot but at times arise and perplex even the honest heart.

There is the question as to God's sovereign, all-wise, all-disposing will. Would it not be better to leave everything to His disposal, Who knows what is best and loves to give us the very best?

There is the question as to the need of persevering prayer and long waiting for the answer. If God is the Infinite Lord, and delights more to give than we are to receive, why is there a need for pleading and wrestling, the urgency and the long delay of which Scripture and experience speak?

What of the multitude of apparently vain and unanswered prayers? To think of all this tries our faith and makes us hesitate as we say, "My God will hear me!"

As little as we can comprehend God can we comprehend this, one of the most blessed of His attributes – that He hears prayer.

God hears because we pray in His Son, and because the Holy Spirit prays in us. The Holy Spirit can enable us to believe and rejoice in it, even where every question is not yet answered. He will do this as we lay our questionings in God's bosom, trust His faithfulness, and give ourselves humbly to obey His command to pray

without ceasing.

"My God will hear me"

What a solemn responsibility! How often we complain of darkness, or feebleness, or failure, as if there were no help for it. Yet God has promised in answer to our prayer to supply our every need, and give us His light and strength and peace.

If we could only realise the responsibility of having such a God and such promises – and yet being guilty of the sin and shame of not availing ourselves of them to the utmost. How confident we should feel that the grace which we have accepted and trusted to enable us to pray as we should, will be given.

This access to a prayer-hearing God is especially meant to make us intercessors for our fellow men. Christ obtained His right of prevailing intercession by giving Himself a sacrifice to God for men, and through it receives the blessings He dispenses.

Even so, if we have truly with Christ given ourselves to God for men, we share His right of intercession, and are able to obtain the powers of the heavenly world for them, too.

In answer to prayer the Spirit can be poured out, souls can be converted, believers can be established. In prayer the kingdom of darkness can be conquered, souls brought out of prison into the liberty of Christ, and the glory of God be revealed.

Through prayer the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, can be wielded in power, and in public preaching as in private speaking, the most rebellious can be brought to bow at Jesus' feet.

What a responsibility on the church to give herself to the work of intercession! What a responsibility on every minister, missionary and worker set apart for the saving of souls – to yield himself wholly to act out and prove his faith: "My God will hear me!"

What a call on every believer, instead of burying and losing this talent, to seek to the very utmost to use it in prayer and supplication for all saints and for all men. The deeper our entrance into the truth of this wondrous power God has given to men, the more wholehearted will be our surrender to the work of intercession.

"My God will hear me"

What a blessed prospect! I see that my failure, especially in the work of intercession, has had its deepest root in this: I did not live in the full faith of the blessed assurance, "My God will hear me!"

Praise God, I begin to see it, I believe it! All can be different. Or rather, I see *Him*, I believe *Him*. Yes, me, even me! Common-place and insignificant though I be, filling but a very little place so that I will scarcely be missed when I go – even *I* have access to this Infinite God, with the confidence that He hears me.

One with Christ, led by the Holy Spirit, I dare to say: "I will pray for others, for I am sure my God will listen to me."

What a blessed prospect before me: every earthly and spiritual anxiety exchanged for the peace of God, who cares for all and hears prayer.

What a blessed prospect in my work: to know that even when the answer is long delayed and there is a call for much patient, persevering prayer, the truth remains infallibly sure that "My God will hear me!"

And what a blessed prospect for Christ's church if we could all give prayer its place, give faith in God its place, or rather, give the prayer-hearing God His place!

Is not this the one great thing that those who begin to see the urgent need of prayer ought to pray for? In scripture, when God time after time poured forth the Spirit on His praying people, He laid down the law for all time: the measure of prayer, the measure of the Spirit.


Let each one who can say, "My God will hear me!" join in the fervent supplication that throughout the church this truth may be restored to its true place. Then the blessed prospect will be realised: a praying church will be endowed with the power of the Holy Spirit.

