

Prepare *the* Way

Issue No. 126

PREPARING THE BRIDE OF CHRIST FOR THE RETURN OF CHRIST



Peter Pollock:

Come to Me

LOVE:
The greatest
of all graces

Your worldview:
Christian or pagan?

Atheist-vegan-pansexual
dressed in lettuce bikinis
& handed out veggie dogs
– then she met Jesus!

Encouragement for pastors!

Contents

- [2. Love, the greatest](#)
- [3. Kindling of a torch](#)
- [4. Come to Me](#)
- [6. Your decisions decide...](#)
- [8. Beware of false gospel](#)
- [10. Seek mercy in judgement](#)
- [12. Your worldview](#)
- [14. Deceit of sin](#)
- [16. The Holy Spirit guides](#)
- [18. Cleansing for fullness](#)
- [20. Encouragement for pastors](#)
- [21. Prepare for Him](#)
- [22. Atheist pansexual...](#)
- [23 Watch & pray](#)
- [24. Dedication](#)

This is us: John & Helen Gardiner, Peter Pollock, Garth Shillaw

E-mail: info@prepare.co.za

Phone & Whatsapp:

082 499 3174

Website: www.prepare.co.za

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/PrepareTheWayMagazine>

Banking details:

Prepare the Way

Standard Bank

Account number: 05 244 9815



by J. C. Ryle (1816-1900)

"And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love (1 Corinthians 13:13)."

LOVE is called the greatest of graces because it is the one in which there is some likeness between the believer and his God.

God has no need of faith. He is dependent on no one. There is none superior to Him in whom He must trust.

God has no need of hope. To Him all things are certain, whether past, present, or to come.

But "God is love," and the more love His people have, the more similar they are to their Father in heaven.

Love is also called the greatest of the graces because it is most useful to others. Faith and hope, beyond doubt, however precious, have special reference to a believer's own private individual benefit.

Faith unites the soul to Christ, brings peace with God, and opens the way to heaven. Hope fills the soul with cheerful expectation of things to come, and, amid the many discouragements of things seen, comforts with visions of the things unseen.

But love is pre-eminently the grace which makes a man useful. It is the spring of good works and kindnesses. It is the root of missions, schools, and hospitals. Love made apostles spend and be spent for souls.

Love raises up workers for Christ, and keeps them working. Love smooths quarrels, and stops strife – and in this sense, "covers a multitude of sins (1 Peter 4:8)."

Love adorns Christianity, and recommends it to the world. A man may have real faith, and feel it – and yet his faith may be invisible to others. But a man's love cannot be hidden.

Love, in the last place, is the greatest of the graces because it is the one which endures the longest. In fact, it will never die.

Faith will one day be swallowed up in sight – and hope in certainty. But love will live on through the endless ages of eternity! Heaven will be the abode of love. The inhabitants of heaven will be full of love. One common feeling will be in all their hearts: and that will be love. 🐟



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The kindling of a spiritual torch

by A. W. Tozer (1897-1963)

EVERY pastor who has had experience watching over the flock of God knows why Stephen went on to surpass the other disciples. Briefly stated it was simply this: Stephen had a more intense desire after God and spiritual things. He blazed upward after God like the bush that burned, and his soul found Him, after whom he so ardently longed.

It is not an uncommon sight in any church to see one or two in the congregation who are ablaze for God, while the rest accept things calmly and without much interest. They are saved and they are certain of their position before God; but farther than that their desire does not lead them. If they grow, it is in doctrinal knowledge, not in spiritual fervour.

They are content to know from the Scriptures that they have eternal life.

Many of them will engage in the routine service of teaching in the Sunday school, singing in the choir, passing out tracts, making a neighbourhood canvass; but the eager pastor does not see among them anything resembling the face of an angel (Acts 6:15).

Their spiritual awareness does not become acute. Their love for God never gets out of hand, never causes them to thirst and long for God – till their flesh suffers under the struggle.

More than a quarter of a century of pastoral work has taught me that most Christians will not discipline their lives to bring them under control of the



Spirit. They will not die to self. They will not make the knowledge of God the single passion of their days and years. A few will – and do – and they are the salt and seed of the truth in every generation.

Paul once used the significant phrase "vehement desire," and though he did not apply it to himself, he could hardly have found a more accurate phrase to describe his own spiritual life (2 Corinthians 7:11). He burned with desire to know Christ, to experience for himself the "excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord (Philippians 3:8)." This holy vehemence carried him onward like a torrent to the end of his days.

