

Prepare^{the} Way

Preparing the Bride of Christ for the return of Christ

Issue No. 123
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Peter Pollock
Preach the Gospel

Former lesbian
**Not gay to straight
but lost to found**

Vance Havner
**And he stood
speechless!**

**The secrets of a
God-blessed life**



**What was the greatest
event of the 20th Century?**

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COVER: Jesus answered him, saying, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God (Luke 4:4).'"

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John & Helen Gardiner

Peter & Inez Pollock

Garth & Audrey Shillaw

CONTACT DETAILS

(Please correspond by e-mail where possible!)

E-mail: info@prepare.co.za

Phone: (033) 3307-135

Fax: 086-5147-404

Cell: 082-499-3174

Post: Prepare the Way

Box 377

Merrivale 3291

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Now is the time to preach endurance not escape

by Dr Michael Brown

NOWADAYS, it is easy to develop a theology of escape, one that says, “When times really get hard, God will remove us from the scene. When real tribulation comes, we will be long gone.” But is that the attitude we should be encouraging? Is not the gospel made for hard times?

I’m aware, of course, that there are divergent views of the end times among Christians, including the debate over a pre-tribulation or post-tribulation rapture (or a variation of those themes).

Fine Christians can disagree on this, and my goal here is not to debate eschatology. We can agree to disagree and work together just the same.

Instead, my goal here is to focus on our attitude. What kind of mindset should we have in a difficult time like this? What should our mentality be?

In the last decade, Christians in Syria suffered bombing, hunger, torture, exile, and death. They did not escape the hard times.

To this moment, Christians in Nigeria are being butchered and beheaded and raped and kidnapped. They have not escaped the hard times.

Some years ago, pastors in the state of Orissa in India were given a choice as gasoline was poured over their wives and children. Deny Jesus, and you all live; refuse, and your family will be burned alive in front of your eyes. They did not escape the hard times either.

In fact, throughout Church history, God’s people have experienced living hell in this world, and throughout history we have survived. What’s more, throughout history we have overcome and thrived.

Note what is written in Hebrews 11, the great faith chapter.

Some, by their faith “conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised.” They “shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword.” Their “weakness was turned to strength (and they) became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies.” Yes, “Women received back their dead, raised to life again (see Hebrews 11:33-35).” This

is the fruit of faith.

But, the text continues, “There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection. Some faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were put to death by stoning; they were sawed in two; they were killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated (Hebrews 11:35-37).”

So then, some, by faith, escaped the edge of the sword. Others, by faith, had the faith to endure the sword, even to the point of death.

Faith doesn’t always deliver us from danger. Often, it gives us the courage and strength to endure the danger. In Jesus we overcome. Through Jesus we endure. As Hebrews 10:36 exhorts, “For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.”

Look at Paul’s words in Romans 8:28-37, words which are not just poetic and beautiful. They are also gritty and real.

Paul had stated that “we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose,” after he which he laid out the glorious plan of salvation (Romans 8:28-31). This prompted him to write, “He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all – how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things (Romans 8:32)?” God already did the hard part, giving up His Son. The rest is easy!

Paul continued, “Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died – more than that, who was raised to life – is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us (Romans 8:33&34).” What incredible truths!

And then, based on this confidence, he asks, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble (in the Greek, tribulation) or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword

(Romans 8:35)?”

Then his dramatic answer: “As it is written: ‘For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.’ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us (Romans 8:36&37).”

Do you see what Paul is saying? We are being slaughtered like sheep (quoting Psalm 44:12). We *are* experiencing trouble and hardship and persecution and famine and nakedness and danger and sword. We *are* going through terrible times of suffering and hardship and pain, but *none* of it can separate us from Messiah’s love. Through Him, we are more than conquerors. This is wonderful news.

Harold J. Chadwick asked: “Would you suffer persecution, poverty, and prison for Christ? Would you endure cruel tortures that take your mind and body to the very brink of death and beyond? Would you persevere? Would you ‘hold fast the profession of your faith without wavering (Hebrews 10:23)?’ Would you stand boldly without shame and confess Christ as Lord, to your own or to your family’s peril? For two thousand years, courageous men and women have been tortured and killed because of their confessions of Jesus Christ as Lord.”

Yes, throughout history, God’s people have experienced hardship of every kind, be it persecution for the faith or be it the difficulties of life. And throughout history, God’s grace has carried us through, making His strength perfect in our weakness. There is no shortage of His power and grace today.

So, to the weak God says, “Be strong in the Lord (see Joel 3:10; Ephesians 6:10)!” You might be weak and frail, but in Him, you are an overcomer. And so, the Spirit says to us, “Don’t feel sorry for yourself. Don’t throw a pity party. Don’t identify with your problems. Instead, put on God’s armour and be strong in Him. You are a more than a conqueror through Jesus!”

This is the attitude we should be cultivating at such a time as this, especially if the present crisis is only a prelude to much tougher times in the future. And, in particular, this is the kind of attitude we should be cultivating should real persecution arise right here in our country.

We don’t fear danger. We don’t fear hard times. We don’t fear persecution. We don’t fear death. We are believers. We are children of God. Enough said. 🐟

A very special word of thanks & gratitude to all those who have supported the ministry of *Prepare the Way* during the nationwide Covid-19 lockdown. You are deeply appreciated!

Preach the Gospel

by Peter Pollock

“WOE is me if I do not preach the gospel,” said Paul. But what is the “gospel?” In English the “gospel” actually means the “good news” and was originally associated with military success on the battlefield.

Colloquially, if you suggest to someone that something is “the gospel truth” it means that it is absolutely irrefutably true! The “gospel” appears 98 times in the New King James version of the Bible.

But what is the Gospel?

Let’s start by stating what it is not! It is not a “social” gospel that is going to fix the world. It is not the “liberation” gospel that is going to provide all the political solutions. It is not the “family,” the “good works” or the “church” gospels that are going to make us all happier on the home front. And it is certainly not the “prosperity” gospel, so dominant on our TV channels, nor the “poor man’s” gospel that robs the rich and gets rid of poverty “Robin Hood” style.

The “gospel” is not behaviour modification; becoming a better person or learning to become more moral or ethical. It is not taking the life of Jesus as a model way, an example to live by. It’s not Christianity. It’s not the church. It is not religion. And it’s not a concept or a philosophy of life.

But it is: the revelation of Jesus Christ and him crucified! It is spiritual. It is divine. It’s mind-boggling. It’s life-changing!

Paul said: I am not ashamed of the Gospel. He had received the “gospel” direct from God, not from the disciples nor by travelling to Jerusalem. Paul got it “direct” by revelation and he did not take this truth and try to fit it into man’s cultures, politics or philosophies.

He spoke it simply and straight because he was not ashamed or intimidated. Paul

said that the preaching of the “gospel” was power unto salvation for those who believed. He also said that preaching the “gospel” reveals the righteousness of God because God is a “holy” God.

And, yes, always there has been this problem with a “different” gospel – a message that has been tampered with by the God of this humanistic, godless age, the devil!

In Colossians 1:26-28 Paul talks about the “great mystery” of the true gospel that had been hidden from ages and generations but was now revealed to His saints who, in turn, God willed to make known this mystery to the world – CHRIST in YOU the HOPE of GLORY!

“Him, we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom that we present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.” To this end Paul laboured and strived with “this gospel working mightily in him” with a passion and an anointing.

It's pure gold

Often I read Colossians 1:13-23. What pure gold! Black and white Gospel gold. It sends shivers down my spine every time I read it.

And each time that I deliberate and meditate through it I become more and more convinced, convicted and utterly converted to the absolute truth that nothing else matters in this world outside Jesus Christ. Yes, nothing!

King Solomon, mighty as he was in terms of money and wisdom, looks back at his life in the Book of Ecclesiastes and declares that everything is “meaningless” and a “chasing after the wind” with his ultimate conclusion that we should “fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.”

Jesus is love, He is grace, He is mercy and above all He is the Gospel. Paul desired to know nothing else but Jesus Christ

and Him crucified. Paul did not support a cause, a method or a system. He belonged absolutely to Jesus Christ. He saw nothing else and lived for nothing else (1 Corinthians 2:2).

“He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed (translated) us into the Kingdom of His dear Son (Son of His love) in who we have redemption through His blood and forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:13).”

In the beginning God made the angels. There was a rebellion and God excommunicated Lucifer and his cohorts who, by this action, became the kingdom of darkness, a powerful influence in the spiritual realm around us.

God then made the earth as we know it now and set up sea, sky and all the animals, each according to their kind. Then he made man. “Come let us make man in our own image” – and so Adam came into being, followed by Eve.

Man was made superior to all other creations when God added to the mind and the body, the spirit. The spirit was God’s image in man and also the vital means of communication, spirit to spirit!

Man was also given his own will, to decide even about God, plus dominion over all the created things. There was a condition, about not eating the fruit of the central tree. Along came temptation, Adam and Eve succumbed and bore the consequences – spiritual death.

They lost the image of God, the protection and wisdom of God – and the devil took over the world! Without the spirit, man became an easy target for the evil influence of Satan, the God of this age. And so the kingdom of darkness took over.

God had put man in charge, so whoever controls man thus controls the world! Just turn your TV sets on at news time, and there is no doubt who is dominating

the world. But God had a plan! He sent His Son Jesus through the virgin birth, and His ministry started at the age of 30 when he went down to the river and was baptised by John.

Off Jesus went into the Wilderness for 40 days to be tempted by Satan. The devil made three offers to Jesus which, if studied, represent every temptation possible.

One of the offers: "If you will bow down and worship me I will give you the world." How could the devil have made this offer if it wasn't truth?

Anyway, three and a half years later Jesus went to the Cross. On the cross He said seven things. "It is finished," was the second-to-last. Those at the foot of the Cross didn't know what He meant. What is finished? The job Jesus came to do for His father!

"Into Your hands I commit My Spirit," was the final statement. In His death, burial and resurrection Jesus Christ restored the spiritual link and make reparation for the damage that had been done by Adam and Eve in the original fall in the Garden of Eden.

Jesus' death on the Cross opened the way to Heaven and was the fulfilment of the covenant God had made with Abraham, the father of all believers.

"Abraham saw My day and was pleased," said Jesus.

Jesus did not come to fix the world. He came to "spiritually" deliver us from the "power of darkness" and convey us into the "Kingdom of His son."

Slaves of righteousness

By His stripes we are healed – spiritually! We have redemption. We were slaves of sin, thanks to Adam and Eve, but we have now been forgiven and gratefully we choose to become bondservants and slaves of righteousness.

"Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature." Jesus is the Light of the World. He is the "first born" of the true family of God. That is why we must get "born again" spiritually to join God's family!

"By Him all things were created." Jesus was there at the beginning! Heaven, earth, visible, invisible, thrones, dominions, principalities and powers. All were created by Him for Him. He is before all things and by Him all things consist.

You can't be more categorical, emphatic

or prophetic. Jesus is the head of His body, the church. He personally signs up members and builds it.

It is His body by the power of the Holy Spirit. And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Jesus is the beginning; He is the first-born from the dead; He has pre-eminence and all fullness dwells in Him.

Jesus is all-sufficient in Himself and we are complete in Him. All honour, glory and authority belong to Him and we cannot touch His glory. It was Jesus who made peace. It was Jesus who reconciled all things unto Himself, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

We were "alienated" and thus "enemies," because our minds had become tainted, thanks to Adam. We are "wretched" and in our minds the damage has been done. But through this sacrifice, His death, Jesus presents us "unblameable" (blameless) and "unreproveable" (beyond reproach) but only if we "continue" in faith, grounded, steadied and settled, not moved away from the hope of the Gospel which you heard because someone, like Paul, preached it with passion, anointing and authority.