"My God will hear me"

What a need of divine teaching! We need this both to enable us to hold this word in living faith and to make full use of it in intercession. It cannot be said too often or too earnestly that it is very needful for the church of our day to have the power of the Holy Spirit.

It is so from the divine side and as truly so from the human side that there is extreme need for more prayer, more believing, persevering prayer for the Spirit.

In speaking of lack of the Spirit's power and the condition for receiving it, there is much to be confessed and taken away in us if the Spirit is to work freely. But also sadly lacking are the upward look, and the deep dependence, and the strong crying to God, and the effectual prayer of faith that avails.

And it is this that is the thing most needful. Might God so reveal Himself as the prayer-hearing God that our whole being may respond, "My God will hear me!" 



The one unique miracle

by Dr David R. Reagan

I WAS recently thinking about the miracles of God, and I decided to make a list of what I considered to be the greatest miracles of history. Here is the list I compiled:

- *The Creation of the Earth
- *The Noahic Flood
- *The Incarnation of Jesus
- *The Resurrection of Jesus
- *The Regathering of the Jewish People

As I pondered this list, something struck me that I had never thought of before. In terms of Bible prophecy, there is only one miracle on the list that is unique.

The Resurrection

And it is not the one that most people would identify – namely, the Resurrection of Jesus. Many do not consider it to be unique because there are examples scattered throughout both the Old and New Testaments of people who were raised up from the dead.

But these were not true resurrections. Instead, they were resuscitations because each one of these people died again. A true resurrection is where a person comes back from the dead to live forever.

Thus, Jesus' resurrection is unique for the time being. But Bible prophecy says that it will not remain unique, for a time is coming when other resurrections will occur. At the Rapture of the Church, all those who have accepted Jesus as Lord and Saviour during the Church Age and who have died, will be resurrected to eternal life. Further, at the Second Coming of Jesus at the end of the Tribulation, all the Old Testament saints and Tribulation martyrs will be resurrected.

The Creation

So, what about the first item on the list? Surely the creation of the earth is a unique miracle. Well, not according to Bible prophecy. Following the Millennial reign of Jesus, God is going to envelop this earth in fire to burn away the pollution

of Satan's last revolt (2 Peter 3:12). And we are told that out of that fiery inferno is going to come a new, perfected earth that will serve as the eternal home of the Redeemed. In other words, God is going to perform a miraculous re-creation of this earth (Revelation 21:1).

The Noahic Flood

The next item on the list, the Noahic Flood, certainly looks unique, particularly when you consider the fact that God has promised He will never again destroy the earth with water.

But what was the flood all about? It was a manifestation of God's wrath in response to the overwhelming sin of Mankind.

And Bible prophecy says that God is going to unleash His wrath once again in the future when the world will become as violent and immoral as it was in the days of Noah (Matthew 24:37). We are told that God will respond to this wickedness by pouring out His unmitigated wrath

during a period of seven years called the Tribulation (Revelation 6-19).

The Regathering of the Jews

So, what about the regathering of the Jewish people from the four corners of the world? This is a miracle that began in the 1890s and continues to this day.

It is true that there was a regathering of Jews from Babylonian captivity that began in 538 BC, but that was only a handful, namely from the tribes of Benjamin and Judah. It cannot be compared to the regathering we are witnessing today as God is bringing back to the land of Israel literally millions of Jews from all the tribes and from all the nations of the world.

Two times, Jeremiah prophesied that when history is over and done, the Jewish people will look back and will no longer swear by the God who delivered them from Egyptian captivity; but they will swear instead by the God who regathered them from all over the world (Jeremiah 16:14&15 and 23:7&8). The same God did both. The point Jeremiah is making is that the Jewish people will consider their regathering in the end times to be a greater miracle than their deliverance from Egyptian captivity.