No need for frills and fancies

Indeed, the Gospel is the power unto salvation for those who believe – but it must be preached. It must be spoken straight and heard with ears and eyes that are wide open and hearts that have been touched and softened by the Holy Spirit. There is no need for frills and fancies, for flattery and compromise.

Stop editing My gospel – I do believe that's God's stern warning. And Jesus is saying, stop apologising for Me. I am Jesus Christ! The Son of God, the Saviour of the World!

We need to be "rooted and built up in Him" and heed this warning from Colossians 2:8: "Watch out for those who cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit according to the traditions of men, according to the basic principles of the world, not according to Jesus Christ."

Paul told Timothy to "Preach the word." Not "about" the Word or "from" the Word, but THE WORD!

"Him we preach" – that's the revelation of Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Warning. Teaching. Convincing. Rebuking! Exhorting!

When did you last hear a modern

preacher bringing a message with urgency, passion and admonishment?

"In season and out of season" means that there are no seasons!

God's Word is not up for discussion, debate or analysis... it's up for presentation with courage and conviction.

The great mystery? Christ in you, the hope of glory! It is simple, incredible, profound and all about the indwelling Christ.

"In Him we live and move and have our being." It is experiential; it's about faith; it's about His anointing and it's about moving mountains – not physically but spiritually.


Everything else is nothing

We need 2020 vision – and for me 2020 vision is where Jesus is everything and everything else is nothing. One day every one of us is go to witness that truth – unfortunately many from the wrong vantage point.

The great modern challenge is that faith and belief is an intellectual Mount Everest. It's an onslaught on, and offence to, the ego and self image – because to enable or allow Jesus Christ to change your life, to change you from within, needs for you to "die to self," to give up your independent right to yourself.

And that's just too much to ask or give up for most of us. Sorry, but it is so! All God wants is everything. He is a jealous God and a consuming fire, and that you truly know and get to understand through the "revelation" of Jesus Christ and Him crucified. It's spiritual. It's divine. And it's so much more than church and religion!

Romans 10:14, 15&17: "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him who have not heard? And how shall they hear without as preacher? And how shall they preach if they are not sent? How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the Gospel of peace? Who bring glad tidings of good things? So faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God."

The bearers of the "anointed" Word. My word from My mouth, never returns void. God's Word from His chosen vessel or agent never fails. It's not just about opening a book and delivering a message. Nor is it about singing a song. Or about attending a church service. It's about the preaching of the Gospel, the only true Gospel – the revelation of Jesus Christ and Him crucified! 



Brothers, be Bible-oriented, not entertainment-oriented preachers

by John Piper

EARNESTNESS is the demeanour that corresponds to the weight of the subject matter of preaching. The opposite of earnest is not joyful but trivial, flippant, frivolous, chipper.

It is possible to be earnest and have elements of humour. But there is a vast difference between humour and levity – between robust laughter that grows up out of the realities of life and the silliness that constantly angles for a clever line and savvy turn of phrase.

Spurgeon had a way with words, for example, that caused some foolish things to look ludicrous. “Live on the substantial doctrines of grace, and you will outlive and out-work those who delight in the pastry and syllabubs of modern thought.”

Now “syllabubs” is an extraordinary word! I don’t know how many of his people knew it. It means “a sweetened drink or topping made of milk or cream beaten with wine or liquor and sometimes further thickened with gelatine and served as a dessert.”

It is a funny-sounding word. But he probably did not smile, and I doubt there was a calculated pause for the laughter to register. He is earnest but not so solemn in his earnestness that he cannot experience human folly as both sad and comical.

Unbroken seriousness of a melodramatic or sombre kind will inevitably communicate a sickness of soul to the great mass of people. This is partly because life as God created it is not like that. There are, for example, little babies in the world who are not the least impressed with or in need of our passion and zeal and earnest looks.

They are cooing and smiling and calling for their daddies to get down and play with them. The daddy who cannot do this will not understand the true seriousness of sin because he is not capable of enjoying

what God has preserved from its ravages. He is really a sick man and unfit to lead others to health. He is in the end earnest about being earnest, not earnest about being joyful.

The real battle in life is to be as happy in God as we can be, and that takes a very special kind of earnestness, since God threatens terrible things if we will not be happy. As far as I can remember in 32 years as a pastor, I have never told a joke in a sermon.

Don’t feel picked on. My father, whom I esteem as high as any man, started every sermon with a joke. But joke, or no joke, our people laugh with uninhibited joy when humorous things happen, and I laugh with them.

For example, once I was comparing the dolphin with the jellyfish. The dolphin swims where he wills. He is free and can cut against the current. But the jellyfish floats with the tide in bondage to every current that comes along. You can tell where I am going.

So I looked out over the people and said with a loud voice, “Who in the world would want to be a jellyfish?” And a little girl in the second or third row said loud enough for all to hear and full of joy: “I would!” The place erupted in laughter. As it should.

There are hundreds of such things in life. And only the sick soul fails to laugh. But we live in a day when, it seems to me, few pastors are falling off their horse on the side of excessive seriousness. The trend is all in the other direction – toward the flippant, casual, clever, hip feel of entertainment.

The main problem with this is that it is out of sync with the subject matter of the Bible and diminishes our people’s capacities to discern and feel the weight

of glorious truth.

God

The sheer thought of God should make us tremble. Isaiah 66:2: “All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the Lord. But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.”

Quipping and jesting about God – or in an effort to point to God – simply means a person is oblivious to reality. The domestication of God is a curse on preaching in our day. We need to recover reality and the language of majesty and holiness and awe and glory: “Who is like you, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders (Exodus 15:11).”

Sin

Sin is intrinsically ugly and outrageous in the universe. To trifle with sin and treat it as minor or casual is to miss what it is. We get some idea of its outrage by considering the images of physical suffering and agony that have entered the world to testify to sin’s moral horror.

And if we do not feel the immensity of sin’s contemptibleness from its images in human suffering, then the final penalty of it should make us shiver with what it must really be: “He... will drink the wine of God’s wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulphur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night (Revelation 14:10&11).”

Sin’s outcome is eternal misery. What infinite ugliness then must be the ugliness of sin. This is the constant subject of preaching, for this is what we must ever overcome. It is more serious than Satan and sickness and insanity. None of those

can damn a soul. Only sin can damn.

This we must defeat in preaching, or all is in vain. Flippancy in and around our preaching communicates to people that sin is not as serious as the Bible says it is.

Hell

Jesus, more than anyone else in the Bible – and the apostle of love, after Him (see Revelation 14:10&11 above) – spoke of the horrors of hell.

Jesus spoke of “outer darkness (Matthew 8:12),” and “weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 13:50),” and a place where “their worm does not die (Mark 9:48),” and “unquenchable fire (Mark 9:43),” and a “place of torment (Luke 16:28).” These are descriptions of an eternity to which many people are heading because “the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction (Matthew 7:13).”

Preaching has placed hell ever before the view because so many people are going there and because the Word of God saves from hell. This makes a preacher earnest. If it does not, he is simply out of touch with reality.

Cross

The death of Jesus was unspeakably horrible. Not only because of its moral hideousness as the ultimate desecration of the infinitely pure Son of God but also as one of the most cruel kinds of torture a human can endure. The central saving event of our preaching was a horrible reality.

Had we been there, we probably would have thrown up at the sight and then wept uncontrollably at the suffering of the most precious Person who has ever lived. This act was the price for all we offer in preaching. Virtually every benefit or hope we offer in preaching was obtained at this cost.

How can any of it be trifled with?

Perseverance

Here is a key to great earnestness in preaching. If you really believe that “(those who endure) to the end will be saved (Mark 13:13),” and that not only the first act of faith but all subsequent acts of persevering faith are sustained by the Spirit through the Word of God, then virtually every sermon is a “salvation sermon,” and the souls of the saints are being saved every Sunday.

There is not an earnest sermon for evangelism when the souls of the lost are at stake, and then a less serious and less critical message for the saints to simply add a few stars in their crown. Rather, every sermon is crucial and critical in sustaining the faith of the saints and so

bringing them safely to glory.

“I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory (2 Timothy 2:10).” “Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election (2 Peter 1:10).”

Preaching

Nowhere else in all the Bible is there a preface to a command like this one: “I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word (2 Timothy 4:1&2).”

The command is three short words. “Preach the word” – in the context of 2 Timothy 3:16&17 meaning the “God-breathed” word of Scripture.

But the introduction to the command is spectacular. It is calculated to make us take a deep breath and be sober minded about the task of preaching. “I charge you.” “In the presence of God.” “And in the presence of Christ Jesus.” “He will judge.” “The living.” “And the dead.” “By his appearing.” “And by his kingdom.” In view of these weightiest of realities, preach the word.

How could Paul have made preaching any more momentous? It is momentous not because it is done by great men but because it is tethered to a great book – the Bible. There is therefore a great difference between preaching tethered to the Word of God and preaching that ranges free and leans toward entertainment.

The difference between an entertainment-oriented preacher and a Bible-oriented preacher is whether there is a manifest connection between the preacher’s words and the Bible as his authority.

The entertainment-oriented preacher gives the impression that he is not tethered to an authoritative book in what he says. What he says doesn’t seem to be shaped and constrained by an authority outside himself.

He gives the impression that what he says has significance for reasons other than that it manifestly expresses the meaning and significance of the Bible. So he seems untethered to objective authority.

The entertainment-oriented preacher seems to be at ease talking about many things that are not drawn out of the Bible. In his message he seems to enjoy talking about other things more than he enjoys talking about what the Bible teaches.

His words seem to have a self-standing

worth as interesting or fun. They are entertaining. But they don’t give the impression that this man stands as the representative of God before God’s people to deliver God’s message.

The Bible-oriented preacher, on the other hand, does see himself that way – “I am God’s representative sent to God’s people to deliver a message from God.”

He knows that the only way a man can dare to assume such a position is with a trembling sense of unworthy servanthood under the authority of the Bible. He knows that the only way he can deliver God’s message to God’s people is by being rooted in it and by saturating his sermon with God’s own revelation in the Bible.


The Bible-oriented preacher wants the congregation to know that his words, if they have any abiding worth, are in accord with God’s words. He wants this to be obvious to them. That is part of his humility and his authority.

Therefore, he constantly tries to show the people that his ideas are coming from the Bible. He is hesitant to go too far toward points that are not demonstrable from the Bible. His stories and illustrations are constrained and reined in by his hesitancy to lead the consciousness of his hearers away from the sense that this message is based on and expressive of what the Bible says.

A sense of submission to the Bible and a sense that the Bible alone has words of true and lasting significance mark the Bible-oriented preacher but not the entertainment-oriented preacher.

People leave the preaching of the Bible-oriented preacher with a sense that the Bible is supremely authoritative and important and wonderfully good news. They feel less entertained than struck at the greatness of God and the weighty power of His Word.

Entertainment is not what our people need. It is not what the nation or the world needs. So I invite you to pray with me:

Lord, tether us to Your mighty Word. Cause me and all preachers to show the people that our word is powerless and insignificant in comparison with Yours. Grant us to stand before our people as messengers sent with God’s message to God’s people in God’s name by God’s Spirit. Grant us to tremble at this responsibility. Protect us from trifling with this holy moment before Your people. Lord, grant these brothers to be Bible-oriented, not entertainment-oriented preachers of Your Word. In Jesus’ name, Amen. 



Secrets of the God-blessed life

by F.B. Meyer

DO you not sometimes moan over your want of power? You stand face to face with devil-tormented people, but you cannot cast the devil out. You feel that you ought to confess Christ in the workshop, in the business place, to the fellow passenger, and in the home, but your lips refuse to utter the message of the heart.

Yes, and worse than all, you are constantly being overcome by besetting sins which carry you whither you would not. There is lamentable lack of power among us. Not many can roll back the tide of battle from the gates, nor wield the weapons which were child's play to the saints of olden times...

It is not a question as to our abilities or qualifications, but of the power behind us. If that is nothing more than human, it is not surprising that the results are miserably poor. But if we link ourselves to the Eternal Power of God, nothing will be impossible to us. "All things are possible to him who believe (Mark 9:23)." The great matter is to see that the connecting band of Faith is in good use. Apart from the vine the branch can do nothing.

But where can I find the power of God?

Jesus Christ is the reservoir in which the Power of God is stored. "It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell (Colossians 1:9)." All power is His. He would not receive it from the devil on the mountain of temptation, but He laid

claim to it on the mountain of Ascension. Listen to His majestic words, "All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18)."

In that grand moment He united in Himself the power which He had as the Son of Man with the power He had with the Father before the world was. And now all power resides in Him for evermore, not for Himself only, but for us.

How May I Get This Power?

By faith. Each time you are face to face with some difficulty or temptation or service, lift up your heart to the living Saviour, draw upon Him, let Him feel that you are depending on Him for the word to say, and the strength to say it. And immediately there will be a welling up of power within your heart, as lakes are filled from hidden springs.

But my faith is so weak, I forget to look in my hour of need and when I do look it does not seem to give me much help.

Weak faith generally shows that there is something wrong in the inner life. Examine yourselves to see the cause. Are you yielding to temptation? Every temptation overcome is an increase of spiritual power, but every temptation yielded to cuts the sinews of your strength and shears off the seven locks of your might.

Have you fully yielded yourself to God? Often failure points to lack of consecration. Is not self too prominent in you? Before conversion you lived from the centre of an irreligious self. Are you perfectly sure that you are not now living from the centre of a religious self?

Show me the workings of this religious self, the symptom and source of weakness, that I may know and hate this self.

Think for a moment! In making plans for doing God's work, do you not often rush into an enterprise without once considering whose spirit it was that prompted you? Do you not continually ask God to help you in all your little schemes, without first asking if He approved of them, or seeking to know what He had on hand and if you might help Him? And when all is done, is there not a spirit of self-congratulation which, though it array itself in the garb of humility, is more distasteful to Him who resists the proud?

How may I be different? I am prepared to forgo anything if only I may win this blessed secret of blessing and saving others.

Then yield to Jesus your whole self. You are His by the purchase of His blood, now be His by your own glad choice. Bind yourself as a sacrifice to the horns of the altar. Present your body, soul and spirit. Hand yourself over to be His. Ask Him to come and take you. Tell Him that from this glad hour you wish to be made willing to have His way, His will, His law in all. Go through life saying a thousand times each day, I am His!

But if I try to give myself thus wholly to Him, how shall I know that He takes me?

At the first you can only know it by faith. He pledges His word to take that which is given Him. If you give yourself, or try to give yourself, or will to give yourself, He

instantly takes you to be His. And from that moment you are His in the bonds of an ownership which is the daybreak of Love and Power and Blessing.

At first there may be no gracious response or emotion but as the days pass on and you come to taste more and more the sweetness of belonging, never more to yourself but only to Him, there will come into your heart the fullness of joy as well as the fullness of power.

You may not be conscious of having much power, or any, before you begin to work, but when you have begun you will be aware that there is going forth from you a virtue which will make the commonest words as powerful as that garment hem which brought healing to the trembling woman.

But how shall I remain in this blessed state?

Jesus will see to that. Trust Him to keep you trusting. At first it may be an effort to keep yourself in the love of God, but it will become easier until at last it is a second nature. Then you will think more of what He says to you than of what you say to Him. Then you will be always on the alert to catch the least whisper of His voice, the slightest token of His will. Then you will bring every plan and purpose into the King's weigh-house before putting them in action or even submitting them to your dearest friend.

Then you will always feel that you are a member of His body, depending for the least direction and for all needed strength on Him, the Head. Then there will be ever on your lips the words, "What next, dear Lord, what next?" and you will read His will in circumstances which to others might seem trivial and devoid of meaning. You will be always on the alert to find out for each day what good works have been prepared by Him for you to walk in. All that happens to you shall be as couriers bringing the secret letters of His love signed by His hand and telling you what to do.

Nothing shall seem to come amiss or by chance. In all things you shall have definite fellowship with Him until you talk over with Him all your life. You shall abide in Him and He in you and out of that abiding union will come abiding power because His power shall reside in you in all its glory, just as the flashing volume of the cataract dwells constantly in the rocky basin into which it falls and from which it rushes forth toward drought

and famine from the fields and homes of men.

It is a fair vision, and I would that my poor life might touch even its outermost rim of beauty, but I fear it is not for me.

Aye but it is, if only you are content to open the door to Him. He stands at the door and knocks. If any will open the door He will come in. Are you willing to let Him in? Are you willing for Him to do what He likes with you and yours? Are you willing to be an ass's jawbone in the hands of this Samson, a cipher behind this mighty numeral?

If so, He will begin to fulfil in you the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power and you may write on the lintel of your life, "This house has passed into other hands and will be opened under entirely new management."

You cannot help being full of power if the Almighty Saviour comes to live in you. If you want overcoming power, get the overcomer to come and fill you, and the thing is done. Do not talk about it but about Him. It is not an influence, it is Himself.

This is my will, most merciful Lord, and from this moment grant that I may always desire and will that which is to You most acceptable and most dear. Let Your will be mine, and let my will ever follow Yours and agree perfectly with it, as the steel to the magnet, or the hand to the head.

Something More

But there is something in addition which you must mark and remember. The reading of the Bible is as necessary as the fuelling of an engine with fuel, or the imparting of strength to an invalid by food. And this reading must be steeped in the spirit of prayer. You must never let your work for Christ so engross you as to rob you of those quiet hours when He needs you to be alone with Him that He may declare to you His Father's name and reveal Himself and charge you with the spiritual forces stored up in Him.

Those still hours are more dear to Him and more needful for you than all your service. "In ploughing time and harvest you shall rest (Exodus 34:21)." One hour spent in work after prolonged fellowship with Christ, will pay better than 12 hours spent in unbroken toils. Christ cares less for the amount of work done than for its quality. He is more anxious about the worker than the work.

Help me to remember this, Lord of the harvest, and often may I leave even the

whitening fields that in You I may find rest and strength. And if I seem to tarry, I pray, send some loving reminder to call me to Your side, as You did to Mary by the hand of her sister Martha.


One More Blessed Secret

There is one blessed secret more. When the Apostles were eager to win the world, He kept them waiting for 10 long days, not that He was indifferent to the claims of a perishing race, nor to dampen their ardour, but because they had not received that endowment of Power which is the prerogative of the Holy Spirit to impart. Perhaps you lack this. You have received Him as Comforter, Teacher, Sanctifier, but not yet as Power for service.

But He will be this to you, if you will. "Be filled with the Spirit" is a positive command. All you have to do is to make room for Him and this sacred wind will come in through every chink and keyhole and aperture, and you will unconsciously become filled with spiritual might; "strengthened with all might by His Spirit in your inner man (Ephesians 3:16)."

And when the Power of the Highest overshadows our meek and waiting souls, who shall estimate the results that shall accrue to His glory? This is the dying need of the Church. This is the one condition of her success. But it can only be hers by prayer and fasting. If only she would never rest till she obtain it, watching daily at His gates, waiting at the posts of His doors, seeking it as silver and searching for it as a hid treasure, then she would do exploits as of old and look forth as the morning, "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners (Song of Songs 6:10)."

If you win this power, beware that you do not lose it. If a man sits on a chair, the feet of which stand on glass castors, you may pour a continual stream of electricity into him and it will remain in him, not a spark will be lost, every part of his body will be charged with it. But if there is so much as a thread connecting his body with the earth, all the electric current will pass away, as water through the cracks of ajar. So will one besetting sin, one evil motive, one proud thought indulged in and permitted, rob us of the might of the Holy Spirit. Let us beware!

"And the Lord looked on him and said, 'Go in this your might: have not I sent you?'" May that might-giving look fall on you, dear reader. 



An uplifting message of comfort for those who are down

by David Wilkerson

ALL you happy, healthy, top-of-the-world Christians living under blue skies, and who are, right now, enjoying the sunshine of life – this message is not for you.

This message is only for those who are down; for those children of God driven down by despair, loneliness, grief, pain, suffering. It is also a message for those who are down because they have no other human being to lean on. Although they lean on the Lord, the human need to love and be needed is not satisfied.

But most of all, this message is for those who can't seem to shake off feelings of despair because they don't understand what they are going through. I know of some very saintly Christians who are experiencing a trial so heavy and painful, they wonder at times if God is letting them hurt more than they are able to bear.

Their heartbreak almost crushes them and they wonder why their prayers for deliverance are not speedily answered.

I have known of great men and women of faith who have experienced a trial so dark and deep that life itself seemed almost not worth living.

I know the New Testament provides us with better promises than the Old. I know Christ will never allow us to be tempted more than we are able to bear. I know God wants all of His children to enter into the rest of faith and not worry and fret. I know there is complete victory, joy, and peace to all who rest in His Word.

The fact is, however, that God still permits testing times, in which the soul is permitted to go through a fiery trial – which, according to God's word, is to try us. God actually allows severe testings in our lives to prove our love for Himself. "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trials which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto

you (1 Peter 4:12)."

All the prophets predicted that saints of God would be tried by fire – just as gold is refined by fire. Jeremiah said, "God... shall melt them... and try them (Jeremiah 9:7)..." Daniel predicted that in the end times, saints would be tried severely to purge them and make them ready (Daniel 11:35), Zechariah prophesied the coming of the testing fire "to refine them as silver is refined... as gold is tried (Zechariah 13:9)..."

The New Testament suggests that fiery trials are to be accepted – as common to all men. Even the great apostle Paul spoke of being "cast down, perplexed, and in despair (2 Corinthians 4:8)." And even though he sounded a note of victory through all the trials and testings, nevertheless, he did experience despair.

There are times in which you can know in your heart that you are serving God with all that is in you – you are sure of your love for His Word. You believe all the promises; you know He is faithful and you confess it so; and you know you are willing to do anything God asks of you. You cannot think of anything standing between you and the Heavenly Father.

The burden presses you down

You know you have prayed in faith – and still you are down. The darkness does not lift. The burden still presses you down. There is no sign of your prayers being answered. You still cry out, "How long, O Lord? How long must this trial go on? When will I ever come out of this fire?"

Are there any examples in the Bible of suffering and affliction among godly people that would relate to us in our trials? Yes! In fact, James encourages us to "take for an example of suffering and affliction – the prophets." Then he focuses on the

suffering of Job.

"Behold, we count them happy which endure. Yes, have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy (James 5:11)."

Here is a righteous man of God, so down he longed for death. He was so crushed by grief and sorrow, he lost his will to live. His sons were taken from him with a sudden cruel blow. He lost his wealth, his influence, and his good name. His friends forsook him and sat in Judgement as his accusers.

Not one person really cared.

Looking into the future, all Job could see was pain, tears, loneliness, and emptiness. There was not one silver lining in all the dark clouds hanging over him. Besides all the battles with being alone in his struggles, a physical infirmity fell upon him. His body also became an enemy. Spiritually, physically, financially – in every way. Job was down.