But the regathering of the Jewish people we are witnessing today will not be a unique miracle according to Bible

prophecy. That's because the Bible says that at the Second Coming of Jesus, He will conduct another regathering in which He will call every believing Jew left alive on earth to return to Israel to enter the Millennium in their mortal bodies and to become the prime nation on earth through whom all of God's blessings will flow (Deuteronomy 30:1-9).

The miraculous regathering that is going on now is a regathering in unbelief. The one that will occur when Jesus returns to this earth will be a regathering in belief.

The Incarnation

Well, as you can see, this leaves only one miracle left on my list – the Incarnation, that incredible moment when God became Man. This is the only unique miracle on the list. It will never be repeated.

And what a miracle it was! The Word became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14). Jesus was Emmanuel, meaning "God with us" (Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:22&23).

When He became flesh, He experienced humanity, with all its trials, temptations and disappointments. He suffered emotional and physical pain.

The only thing He never experienced was the grief of sin – until, of course, He was nailed to the Cross and had all the sins of Mankind placed upon Him, at which

point He experienced a momentary break in His perfect communion with God the Father, prompting Him to cry out from the depths of His soul, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me" (Matthew 27:46)?

All of this is beyond our full comprehension. After all, if we could fully understand the Trinity and the Incarnation, then God would not be God. His infinite, eternal nature as one God in three persons is beyond our finite minds.

The Incarnation emerges, therefore, as the most unique miracle of history. It will never occur again. Jesus is still in His resurrected, glorified body, and always will be. The wounds in His hands and side were visible to His disciples after His resurrection, when He was in His glorified body (Luke 24:39 and John 20:24-28).

I believe those wounds will always be there as a reminder to the Redeemed of the price that had to be paid for our sins to enable us to be reconciled to God the Father.

This Christmas, in the midst of all the hoopla that the celebration has become, let's remember what Christmas is all about – God becoming Man in a humble stable in the tiny village of Bethlehem some 2 000 years ago.

Let's praise God for that incredible, sacred event, and let's shout, "Maranatha! Come quickly, Lord Jesus!" ☩

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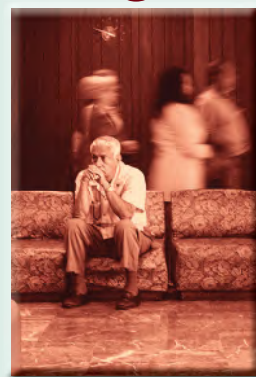
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If I could retrace my life...

by William Booth (1829-1912)

IF the privilege of repeating my early life was allotted me, I will tell you what I would do – if I could I go back once more to the beginning of my career and be assured that a long spell of vigorous life was before me.

I would offer my life up, without a moment's hesitation, on the altar of redeeming love. I would place myself – spirit, soul, and body – at the feet of Jesus Christ, ready and willing literally to live, suffer and die for Him.

But did I not do this many years ago? Certainly I did! When a lad of only 15 years of age, I made this offering so far as my limited knowledge would allow.

But if found in the circumstances I have imagined – with all the light that has, since those days, come into my soul through experience, observation and instruction in harmony with my consecration, and – I would make the same offering, only far more wholeheartedly than I did then.

And having made the offering, I would at once proceed to act in that in the most thorough manner possible.

I would say, "Oh, my God, I am Your son, Your servant, Your soldier. Henceforth let me do nothing and allow nothing in my heart or in my life except that which is calculated to promote Your interests on earth, the purpose for which I have been entrusted with my being. And then let me come up and reign with You forever and forever."

In pursuance of that object, I would resolve to be something that would count in strife between good and evil raging around me. No silly wasting of time, or strength, or faculties,



or goods, or opportunities would satisfy me. All would be consecrated, all baptised with holy power, all made truly divine.

To further my design, **I would be a man of sacrifice** – I would accept a life of poverty, privation, and toil, as being my Heavenly Father's way for me. And I would struggle until I attained that state of mind which would enable me to endure hardship without a murmur or complaint.

I would be a man of prayer – I would accustom myself to holding communication with heaven, until my spirit was ever communing with God, interceding for man, and crying for the Holy Spirit – that is until I prayed "without ceasing." Oh, when I look back over the course I have travelled through the world, what a precious, invaluable privilege of prayer has been mine!

Were I, while I write this, again standing on the threshold of my earthly life, whether long or short, I would at once start to pray. Indeed, I would pray in public and in private; yes, everywhere I would pray,

until my every thought was a prayer.

I would be a man of holiness – a truly righteous man. Oh, if I were young again, with the prospect of a long life before me, I would surely say, "Oh, my God, my God, let me indeed and of truth be a holy man, that I may make men know what the Kingdom of heaven really is!"

I would be a man of compassion for human suffering – I would cultivate the spirit of sympathy with human distress wherever and whenever I might find men and women and children in sorrow, no matter whether their distress had been brought about by their own evil conduct or the evil conduct of others, or by some mischance for which they were not responsible.

I would be a man of faith. To that end I would cultivate the holy habit of trusting God. In season and out of season I would practice believing.

Under the most difficult conditions that could possibly befall me, I would accustom myself to a bold reliance on the protection and provision and


direction of my loving Lord.

In every hour and in every place I would believe all the time that my Father's arms were around me, that my Saviour's wings were over me, that the Spirit's light was guiding me, and that all was going well and could not be other than well, both for earth and heaven.

I have given you only a very faint and imperfect idea of the manner in which I would deal with my life, had I the privilege of living it over again. Nevertheless, it is there, and to the realisation of that standard I shall consecrate the remaining days of my advanced years.

For all will agree that the service and devotion which I feel would be my duty at the commencement of my life must be equally my duty at its close.

Whether young or old, this, then, is my standard of love and duty, and my standard it shall continue to be until I utter my last word, and breathe my last breath on earth.

Will you not join me in this consecration? Long years may yet be your portion. The world may yet be before you: God is on your side. 

SYRIA: HIGH COST OF MAINTAINING THE CHRISTIAN PRESENCE

Contrary to its deal with Russia, Turkey and its jihadist proxies continue to press towards the Assyrian town of Tel Tamer. Exploiting insecurity, Islamic State is re-asserting itself. On November 11 at least two bombs were detonated in Qamishli; one outside a church. At least six civilians were killed and more than 20 wounded.

Rev. Hovsep Bedoyan (43), an Armenian Catholic priest in Qamishli, was driving his father and two church members to Deir ez-Zor where he was overseeing the reconstruction of a church built by survivors of the Armenian Genocide but destroyed by IS in 2014. Hovsep and his father were killed when their vehicle was ambushed by armed militants.

Nobody doubts Rev. Hovsep Bedoyan was assassinated for his efforts to re-establish the Christian presence in Deir ez-Zor. Please pray.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC: CHURCH TRAUMATISED AND SUFFERING

In 2012, a coalition of local and regional Muslim militias known as Séléka overran Central African Republic (CAR: a French-speaking, predominantly Christian nation). In March, 2013 Séléka captured the capital, Bangui, and all hell broke loose.

While Bangui and much of the south-west has been liberated and the Séléka coalition has collapsed, 80 percent of the state remains under the control of 14 Muslim militias whose fighters are predominately

foreigners. While the militants are in CAR for diamonds and gold, they come with an Islamic worldview, which discounts Christians as infidels.

CAR's Church is traumatised and suffering enormously. Weapons are flooding in from Sudan. CAR's future hangs in the balance. Christians worldwide need to plead: "Lord have mercy on Central African Republic and its Church."



LOOMING NATIONALIST JIHAD IN INDONESIA'S PAPUAN PROVINCES

Several Java-based Islamic organisations – including the Islam Jihad Front and Islamic Defenders Front – are openly recruiting fighters for a jihad in Indonesia's Papuan provinces. Several other groups – including Laskar Jihad and the Islamic-State affiliate Jamaah Ansharut Daulah – already have bases in the region.