The loneliness Job experienced must have been horrifying. And the despair hung on so long, with no relief in sight, that Job started to get bitter. He despised the day of his birth, as if to say, "God, you brought me into the world – for this? Was I born to live in turmoil, pain, and trouble?" He questioned why God was so long in answering him.

But Job's greatest despair came from a dilemma he could not understand at all. "Why is light given to a man whose way is hid, and whom God has hedged in (Job 3:23)?"

In other words, "I've got the message; I see the truth; I know what You are saying – but where is my solution?"

It often happens that a believer's worst trials come right after the most glorious revelation and spiritual growth. As a child of God, you can be thrust into a long, drawn out trial immediately after you have taken leaps and bounds in spiritual growth.

God seems to have been preparing you to go through a severe testing time. So you yield to His chastening rod. The troubled days that follow force you to rely only on God. You know you are in the furnace; you know that only His supernatural strength is carrying you through it all – and you are wanting to learn all the lessons God wants to teach you.

Just as you are about to give up in despair, the Comforter comes and gives a short season of rest to your weary soul. You are refreshed and encouraged. You begin to look ahead and think. "I'm coming out of

it! Deliverance is just around the corner! A few more days or weeks, and everything will be just fine."

But the days roll by and, instead of your burden lifting, it gets heavier. Just as you thought the battle was over – it worsens! Plans go awry. Things that you hoped would happen – don't. Promises are broken. The much longed for victory does not materialise.

The prophet Jeremiah went through just such a trial. He had hoped for deliverance, but, instead, was cast deeper into the pit of despair. He cried out, "He has hedged me about, that I cannot get out; he has made my chain heavy... He has enclosed my ways with hewn stone; He has made my path crooked (Lamentations 3:7&9)..."

Chains getting heavier

How clearly this prophet describes the feelings of a child of God who finds himself cast down to the very depths: that hedged in feeling; burdens that feel like chains getting heavier; walls of stone in every direction an uncertain road ahead; a crooked path.

Keep in mind this is the same Jeremiah whom Christ so often quoted. How could a prophet of God who thundered against kings and nations fall into such deep turmoil and despair? This is the same prophet who kept kings and their armies waiting for 10 days while he sought God for their direction (Jeremiah 42:1-9).

Again and again the Lord had spoken to this humble prophet. He had experienced glorious revelations and mighty anointings of the Holy Spirit. He knew what it was to come out of the secret prayer closet with clear direction from the Lord.

But now, he is down, way down. Lonely, feeling rejected, thinking God had stopped answering his cry – he now allows that old root of bitterness to spring up, and, as a result, he grew restless and troubled. He lost his spiritual composure, crying: "He has filled me with bitterness and he has removed my soul far off from peace (Lamentations 3:15&17)."

Jeremiah lost sight of God's hand in his life. He could no longer sense God being in anything that was now happening to him. "He has led me, and brought me into darkness, but not into light (Lamentations 3:2)."

How sad, yet how very common to all people of God – Jeremiah hit the very bottom. He could get no lower. Listen to his pitiful hopelessness: "My hope and strength is gone... all that is left is misery

and affliction... nothing left but ashes (Lamentations 3:16-21)."

I wonder how many of you can relate to the agony of Jeremiah when he was down? Are you, too, at that point in your trial that you cry out, "God, I'm at the end of myself! I can't take anymore! I'm so miserable I could die! I can't get any lower than I am right now! I can't understand it! When will this darkness pass?"

Do you wonder if the day will ever come when you will be happy and carefree again? Do you worry that your trial has already lasted too long, and you are not going to be able to hold out if it continues? Do your hopes and dreams keep falling apart – as if you seem condemned to a life of misery and trouble? Thank God – there is an answer to it all in the Word. We have been given a message of comfort for all who are cast down.

So far, we have focused our attention on the problem. Now, let us consider the way to victory over all despair. We can begin with the prophet we have been referring to as our example of suffering, because he also sets the example in faith and hope.

In his very darkest hour, Jeremiah discovered a glorious truth that brought new hope and assurance to his mind. It was something he already knew about God, but it didn't touch his soul until he came to the end of himself.

He discovered that at the very bottom – there was God! The further down he went, the more God was to be discovered. Down was not into some dark, hidden, fearful abyss – but down is going deeper into God. God was not to be discovered "up there" in some blissful soaring into untroubled skies, but in the shadows of grief and despair.

When Jeremiah hit bottom, he bumped into God! He fell hard against the faithfulness of a compassionate God. Listen to his discovery: "God is a God of compassion... His compassions for me cannot fail... they are new every morning... great is his faithfulness (Lamentations 3:22&23)."

Little by little, Jeremiah began to realise some great truths that can only be discovered by those who are down.

(1) When I am at the very lowest point; when troubles flow over my heart like water, and I say, "I am cut off" – God draws near and whispers, "Do not fear (Lamentations 3:54-57)!"

(2) When God seems to have "covered Himself as a cloud, so that my prayers could not pass through – He will still see my oppression and will judge my case (Lamentations 3:44&59)."

(3) If the Lord allows grief and sorrow, He will at the same time, uphold me with abundant compassion and love (Lamentations 3:32).

(4) God hurts when I hurt; He wants my troubles to end (Lamentations 3:33)!

(5) God is not against me, trying to crush me under His foot when I'm down like a prisoner in trouble (Lamentations 3:34).

(6) God is not trying to sabotage any of my plans; He is not causing my confusion; He is not working against me (Lamentations 3:35).

(7) Even in my despair and bitterness, when I hated to face a new day – His compassion failed not. His mercies were waiting for me – new each morning (Lamentations 3:22&23).

(8) Because God is always faithful, He will do right by me. God will not cast me off. God will save me (Lamentations 3:25&26).


(9) When I am at my lowest, I have nowhere to turn but to God; so I will lift up my heart and my hands, and thank Him for His faithfulness (Lamentations 3:40&41).

(10) Being down has so spent my strength and hope. I am left empty and humbled – so now, I can depend totally on His mercies (Lamentations 3:18, 20&21).

What it all means is simply this: Get your eyes off your problems and afflictions, and remind yourself that God is still faithful and that His compassion and tender love is yours for the taking.

God is still God!

Rebuke your unbelief and say to your soul, "Wait just one minute – God is still God! He is still on His throne, hearing and answering prayer. God is going to act on my behalf not one minute too soon or too late. He is not trying to hurt me; He loves me. God is overflowing with love toward me; He cares about me. Right now, even though I am down and hurting, He is not far off. He sees every move I make; He bottles every tear; He will take quick action and do what must be done – on time!

"God is bigger than my problem. God is too holy to fail me. His promises have not and cannot fail. So I will quietly wait on my Lord to bring me out into a safe place. Until then, He is with me in the darkest hour. I am not alone – He has promised to never leave or forsake me. In my sorrow – He will comfort me. Even in death – He will not forsake me." 

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What was the greatest event of the 20th Century?

by Dr David R. Reagan

THERE are a great variety of opinions in response to this question, due mainly to the fact that the 20th Century contained many stupendous events. When I Googled the question, I was presented with many lists. Some of the events that were mentioned on almost every list were the following:

*World Wars 1 and 2 (1914-1918 and 1939-1945)

*The Lindburgh transatlantic solo flight (1927)

*The invention of television (1927)

*The first antibiotic – Penicillin (1928)

*The first computer (1936)

*The first heart transplant (1967)

*The first man on the moon (1969)

*The invention of the Internet (1969)

*The first test tube baby (1978)

*The demolition of the Berlin Wall (1991)

I noticed that many, if not most, of the events that were identified as the most significant were dependent upon prior developments that were often more important. Consider, for example:

*The Lindburgh transatlantic flight resulted from the Wright Brother's invention of the airplane in 1903.

*The first man on the moon was dependent on the development of rocket propulsion in 1926, the invention of the computer in 1936, the launching of the first satellite in 1957 and the first man in space in 1961.

*The destruction of the Berlin Wall was due to a more important event – namely, the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

*The many marvellous developments in the health sciences were dependent on biological discoveries that dated back to the 19th Century, like the development of the germ theory of disease in the 1860s.

The Most Important Event From the World's Viewpoint

The event that was named on the Google lists more than any other as the most important event of the 20th Century was the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan in August of 1945. But this event was also dependent upon many theories, experiments and tests that preceded it. Here is a list of some of them:

*400 BC – The Greek philosopher, Democritus (460-370BC) postulated

that the fundamental building block of all matter was what he called the “atom.”

*1803 – A British chemist, John Dalton (1766-1844), developed a more scientific definition of the atom, describing it as a small, hard sphere that is indivisible.

*1904 – J. J. Thomson (1856-1940), an English physicist, discovered the electron.

*1905 – Albert Einstein (1879-1955) proposed the formula, $E=mc^2$, which indicated the power potential of converting a tiny amount of mass into enormous energy, something that could happen with the splitting of the atom if a sustained reaction could be attained.

*1911 – Ernest Rutherford (1871-1937) of New Zealand theorised that the atom had a nucleus and that electrons orbit the nucleus. The result was what came to be known as the planetary model of the atom – a nucleus surrounded by orbiting electrons.

*1917 – Rutherford split the atom at Manchester University in England and discovered the proton.

*1921 – Rutherford theorised the existence of neutrons in the nucleus of the atom.

*1932 – Rutherford's student, James Chadwick, a British physicist, proved the nucleus of the atom contained neutrons clustered with protons.

*1936 – Erwin Schrodinger (1887-1961), an Austrian scientist, proved that electrons do not orbit the nucleus in set paths, but in waves.

*1938 – Discovery of nuclear fission by Schrodinger and a German chemist, Otto Hahn (1879-1968).

This intriguing historical process of discovery culminated on December 2, 1942, at 3:25pm, when the first artificial nuclear reactor produced the first human-made, self-sustaining nuclear chain reaction. The scientist in charge was an Italian-American, Enrico Fermi (1901-1954).

This momentous event took place on a squash court located under the bleachers of Stagg Field – the University of Chicago's abandoned football stadium. It was an incredible accomplishment which marked the advent of the Nuclear Age.

One of the people present, University of Chicago physicist, Samuel K. Allison (1900-1965), wrote at the time: “All of



us knew that with the advent of the chain reaction, the world would never be the same again.” Secretary of War, Henry L. Stimson (1867-1950), called the chain reaction “the greatest achievement of organised science in history.”

A Crucial Letter

Three years before this chain reaction was created, in August of 1939, two Hungarian-born physicists, Leo Szilard (1898-1964) and Eugene Wigner (1902-1995) drafted a letter to send to President Franklin Roosevelt in an attempt to warn him of the potential development of “extremely powerful bombs of a new type.”

They had it signed by Albert Einstein in order to make sure it came to the President's attention. The ploy worked, and on October 9, 1941, President Roosevelt approved the establishment of a crash programme to develop an atomic bomb.

This decision led to the creation of what came to be called “The Manhattan Project.” General Leslie Groves (1896-1970) of the Army Corps of Engineers was put in charge of overseeing the project. Dr Robert Oppenheimer (1904-1967), a theoretical physicist at the University of California, Berkeley, was appointed the scientific director.

To maintain a high degree of secrecy, the central headquarters of the project was located in the mountains of a remote region of northwest New Mexico, at a site called Los Alamos. The specific location of the project and its residents was concealed by designating its mailing address as a post office box in Santa Fe. Babies born in Los Alamos were designated on their birth certificates as being born in Santa Fe. Residents were told to call the town “Site Y” or “The Hill.” There were many more locations across the nation – from Washington State to Alabama – where various aspects of the project were housed. But the key core of scientists were at Los Alamos.

An Amazing Project

The pressure to develop the bomb was intense. There were fears that the Germans might succeed first, and there was the desire



to use the weapon to bring a quick end to World War 2. But the technical problems were overwhelming. Nonetheless, as 1945 began, the scientists could see the light at the end of the tunnel.

In early May of 1945, it was decided that there needed to be a test explosion of TNT in order to obtain parameters for evaluating the force of the atomic bomb when it was exploded. Accordingly, on May 7, a stack of 108 tons of TNT was placed on top of a 7-metre tower and exploded. This is the reason that the force of atomic explosions since that time have been expressed in tons of TNT.

This TNT test explosion was conducted at the same site that had been selected for the detonation of the first atomic bomb – a very remote location in New Mexico in the midst of the Jornada de Muerto Desert (“Day of Death”). The exact site was about 80 kilometres southeast of Socorro and 200 kilometres south of Albuquerque. Today, this site is at the north end of the White Sands Missile Range. The site was given its name, Trinity, by Oppenheimer. He later claimed that the idea for the name came from a poem by John Donne.

As the day neared in July for the atomic bomb test, the scientists set up a betting pool as to how powerful the explosion would be. The bets ranged from the bomb being a dud to speculation by Edward Teller (1908-2003) that it might ignite the atmosphere and destroy the planet. Among those who guessed a specific number, the one who came the closest to the bomb’s actual power was an American physicist, I.I. Rabi (1898-1988), who took the number of 18 kilotons because it was the last available wager left in the pool. The team of theoretical physicists guessed a yield of between 5 and 10 kilotons of TNT.

The bomb itself was nicknamed “The Gadget.” It was exploded at 05:29:21 on the morning of July 16, 1945. The power was determined to be 22 000 tons of TNT (or 22 kilotons). A total of 425 people were present, most of them housed in bunkers. All seemed to be more impressed by the brilliant light of the explosion than its sound.

The roar of the shock wave was felt more than 150 kilometres away. The mushroom cloud reached 12 kilometres in height and could be seen 300 kilometres away.

The Army issued a cover story in the form of a press release that said, “A remotely located ammunition magazine containing a considerable amount of high explosives and pyrotechnics exploded.” The true story was not released to the public until after the atomic bombs had been dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August. The Manhattan Project engineers and scientists did not visit the site until two months later in September.

The results of the test were sent immediately to Secretary of War Stimson who was with President Harry S. Truman at the Potsdam Conference in Germany. The coded message read: “Operated on this morning. Diagnosis not yet complete but results seem satisfactory and already exceed expectations.”

Back to the Question

So, what about it? Was this the greatest event of the 20th Century? Well, of course, that is debatable. But from a humanistic viewpoint, I would say that it was.

Why? Because of both its immediate and long-term impact. Immediately, it resulted in the swift end to the greatest war in world history. In the long run, it changed international politics forever. And it provided mankind with the power to destroy all life.

Since that time, there have been 528 atmospheric nuclear tests and 1 528 underground tests. There are currently a total of nine nations with nuclear weapons: the United States, England, France, Russia, China, India, Pakistan, North Korea and Israel.

As of 1986, there were 70 300 active nuclear weapons in the world. Due to disarmament treaties, that total now stands at 13 890, but many of the decommissioned weapons were simply stored or partially dismantled, not destroyed.

As of 2020, the world is focussed on trying to control the nuclear capabilities of two nations – Iran and North Korea. The effort regarding Iran is to prevent the nation from acquiring nuclear weapons. With regard to North Korea, the purpose is to prevent the nation’s irresponsible use of its weapons.

The Relationship to Bible Prophecy

The advent of the atomic bomb also has spiritual implications that are related to the prophecies contained in the book of Revelation. Although the Antichrist will

rise to power peacefully in Europe, relying on his charisma and supernatural wisdom given to him by Satan, he will have to use military power to conquer the rest of the world.

Keep in mind that Africa, Asia and Latin America have spent the past 200 years struggling to get out from under European colonial rule. These nations are not going to willingly submit themselves to a European dictator, no matter how charismatic he may be. And this will also be true of the Muslim nations in the South Asian areas of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Indonesia.

Thus, after the Antichrist establishes his power over Europe, he will launch World War 3 in order to fulfil the prophecy of Revelation 13:7&8, which says that he will ultimately gain “authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation.” That war is pictured in the Seal Judgments of Revelation. It appears to be a conventional war in which one-fourth of humanity will be killed.

But in chapters 8 and 9 of Revelation, the war seems to morph into a nuclear one, resulting in the deaths of one-third of those left alive. It also results in one-third of the earth being burned and one-third of the sea being polluted.

This is most likely what Jesus had in mind when He said that one of the characteristics of the end times would be “men fainting from fear... for the powers of the heavens will be shaken (Luke 21:26).” Also, a nuclear holocaust would explain why we are told that at the end of the Tribulation those still living will be covered with “malignant sores” – most likely from nuclear radiation (Revelation 16:2 &11).

Before the advent of the Nuclear Age, we had to assume that the horrible judgements of Revelation could only be achieved through supernatural acts of God. Now, we realise that we can do these things to ourselves through an all-out nuclear exchange.

I believe the only reason nuclear weapons have not been used since World War 2 is because of God’s restraining hand. But during the Tribulation, He is going to step back, remove His restraints and allow evil to run its course. Unrestrained mankind will then proceed to destroy itself.

The Spiritual Viewpoint

Now, up to this point I have been evaluating the most important event of the 20th Century from a humanistic viewpoint. But if we shift to a much more important spiritual viewpoint, then I would

What was the greatest event of the 20th Century?

Continued...

argue that there was an event in the 20th Century that was far more important than the development of nuclear weapons.

That event was the worldwide regathering of the Jewish people back to their homeland – an event that resulted in the re-establishment of the state of Israel.

And like many of the great events of the 20th Century which were preceded by equally great or greater foundational events, the miraculous regathering of the Jewish people was possible only because of a greater miracle God performed – namely, the preservation of the Jewish people for more than 1 800 years despite the fact that they were dispersed worldwide and were severely persecuted almost everywhere they went.

And lest you think I am exaggerating, let me prove it to you.

The Relevant Prophecies

There are many Bible prophecies concerning the regathering of the Jewish people in unbelief. In fact, their regathering in unbelief is the most prolific prophecy in the Old Testament Scriptures.

Let's take a look at three of the most important of those prophecies. The first is found in Jeremiah 16:14&15. It is mind-boggling. Read it carefully:

"Therefore behold, days are coming," declares the Lord, "when it will no longer be said, 'As the Lord lives, who brought up the sons of Israel out of the land of Egypt,' but, 'As the Lord lives, who brought up the sons of Israel from the land of the north and from all the countries where He had banished them.' For I will restore them to their own land which I gave to their fathers."

This same prophecy is repeated verbatim in Jeremiah 23:7&8. You cannot fully appreciate what is said in these verses unless you know something about Judaism. The one event that all Jews consider to be the greatest miracle in their history is the deliverance of their ancestors from Egyptian captivity under the leadership of Moses.

But this scripture passage asserts that a time will come when the Jews will look back on their history and proclaim that their regathering from the four corners of the earth – the event that began in the 1890s and continues to this day – was a greater miracle than their deliverance from Egyptian slavery. In other words,

the regathering that began in the 20th Century and continues today will eclipse the Exodus!

This means that you and I are privileged to witness one of the greatest miracles of history. And yet, the average Christian has no appreciation for what is happening because he is ignorant of Bible prophecy and he has been taught that God is finished with the Jews. Therefore, the current regathering is simply viewed as an accident of history.

The second prophecy I want to bring to your attention is found in Isaiah 11:10-12. *Then in that day the nations will resort to the root of Jesse, who will stand as a signal for the peoples... Then it will happen on that day that the Lord will again recover the second time with His hand the remnant of His people, who will remain, from Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And He will lift up a standard for the nations and assemble the banished ones of Israel, and will gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.*

Some have tried to debunk any modern application of this prophecy by claiming that it was fulfilled about 500 years before the time of Jesus by the return of the Jews from Babylonian captivity. But that cannot be. The passage refers to a "second" regathering (the return from Babylon being the first). Further, it states this will be a regathering "from the islands of the sea," which is a Hebrew colloquialism for the whole world, as is made clear in verse 12 where it states that the regathering will be "from the four corners of the earth." Also, verse 12 says that "the banished ones" of both Israel and Judah will be regathered. The return from Babylon was a regathering of Jews from Judah.

The third prophecy is found in Ezekiel 37. This is the famous prophecy of the Valley of the Dry Bones. The prophet was placed in a valley full of bones and told to preach to them. As he did so, the bones began to come together, flesh grew back upon them and they came to life, becoming "an exceedingly great army (Ezekiel 37:1-10)." At that point, the Lord explained to Ezekiel what he was witnessing:

Then He said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel; behold, they say, 'Our bones are dried up and our hope has perished. We are completely cut off.' Therefore prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God, Behold, I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves, My people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel.'"

This is a symbolic prophecy. The dry bones represent the Jewish people in their end-time dispersion, with no hope of ever

existing again as a nation. The resurrection from their graves represents their regathering from the nations where they had been dispersed.

We can be assured of this interpretation because it is the one that God Himself provides later in the chapter:

"Say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God, Behold, I will take the sons of Israel from among the nations where they have gone, and I will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king will be king for all of them; and they will no longer be two nations and no longer be divided into two kingdoms.'"

Again, those who are determined to argue that God has no purpose left for the Jewish people, attempt to invalidate these verses as an end-time prophecy by arguing that they were fulfilled when the Jews returned from Babylonian captivity. But that simply cannot be.


The entire chapter has an end-time context. It speaks of a regathering from "the nations," and not just from Babylon (verse 21). It says this regathering will result in a union of Jews from both Israel and Judah (verse 19). And it says that following this regathering, the Jewish people will turn their hearts to God and will become "My people (verse 23)."

At verse 24, the chapter moves into the Millennial Reign of Jesus as it speaks of David (in his glorified body) once again becoming the king of the Jewish people. Further, it states that at that time, "the nations will know that I am the Lord who sanctifies Israel (verse 28)..."

Conclusion

I was talking with a friend recently about the life of Jesus, and he said to me, "Wouldn't it have been exciting to live in biblical times?" My response: "We are living in biblical times because we are being granted the privilege of seeing the fulfilment of one of God's greatest biblical promises – that one day He will regather the Jewish people in unbelief back to their homeland from the four corners of the earth."

Further, we should keep in mind that end-time Bible prophecy focuses on the Jewish people and the nation of Israel, and the things that God is doing among the Jewish people today, in fulfilment of many prophecies, is proof positive that we are living in the season of the Lord's return.

That's the most important reason for considering the regathering of the Jewish people to be the greatest event of the 20th Century. 



Be strong and very courageous

by Steve Gallagher

"Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go. This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success (Joshua 1:7&8)."

AS Joshua contemplated the task before him – destroying and driving out the wicked Canaanites from the Promised Land – he must have been overwhelmed. The enemy seemed so strong. Not only that, but they were deeply entrenched in fortified cities and would not be displaced without a tremendous battle.

It is much the same for the believer who is bound up in habits of sexual sin. The enemy is powerful and deeply rooted within his soul. The man's adversaries in this battle are his own flesh and the devils that keep him ensnared. The pact the flesh and the devil have between them seems to make them invincible.

If this describes you, the Lord has a word for you: **be strong and very courageous!**

In other words, don't wimp out, don't give up and don't be intimidated by the fight. A few weeks previously, Moses had explained to Joshua and his men how the Lord would help them:

"The Lord your God will send the hornet against them, until those who are left and hide themselves from you perish. You shall not dread them, for

the Lord your God is in your midst, a great and awesome God. And the Lord your God will clear away these nations before you little by little; you will not be able to put an end to them quickly, lest the wild beasts grow too numerous for you (Deuteronomy 7:20-22)."