On September 26 the Indonesian parliament passed a controversial law that gives the military permission to mobilise civilian forces for national defence. Consequently, instead of functioning as proxies of the Indonesian military, Islamic jihadi and merah putih (red and white, ultra-nationalist) militias will now be able to fight openly and legally in co-operation with the Indonesian military to defend the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia from "separatists," by which they mean the ethnic Melanesian and mostly Christian indigenous Papuans. Please pray.

THE BATTLE FOR HIMACHAL PRADESH (in INDIA)

"The heights of the mountains are his (from Psalm 95)."

Perched in the Himalayan mountains is the north Indian state of Himachal Pradesh (HP), also known as Devbhumi (the land of the gods) and its capital, Shimla. Behind the scenic beauty lurks a reality of deep spiritual darkness. While Indian missionaries have done amazing work bringing truth, life and light into HP, there remains much work to do – HP is still only 0.2 percent Christian.

On August 30 HP's Hindu nationalist-led state government, backed by the supposedly secular Congress, unanimously passed a shockingly repressive anti-conversion law that will fuel persecution and drive Christian witness underground. On September 15 Hindu nationalists shut down a prayer meeting in a private guest house. A new era of escalating persecution is just beginning. Please pray for India and its Christians.

BURKINA FASO: UPTICK IN JIHADIST ACTIVITY

Both al-Qaeda's Group for Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM) and Islamic State's West Africa Province (ISWA) have claimed responsibility for a string of terror attacks in Burkina Faso in recent weeks. The attacks have targeted military bases and operations,

Burkinabe soldiers have been killed and large quantities of weapons and ammunition stolen.

There have also been several incidents where vehicles have driven over improvised explosive devices (IEDs), resulting in mass deaths. The escalation of terrorist violence does not bode well for Burkina Faso or her Church which suffered a string of targeted terror attacks earlier this year. Please pray.

NEPALESE PASTOR FORCED INTO HIDING

In March, Pastor Sukdev Giri (59) of Trinity Fellowship Church in Chitwan District (on Nepal's southern border with India) participated on a panel at the International Christian Media Workers Summit in Kathmandu. During the panel discussion, Pastor Giri was asked to explain the belief systems most prevalent in Nepal, which he did. The session was filmed, but only made available to Christian media workers.

By mid-August the footage had been leaked and was freely available on YouTube. Nepalese Hindu nationalists now accuse Pastor Giri of being anti-Hindu. Due to death threats he now cannot return home but instead has been forced into hiding. Meanwhile, his family and friends are also receiving threatening phone calls. Please pray.

Manna for mahala!

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Behold your King!

by Frances Ridley Havergal

"Behold, and see if there is any sorrow like My sorrow (Lamentations 1:12)."

*Behold your King!
Though the moonlight steals
Through the silvery sprays of the
olive tree,
No star-gemmed sceptre or
crown it reveals,
In the solemn shade
of Gethsemane.
Only a form of prostrate grief,
Fallen, crushed, like a broken
leaf!
Oh, think of His sorrow!
That we may know
The depth of love
in the depth of woe.*

*Behold your King!
Is it nothing to you,
That the crimson tokens
of agony
From the kingly brow must fall
like dew,
Through the shuddering shades
of Gethsemane?
Jesus Himself, the Prince of
Life,
Bows in mysterious mortal
strife;
Oh, think of His sorrow!
That we may know
The unknown love
in the unknown woe.*

*Behold your King,
with His sorrow crowned,
Alone, alone in the valley is He!
The shadows of death are
gathering round,
And the Cross must
follow Gethsemane.
Darker and darker the gloom
must fall,
Filled is the Cup, He must drink
it all!
Oh, think of His sorrow!
That we may know
His wondrous love
in His wondrous woe.*