This is a picture of how the Lord will drive the enemy out of you, as well. Chances are it will not happen instantaneously, but over a period of time. Little by little your adversaries will fall by the wayside.

You will notice that Joshua and his men had to fight the enemy themselves. God didn't simply send the 10 plagues on the land as He had done in Egypt. Now they had to learn to fight the enemy themselves. The Lord wanted them to constantly be reminded that their adversaries would destroy them if given the opportunity and that they should be just as ruthless with them.

It is interesting that the first thing the Lord told Joshua revolved around Scripture. He gave three things to this godly warrior to do.

First, "be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you." Sloppy obedience produces little power. The person who picks and chooses what commandments he wants to obey will find little help from the Lord. Joshua was told to take great care in this matter and how much more should we, who have been so inconsistent in our obedience?

Second, he was told "do not turn from it to the right or to the left." When the devil sees a man getting serious about becoming

free, he launches a multi-lateral assault against him. The inevitable temptations – both blatant and subtle – appear. But he also attacks that which is going to spiritually empower him: the Word of God.


The enemy knows full well that if he can get the man looking elsewhere for help, that he will take away the greatest weapon the man has at his disposal. A vast smorgasbord of man's ideas and opinions are offered through books, seminars, radio shows, counselling sessions and even sermons by well-meaning but ill-informed teachers who consider the Scriptures as inadequate help for such problems.

Nevertheless, the man who finds victory over these spiritual problems understands that only the Bible contains the pure truth he needs.

Last, Joshua was told "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night." The heart, soul and mind of the man who has been involved in pornography has been terribly warped and polluted. His inner circuitry has been trashed.

He desperately needs a great immersion in God's mindset. This doesn't simply come about by "knowing" what the Bible says.

The man must meditate upon it. He must focus his attention on the concepts offered in Scripture. By doing so, the Lord will be able to make those truths real to his inner man. In other words, it won't simply be "head knowledge," but the life-transforming knowledge that penetrates the heart. This is what Jesus meant when He said, "If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:31-32) Sitting in prayerful silence before the Bible, mulling over some precious passage, asking God to make it real, is the way God breathes life into His Word. The logos (written word) comes to life through the rhema (spoken word); what is written in Scripture becomes alive as God brings a fresh revelation to the reader. This is not accomplished by blowing through chapters at a time but only by careful meditation.

As you obey, look to, and immerse yourself in the Word of God, "then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success." 

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The need to confess our own sins

by D. L. Moody

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9)."

"He who covers his sins shall not prosper: but whoever confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy (Proverbs 28:13)."

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that you may be healed (James 5:16)."

ITHINK we, as Christians, have a good many sins to confess. If you go back to the Scripture records, you will find that the men who lived nearest to God and had most power with Him were those who confessed their sins and failures.

Daniel confessed his sins and those of his people. Yet there is nothing recorded against Daniel. He was one of the best men on the face of the earth, yet his confession of sin was one of the deepest and most humble on record.

Brooks, referring to Daniel's confession, says: "In these words you have six circumstances that Daniel uses in confessing of his and the people's sins; and all to heighten and aggravate them. First, 'We have sinned;' secondly, 'We have committed iniquity;' thirdly, 'We have done wickedly;' fourthly, 'We have rebelled against Thee;' fifthly, 'We have departed from Thy precepts;' sixthly, 'Neither have we hearkened unto Thy servants the

prophets, which spake in Thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land (Daniel 9:5&6).'

"These six aggravations which Daniel reckons up in his confession are worthy of our most serious consideration."

Job was no doubt a holy man, a mighty prince, yet he had to fall in the dust and confess his sins (Job 42:6). So you will find throughout the Scriptures. When Isaiah saw the purity and holiness of God, he beheld himself in God's true light, and he exclaimed, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips (Isaiah 6:5)."

I firmly believe that the church of God will have to confess her own sins before there can be any great work of grace. There must be a deeper work among God's believing people. I sometimes think it is about time to give up preaching to the ungodly and preach to those who profess to be Christians.

If we had a higher standard of life in the church of God, there would be thousands more flocking into the kingdom.

So it was in the past when God's believing children turned away from their sins and their idols: the fear of God fell upon the people round about. Take up the history of Israel and you will find that when they put away their strange gods, God visited the nation, and there came a

mighty work of grace.

Judgement Must Begin with Us!

What we want these days is a true and deep revival in the church of God. I have little sympathy with the idea that God is going to reach the masses by a cold and formal church. The judgement of God must begin with us (1 Peter 4:17)!"

You notice that when Daniel got that wonderful answer to prayer recorded in the 9th chapter, he was confessing his sin. That is one of the best chapters on prayer in the whole Bible. We read:

"While I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God; yes, while I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, 'O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill and understanding (Daniel 9:20-22).'"

So also when Job was confessing his sin, God turned his captivity and heard his prayer (Job 42:10). God will hear our prayer and turn our captivity when we take our true place before Him and forsake our transgressions. It was when Isaiah cried out before the Lord, "I am undone,"

that the blessing came; the live coal was taken from the altar and put upon his lips; he went out to write one of the most wonderful books in the Bible.

It was when David said, “I have sinned (2 Samuel 12:13),” that God dealt in mercy with him. “I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity have I not hid. I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the Lord; and You forgave the iniquity of my sin (Psalm 32:5).’”

“I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight (Psalm 51:3&4).” Notice how similar David’s confession is to that of the prodigal son in Luke 15:21.

God Is No Respector of Persons

There is no difference between the king and the beggar when the Spirit of God comes into the heart and convicts of sin.

Richard Sibbes quaintly says of confession: “This is the way to give glory to God: when we have laid open our souls to God, and laid as much against ourselves as the devil could do that way, for let us think what the devil would lay to our charge at the hour of death and the day of judgement! He would lay hard to our charge this and that – let us accuse *ourselves* as he would, and as he will ere long.

“The more we accuse and judge ourselves, and set up a tribunal in our hearts, certainly there will follow an incredible ease (1 Corinthians 11:31). Jonah was cast into the sea, and there was an ease in the ship (Jonah 1:15). Achan was stoned and the plague was stayed (Joshua 7:25&26). Out with Jonah, out with Achan; and there will follow ease and quiet in the soul, and your conscience will receive wonderful ease!”

Thomas Fuller says: “Man’s owning his weakness is the only stock for God to graft the grace of His assistance on to.”

Confession Implies Humility, and This, in God’s Sight, Is of Great Price

If this confession of sin is deep among believers, it will be so among the ungodly also. I never knew it to fail. I am now anxious that God should revive His work in the hearts of His children so that we may see the exceeding sinfulness of sin!

Let us pray God to search our hearts. If it is a right eye, let us pluck it out; if it is a right hand, let us cut it off; that we may have power with God and with man (Matthew 5:29&30).

Unconfessed sin is unforgiven sin, and

unforgiven sin is the darkest, foulest thing on this sin-cursed earth!

You cannot find a case in the Bible where a man has been honest in dealing with sin, except God has been honest with him and blessed him. The prayer of the humble and contrite heart is a delight to God (Psalm 51:17; Isaiah 57:15). There is no sound that goes up from this sin-cursed earth so sweet to His ear as the prayer of the man who is walking uprightly (Proverbs 15:8).

Let me call attention to that prayer of David, in which he says: “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting (Psalm 139:23&24).”

I wish all my readers would commit these verses to memory. If we should all honestly make this prayer once every day there would be a good deal of change in our lives.

“Search Me” – Not My Neighbour!

It is so easy to pray for other people, but so hard to get home to ourselves. I am afraid that we who are busy in the Lord’s work are very often in danger of neglecting our own vineyard (Song of Songs 1:6). In this psalm, David got home to himself!

There is a difference between God searching me and my searching myself! I may search my heart and pronounce it all right, but when God searches me, as with a lighted candle, a good many things will come to light that perhaps I know nothing about.

“Know My Thoughts”

God looks at the thoughts. Are our thoughts pure? Have we in our hearts thoughts against God or against His people – against anyone in the world? If we have, we are not right in the sight of God. Oh, may God search us, every one! I do not know any better prayer that we can make than this prayer of David.

I think, if God searches us, we will find a good many things in our lives for us to confess. If we are tried and tested by God’s law, there will be many, many things that will have to be changed.

Let us pray to God to search us and try us to see if there be any evil way in us. If these holy and good men in the Bible felt that they were faulty, should we not tremble and endeavour to find out if there is anything in our lives that God would have us get rid of?

Once again, let me call your attention to the prayer of David contained in Psalm 51: “*Have mercy upon me, O God, according to*


Your lovingkindness: according to the multitude of Your tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight.... Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which You have broken may rejoice. Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Your presence; and take not Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation; and uphold me with Your free Spirit. Then will I teach transgressors Your ways; and sinners shall be converted to You (verses 1-4, 7-13).”

A friend of mine told me some years ago that he repeated this prayer as his own every week. I think it would be a good thing if we offered up these petitions frequently; let them go right up from our hearts!

If we have been proud, or irritable, or lacking in patience, shall we not at once confess it? Is it not time that we began at home, and got our lives straightened out? See how quickly the ungodly will then begin to inquire the way of life! Let those of us who are parents set our own houses in order and be filled with the Holy Spirit; then it will not be long before our children will be inquiring what they must do to get the same Spirit!

I believe that today – by its lukewarmness and formality – the Christian church is making more nonbelievers than all the books that nonbelievers ever wrote. I do not fear nonbelievers’ lectures half so much as the cold and dead formalism in the professing church at the present time! One prayer meeting like the disciples had on the day of Pentecost would shake the whole nonbelieving fraternity!

What we want is to get hold of God in prayer! You are not going to reach the masses by great sermons. We want to “move the Arm that moves the world.” To do that, we must be clear and right before God.

“For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, then have we confidence toward God. And whatever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight (1 John 3:20-22).” 



Knowing God through prayer

*taken from The Kneeling Christian
by an unknown Christian*

PAYER is much more than merely asking God for something – although that is a very valuable part of prayer, if only because it reminds us of our utter dependence upon God. It is also communion with God – talking with Him, not only to Him. We get to know people by talking with them. We get to know God in like manner. The highest result of prayer is not deliverance from evil, or the securing of some coveted thing, but knowledge of God.

“And this is life eternal, that they should know You, the only true God (John 17:3).” Yes, prayer discovers more of God, and that is the soul’s greatest discovery. Men still cry out, “Oh, that I knew where I might find Him! That I might come even to His seat (Job 23:3)!”

The kneeling Christian always “finds” Him, and is found of Him. The heavenly vision of the Lord Jesus blinded the eyes of Saul of Tarsus on his downward course, but he tells us, later on, that when he was praying in the temple at Jerusalem he fell into a trance and saw Jesus (Acts 22:18). It was then that Christ gave him his great commission to go to the Gentiles.

Vision is always a precursor of vocation and venture. It was so with Isaiah. “I saw the Lord... high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple (Isaiah 6:1).” The prophet was evidently in the sanctuary praying when this happened. This vision also was a prelude to a call to service, “Go...”

Now, we cannot get a vision of God unless we pray. And where there is no vision

the soul perishes.

A friend of Horace Bushnell was present when that man of God prayed. There came over him a wonderful sense of God’s nearness. He says: “When Horace Bushnell buried his face in his hands and prayed, I was afraid to stretch out my hand in the darkness, lest I should touch God.”

A Thirst for God Alone

Was the psalmist of old conscious of such a thought when he cried, “My soul, wait only upon God (Psalm 62:5)?”

I believe that much of our failure in prayer is due to the fact that we have not looked into this question, “What is prayer?” It is good to be conscious that we are always in the presence of God. It is better to gaze upon Him in adoration. But it is best of all to commune with Him as a Friend – and that is prayer.

Real prayer at its highest and best reveals a soul athirst for God – just for God alone. Real prayer comes from the lips of those whose affection is set on things above. What a man of prayer Count Zinzendorf was. Why? He sought the Giver rather than His gifts. He said: “I have one passion: it is He, He alone.”

Of course, we know that God bids us “ask” of Him. We all obey Him so far; and we may rest well assured that prayer both pleases God and supplies all our need. But he would be a strange child who only sought his father’s presence when he desired some gift from him! And do we not all yearn to rise to a higher level of prayer than mere petition? How is it to be done?

It seems to me that only two steps are necessary – or shall we say two thoughts? There must be, first of all, a realisation of God’s glory, and then of God’s grace.

A Realisation of God’s Glory

Do you think that any one of us spends enough time in pondering over, yes, and marvelling over, God’s exceeding great glory? And do you suppose that any one of us has grasped the full meaning of the word “grace?” Are not our prayers so often ineffective and powerless – and sometimes even prayerless – because we rush unthinkingly and unprepared into God’s presence, without realising the majesty and glory of the God whom we are approaching, and without reflecting upon the exceeding great riches of His glory in Christ Jesus, which we hope to draw upon?

We must “think magnificently of God.”

May I then suggest that before we lay our petitions before God we first dwell in meditation upon His glory and then upon His grace – for He offers us both. We must lift up the soul to God. Let us place ourselves, as it were, in the presence of God and direct our prayer to the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who only has immortality, dwelling in light... to whom be honour and power eternal (1 Timothy 6:16).

Let us then give Him adoration and praise because of His exceeding great glory. Consecration is not enough. There must be adoration.

“Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts,”

cry the seraphim; “the whole earth is full of His glory (Isaiah 6:3).” “Glory to God in the highest,” cries the “whole multitude of the heavenly host (Luke 2:13&14).” Yet some of us try to commune with God without stopping to “put off our shoes from off our feet (Exodus 3:5).”

And we may approach His glory with boldness. Did not our Lord pray that His disciples might behold His glory (John 17:24)?

It was not a desire for self-display that led our Lord to pray, “Father... glorify Your Son...” “O, Father, glorify Me (John 17:1&5).” Our dear Lord wants us to realise His infinite trustworthiness and unlimited power, so that we can approach Him in simple faith and trust.

In heralding the coming of Christ the prophet declared that “the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together (Isaiah 40:5).” Now we must get a glimpse of that glory before we can pray right. So our Lord said, “When ye pray, say, Our Father, who art in heaven (the realm of glory), hallowed be Thy name (Luke 11:2).”

There is nothing like a glimpse of glory to banish fear and doubt.

Expressing God's Glory

Most of us need some help to realise the glory of the invisible God before we can adequately praise and adore Him. William Law said, “When you begin to pray, use expressions of the attributes of God that will make you aware of His greatness and power.”

This point is of such tremendous importance that we venture to remind our readers of helpful words. Some of us begin every day with a glance heavenwards while saying, “Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.” The prayer, “O Lord God most holy, O Lord most mighty, O holy and merciful Saviour!” is often enough to bring a solemn awe and a spirit of holy adoration upon the soul.

We need to cry out, and to cry often, “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour (Luke 1:46&47).” Can we catch the spirit of the psalmist and sing “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name (Psalm 103:1)?” “Bless the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, You are very great; You are... clothed with honour

and majesty (Psalm 104:1).” When shall we learn that “in His temple everything says, Glory (Psalm 29:9)?” Let us, too, cry, Glory!

All He is and all He does is glory. His holiness is “glorious (Exodus 15:11).” His name is “glorious (Deuteronomy 28:58).” His work is “glorious (Psalm 111:3).” His power is “glorious (Colossians 1:11).” His voice is “glorious (Isaiah 30:30).”

Reflecting His Glory

“For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things. To Him be glory forever (Romans 11:36).”

And this is the God who bids us come to Him in prayer. This God is our God, and He has “gifts for men (Psalm 68:18).” God says that everyone who is called by His name has been created for His glory (Isaiah 43:7). His church is to be a “glorious” church – holy and without blemish (Ephesians 5:27).

Have you ever fully realised that the Lord Jesus desires to share with us the glory we see in Him? This is His great gift to you and me, His redeemed ones. Not only in that day “when He shall come to be glorified in His saints” is there glory for us, but here and now – today (2 Thessalonians 1:10).

He wishes us to be partakers of His glory. Did not our Lord Himself say so? “The glory which You have given Me I have given to them,” He declares (John 17:22). What is God’s command? “Arise, shine, for your light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon you.” Nay, more than this: “His glory shall be seen upon you,” says the inspired prophet (Isaiah 60:1&2).

God would have people say of us as Peter said of the disciples of old: “The Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God rests upon you (1 Peter 4:14).” Could we ask for anything better?

How can we get this glory? How are we to reflect it? Only as the result of prayer. It is when we pray, that the Holy Spirit takes of the things of Christ and reveals them to us (John 16:15).

It was when Moses prayed, “Show me Your glory,” that he not only saw something of it, but shared something of that glory, and his own face shone with the light of it (Exodus 33:18; 34:29). And when we, too, gaze upon the “glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians

4:6),” we shall see not only a glimpse of that glory, but we shall gain something of it ourselves.

Now, that is prayer, and the highest result of prayer. Nor is there any other way of securing that glory, that God may be glorified in us (Isaiah 60:21).

When we can declare, with John, “Yes, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ (1 John 1:3),” people will say the same of us: “They have been with Jesus!”

As we lift up our soul in prayer to the living God, we gain the beauty of holiness as surely as a flower becomes beautiful by living in the sunlight. Was not our Lord Himself transfigured when He prayed? And the “very fashion” of our countenance will change, and we shall have our Mount of Transfiguration when prayer has its rightful place in our lives.


And men will see in our faces “the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace.” Our value to God and to man is in exact proportion to the extent in which we reveal the glory of God to others.

A New Vision of God's Glory

What is prayer? It is a sign of spiritual life. I should as soon expect life in a dead man as spiritual life in a prayerless soul! Our spirituality and our fruitfulness are always in proportion to the reality of our prayers.

If, then, we have at all wandered away from home in the matter of prayer, let us today resolve, “I will arise and go to my Father, and say to Him, Father...”

“The secret of failure is that we see men rather than God. Romanism trembled when Martin Luther saw God. The ‘great awakening’ sprang into being when Jonathan Edwards saw God. Scotland fell prostrate when John Knox saw God. The world became the parish of one man when John Wesley saw God. Multitudes were saved when Whitefield saw God. Thousands of orphans were fed when George Müller saw God. And He is ‘the same yesterday, today, and forever.’”

Is it not time that we got a new vision of God – of God in all His glory? Who can say what will happen when the church sees God? But let us not wait for others. Let us, each one for himself, with unveiled face and unsullied heart, get this vision of the glory of the Lord. 



And he stood speechless

by Vance Havner

IN the first 14 verses of the 22nd chapter of Matthew, our Lord gives a parable setting forth God's dealings with man concerning salvation from the very beginning. The story of the wedding feast is unusual in that it combines past history with future prophecy.

Some of it has already taken place; more of it is happening before our eyes; and the rest is sure to come.

"The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king, who made a marriage feast for His son."

The King is God, Who prepares a wedding supper for His Son, Jesus Christ, and His Son's bride, the church. The Jews were familiar with the Old Testament figure of Jehovah and His wife, Israel, long since become adulterous. Now a new figure arises to picture the union of Christ with believers.

Paul wrote of having espoused the Corinthian Christians unto one husband, the risen Lord.

Then there is the beautiful passage in Ephesians 5:22-32, using the marriage relationship to illustrate the same truth. This

marriage reaches its heavenly consummation at the marriage supper of the Lamb described in Revelation 19:7-9, where the bride is arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, the righteousness of the saints – a detail we should remember in connection with this parable.

"And sent forth his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they would not come."

The servants here are all the prophets from Moses to John the Baptist, inviting Israel. But they would not come, and our Lord lamented as He wept over Jerusalem that He would have gathered them but they would not.

"Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, 'Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: Come to the marriage feast.'"

Between verses 3 and 4, Christ has come, has died, and has risen, and all things are ready. The bread of life, the water of life, the Passover Lamb, all are ready, the gracious provisions of the gospel are spread, and the servants, the early Apostles and witnesses, go out to invite the Jews again.

Peter preached on Pentecost to a Jewish audience.

"But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise."

This reminds us of those in Luke 14:18-20, who had bought land and oxen and married and could not come. This crowd was not hostile, just preoccupied.

In the days of Lot they ate and drank, they bought and sold, they planted and built, and most people today miss heaven because they are taken up with things perhaps not evil in themselves, but secondary interests that keep them from God's best.

These invited guests excused themselves, and so do men today offer silly arguments to explain why they prefer to go to hell.

There are no reasons, only excuses, and an excuse is but the skin of a reason stuffed with a lie.

"They went their ways..." and so have we "turned every one to his own way." But the wicked must "forsake his way if he is to be saved (Isaiah 55:7)."

"And the remnant took his servants, and treated them shamefully, and killed them."

The Jewish rulers persecuted the early witnesses, and killed Stephen and James.

"But when the king heard of this,

he was angry; and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city."

This is ancient history. God was angry and sent the Roman armies, His armies in the sense that they were the instruments of His anger, as was the Assyrian in Isaiah 10: 5, to destroy Jerusalem.

Jesus prophesied it clearly, and it came literally to pass in the slaughter of over a million Jews and the demolishing of their city. Truly, their house was left desolate.

"Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but they who were invited were not worthy. Go therefore into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the marriage.'"

The gospel preachers went forth from then until now into the highways and hedges to compel them to come in. We are debtors to everyone, the progressive throngs on the highways, the poor and despised in the hedges.

We are to compel them with the compulsion of urgent love, snatching some from the fire, for it is a day of good tidings, and we do not well to hold our peace.

The objective is that His house may be filled, and when His elect number is gathered, He will come.

"So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests."

Into the professing church will come both the true and the false. The minister has no way of reading hearts, but "the Lord knows those who are his." Just as the net gathered good fish and bad (Matthew 13:47-50) so do soul-winners gather into the professing church both true possessors and mere professors.

Many are called with the general gospel calling, but not many are chosen, not many belong to the effectual calling of Romans 8:30; not many truly receive Christ and are born again.

But now I come to the climax of this parable, and the part with which I am most concerned just now...

"And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man who did not have on a wedding garment."

Our Lord seems to have in mind a passage from Zephaniah: "Hold your peace at the presence of the Lord God: for the day of the Lord is at hand: for the Lord

has prepared a sacrifice, He has bid his guests. And it shall come to pass in the day of the Lord's sacrifice, that I will punish the princes, and the king's children, and all who are clothed with strange apparel (1:7&8).

I have heard many sermons on the man who bought land, the man who bought oxen, the man who married a wife and could not come.

I have never heard a sermon on the man who came and yet went to hell. This man offered no excuses; he did not persecute the servants. He came, yet he was cast out as though he had bitterly opposed the whole matter.

What was the reason? I read that the king...

"...said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here not having a wedding garment?' And he was speechless."

Why was he speechless? Maybe he had not heard that a certain garment must be worn. Maybe he was not able to secure one or perhaps he did not have time. But we are told that on such occasions the host provided wedding garments, which were put on when the guests arrived; so there was no excuse.

There are thousands in our churches today called but not chosen. They appear righteous before men, but they wear not the wedding garment of the righteousness

of Christ.

"I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels (Isaiah 61:10)."

"Our righteousness is as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6)" but the Lord Jesus Christ is made unto us righteousness (1 Corinthians 1:30) and we are to put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh (Romans 13: 14).

You may hear and answer the general gospel invitation; you may go to church, belong to a church, pray in the church, pay to the church, be active in a church; but if you are not robed in the righteousness of Christ Himself – the wedding garment the King provides – you will stand on that day condemned, hearing the King say, "How did you come in here?"

It is only as we are "clad in His righteousness alone" that we are "faultless to stand before the throne."

"And he was speechless." The word means "muzzled."

Men can talk aplenty now – we run into many long-winded and loudmouthed individuals who can talk like phonographs as they try to justify themselves, but there will come a day when their little speech

will not do; they will stand muzzled before the King.

"Then said the king to his servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"

God commands the angels not only to cast the offender into outer darkness but first – and we read of it nowhere else – to bind him hand and foot.

Mind you, it is the Lord Jesus Himself who gives us this awful detail. We seem to forget that the most fearful pictures of future punishment recorded in the Bible come to us from the Lord Jesus Himself.

"For many are called, but few are chosen." Many are basing their hopes on an external call instead of upon an eternal choice.

Many are called, but only those who accept the righteousness of God and put on the Lord Jesus Christ and are thus made the righteousness of God in Him, only these pass inspection before the King. All others are but spots in the feasts (Jude 12).

Then let us give diligence to make our calling and election sure (2 Peter 1:10) lest after living in a church all our lives, we end in outer darkness.

"Examine yourselves, whether you are in the faith (2 Corinthians 13:5)."

"Put on the Lord Jesus Christ!" 

Will you help us be a blessing?



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

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

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

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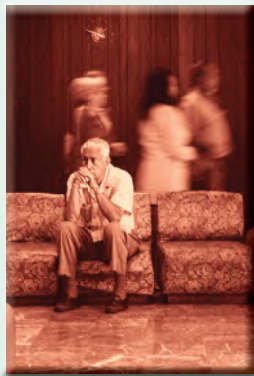
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Former lesbian says it's not 'gay to straight; it's lost to saved'

by Mark Ellis

SHE still maintains she was “born that way.” But an encounter with the truth in a women’s Bible study drew her out of the lesbian lifestyle.

A young woman named Emily Thomes recounted her story on a video testimony produced by *Anchored North*, a Christian media ministry targeting millennials with short videos. Their video, *Love is Love*, has had over two million views in the last month.

Very early in life Emily discovered she was attracted to other young women. “I was 15 and I started dating a girl who lived down the street from me,” she told *Anchored North*. “I got a hicky and my dad saw it and was livid.”

As he erupted in anger she responded defiantly. “I love her. I’m going to be with her. This is how it is,” she declared.

While it went “terribly” with her father, other friends seemed to be more accepting of her choice. When they questioned her, she realised she could deny reality or own it. “I decided to own it. I said, ‘Yeah, what about it?’”

Emily thought Christians who rejected her lifestyle choice were guilty of “backwoods” thinking.

She believed if someone was truly a Christian they would be on her side. Christians who opposed her she considered “legalistic.” She thought they needed to re-read what Christianity is really about – not being judgemental.

God being love means God is nice; God is chill with what I am cool with, she thought.

In her late teens she fell headlong into the lesbian lifestyle. “I was super wild and in serial relationships with women,”



she said.

At nursing school she became engaged to another young woman. “I kind of slowed down a little bit for her because she had two kids,” she told *Anchored North*.

At 22 she was invited to a women’s Bible study. “I expected them to bring up my lifestyle really early and I could use that as justification for not coming back, so I agreed to go.”

As Emily listened to women in the circle talking about having a personal relationship with God, it unsettled her. “I had nothing like that and it bugged me... I didn’t feel okay anymore.”

“What if it’s all true?” she wondered.

Her mind began to swirl with questions about her sexual identity. “Are you sure this is who you are?”

She looked up verses about homosexuality and stumbled upon 1 Corinthians, chapter 6:

“Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators,

nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.”

The implications of the passage struck close to home. “Those who practice homosexuality – which was me – and also drunkards and a bunch of other things that I had been...”

Emily recognised she had been outside the will of God and it scared her.

When she read verse 11 she had an epiphany. “It says, ‘And such were some of you. But you were washed. You were sanctified. You were justified.’”

“I realised there were people in the same place and they were saved and they were changed and that God could do that for me too and I needed that. I could hold on to my sin and reject God or I could turn to him.”


“All the debt that I had racked up living like I lived didn’t have to be mine if I could trust Him,” she reasoned.

The truth in those verses stared at her in black and white. She realised she had twisted the Scripture to suit her desires.

The Word and the Spirit touched Emily’s heart and she was born again. “That day it was like my eyes were really opened. I was amazed at the grace He had shown me.”

After she began to walk with Jesus a gay person told her, “I was born this way.”

“Okay, yeah, me too,” she replied. “You’re not born with right affections. That’s why Jesus had to come. You feeling the desire to sin just proves your need for grace like me.”

“It’s not gay to straight. It’s lost to saved. God calls us not to heterosexuality, but to holiness. Even though the world would paint a totally different story of what sexuality is and isn’t, God’s word is clear and He can save and He does and He will.” 

WATCH & PRAY

Thanks to
Elizabeth Kendal

CHRISTIAN CRISIS LOOMS IN SYRIA

The USA's Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act came into effect on June 17. The Act essentially places Damascus in a state of economic siege. Any foreign entity (state, business or individual) found to be conducting business with the Syrian government or "entering into contracts related to reconstruction" in areas controlled by the Syrian, Russian or Iranian governments will face sanctions. Almost all Syria's Christians, including those displaced by war, live in areas controlled by the Syrian government, where they are both safe and free. The sanctions mean that hardship will escalate to catastrophic levels, reconstruction will grind to a halt and, most critically, if the Syrian Army is forced to pull back, security for Christian front-line communities in the north and east will deteriorate markedly. Please pray.

'NO' TO MINANG BIBLE IN INDONESIA

Indonesia is home to some 7 million Minangkabau. They are the fourth largest ethnic group in Indonesia and the dominant ethnic group in West Sumatra. They are 99 percent Muslim and 0.26 percent Christian. On June 3 Indonesia's Communication and Information Minister removed a Bible app – "The Bible in Minangkabau language" – from the Google Play Store at the request of West Sumatra governor, Irwan Prayitno. Backed by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI, Indonesia's top body of Islamic clerics), Irwan insisted that the Bible app is offensive to the Minangkabau, whose culture is based on Sharia and the Quran, not the Bible. The action sets a very dangerous

precedent and has triggered a fierce debate on religious freedom both in West Sumatra and across Indonesia.

ERDOGAN STOKES THE FIRE OF ISLAMIC ZEAL IN TURKEY

Turkey's President Erdogan continues to inflame Islamic zeal, putting at risk the country's mostly Greek, Armenian and Assyrian remnant Christians, whom he vilifies as enemies. Annually, on May 29, Muslim Turks celebrate the Ottoman conquest of the Byzantine Christian capital, Constantinople (which fell to Muslim forces on May 29, 1453). In recent years, "Conquest Day" has grown to be an all-day spectacular. This year the government, playing to its neo-Ottoman Islamist base, allowed Islamic prayers and a Quran recitation to be performed inside the UNESCO world heritage-listed Church of Hagia Sophia. The danger posed by the incitement inherent in the text, especially when backed by the symbolism of the event and the president's inflammatory provocations, cannot be overstated. Please pray for the Church in Turkey.

HONG KONG LOSES ITS LIBERTY

On Friday May 22, China's Premier Li Keqiang announced that the National People's Congress currently meeting in Beijing would write national security legislation into Hong Kong law, bypassing – "and thus fatally neutering" – HK's legislative council. This, as Benedict Rogers of *Hong Kong Watch* notes, "effectively ends 'one country, two systems' in Hong Kong." Hong Kong – home to 850 000 Christians (12.4 percent of the population), some 1 500 churches and 35 Bible Colleges – has long been "a vital nerve centre

for Christian media" and "the springboard for evangelising on the mainland." HK's loss of freedom will be a massive blow to the Church in China. Please pray.

CHINA'S GOVERNMENT WANTS FEWER CHURCHES

Under President Xi, Chinese Communist Party (CCP) repression and persecution of legal, CCP-approved churches has escalated. For the Protestant, Three Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) it started with the removal of pastors who criticised CCP policies. Since then, the CCP interference and harassment has only escalated. Multitudes of TSPM churches have been forced to remove crosses and Bible texts and replace them with pictures of Xi and pro-CCP slogans.

In mid-2019, Beijing determined that, to stem the rapid growth of Christianity, it had to reduce the number of churches. Multitudes of TSPM churches are now being closed, merged and re-purposed. As the CCP wipes out the middle ground, Christians will have to choose between total

absorption into CCP structures, or illegal, high-risk secret meetings amidst Cultural Revolution-style persecution.

EGYPT: EASTER TERROR PLOT FOILED

On Tuesday evening April 14, Egyptian security forces raided a 10-storey apartment block in the El-Amiriya neighbourhood, eastern Cairo, to neutralise a terror cell ensconced there. A shoot-out ensued, in which all seven terrorists were killed. Police also raided a warehouse in El-Matariya neighbourhood, where weapons (including six automatic rifles), ammunition and explosives had been stored.

El-Amiriya neighbourhood is known to have a significant population of Christians and several churches. In a statement, the Ministry of Interior confirmed that the terrorists had been part of a cell preparing to attack Coptic Christians during Holy Week and Easter Sunday. One National Security Agency (NSA) officer died in the operation and a NSA officer and two policemen were wounded. Please pray for Egypt and her threatened, long-persecuted Church.

Make a date with us! November 1

This is the date for this year's final *Prepare the Way* day at Mount Zion Church, Merrivale (near Howick in KZN) at 9.15 am. Peter Pollock will be preaching! Bring a friend, make a day of it and stay for (free) lunch!

Manna for mahala!

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



Love

The Sign Of A True Church

by Andrew Murray

"By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another (John 13:35)."

WE are taught in most of our creeds that the true church is to be found where God's Word is rightly preached, and the holy sacraments dispensed, as instructed by Christ.

Christ Himself took a much broader view. To Him the distinguishing mark of His followers is not merely what the church teaches through her ministers, but a life lived in love for the brethren.

It is most important that we should understand this.

In God, love reaches its highest point. We owe everything to this love. Love is the power that moved Christ to die

for us.

In love, God highly exalted Him as Lord and Christ. Love is the power that broke our hearts, and love is the power that heals them.

Love is the power through which Christ dwells in us, and works in us.

Love can change my whole nature, and enable me to surrender all to God. It gives me strength to live a holy, joyous life, full of blessing to others.

Every Christian should show forth, as in a mirror, the love of God.

Alas, how seldom do Christians realise this! They seek, in the power of human love, to love Christ and the brethren. And then they fail.

They are sure it is impossible to lead such a life, and they do not even

greatly desire it, or pray for it. They do not understand that we may and can love, with God's own love, which is poured forth unto our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

Oh, that this great truth might possess us: the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. If we fully believe that the Holy Spirit, dwelling within us, will maintain this love from hour to hour, we shall be able to understand the word of Christ: "All things are possible to him who believes (Mark 9:23)," and to love God and Christ with all our hearts; and, what is even harder, to love our brethren, and even our enemies, while love flows from us as a stream of living water, "through the Holy Spirit." 