Spiritual vehemence frightens the timid saints, but it carries the bolder ones upward to blessed spiritual heights. I wonder whether any great work of God has ever sprung up in any place apart from the presence of a few Christians who were ablaze with vehement desire.

A classic example of the power of holy desire is found in the person of Evan Roberts, who was the human agent in the Welsh revival. His testimony is most revealing and can be downright startling unless we have some measure of the same spirit to prepare us for the shock.

The language he uses to describe his experience furnishes a splendid expression of that spiritual vehemence

of which I speak. "Suddenly I was awakened out of my sleep, and I found myself with unspeakable joy and awe, in the very presence of Almighty God. And for the space of four hours I was privileged to speak face to face with Him, as a man speaks to his friend. At four o'clock it seemed to me that I again returned to earth..."

Again he says: "Shortly some wonderful influence came over me. I felt some living energy of force entering my bosom. It held my breath. My legs trembled terribly. This living energy increased as one after the other prayed, until it nearly burst me... My bosom boiled all through and if I had not prayed I would have burst.

"What boiled my bosom? It was the verse 'But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8).'"

"I fell on my knees with my arm stretched out on the seat before me. The perspiration poured down on my face, and my tears streamed so quickly I thought the blood came out... I cried, 'Bend me, bend me!' After I was bent, a wave of peace filled my soul."

It may be set down as an axiom that our spiritual state perfectly corresponds to the intensity of our desire. Each of us enjoys as much grace as he actually wants. Where there seems to be a discrepancy between what we possess and what we desire to possess, we may safely conclude that our desire is not as great as we had supposed.

We want God, it is true, but we want something else more. And we get what we want most.

What shall we do when we find that our desire is but lukewarm? Treat our condition as a spiritual sickness, and act accordingly. Go to God about it as we would about any other sin, and stay before Him in repentance and faith – till the flame of pure desire begins to glow within.

With the coming of strong desire, a whole new world will open before us. The simplest Bible truth will come alive with a new and blessed meaning! The person of Christ will become dear beyond expression, and our lives will begin to glow with a fresh and wonderful devotion. 🐟



by Peter Pollock

“You search the scriptures for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are that testify of Me... but you are not willing to come to Me (John 5:39&40)!”

AVIDLY, almost obsessively we do just that – search the scriptures – because we believe or have been encouraged, to seek the intellectual road to understanding about God. But, as Jesus points out, “they do reveal Me” but you are not willing to come to Me!

We are not willing to lay down the intellectual stronghold that has built itself in us and allow our relationship with Jesus to become spiritual, intimate and experiential. The same problem is referred to in Matthew 15: 8&9, “These people draw near to Me with their mouth and honour Me with their lips but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”

Yes, in vain we pursue the worthless exercise of following the pathway of humanism, a one-way ticket to damnation. The Prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled in that “hearing you will hear and not understand and seeing you will see and not perceive...”

Blind eyes and deaf ears that are so representative of the end-time apostate church all around us. But it was all foreseen and prophesied. 1 Corinthians 2:14, “But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness to him nor can he know them because they are

spiritually discerned.” The man without the spirit does not understand!

Worse still... he cannot understand! Why? Because almighty sovereign God has ordained it so. In the beginning “Come let us” and Triune God made man for “fellowship” with Him.

The Spirit in man was the “image” of God in man because God is Spirit! And it was the Spirit in man that made him superior to all God’s other creations and it was also the Spirit in man that enabled him to communicate with God.

God then gave Adam and Eve dominion of the world and their own will because He didn’t want to make a whole lot of robots. To exercise their will, God gave an instruction not to eat of the fruit of the central tree in the Garden of Eden or else they “would surely die!”

But man was tempted by the devil, succumbed and died spiritually, and in so doing lost God’s wisdom and protection. The spiritual link was restored by the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, when He died on the Cross.

Through Gethsemane, Calvary and the Garden Tomb, Jesus became the Restorer and the Redeemer. In His death, burial and resurrection the spiritual link was restored for all who believe in Him.

Jesus is the restorer – not grace, love, mercy, the Gospel, the church, Christianity or religion. It was Jesus! Jesus!

Indeed, Jesus is in all those things but He alone is the Saviour and He is all-

sufficient in Himself. You just cannot replace Him in any shape or form. It’s an absolute truth that God ordained, and it makes sense.

There is nothing worthwhile outside God, because He decreed it so. And doesn’t it make sense that, if God is creator of everything, He had made it absolutely impossible for anyone to find peace, love and fulfilment any other way but His Way – Jesus Christ.

God gave us His Bible and His Word as a revelation of Himself. When He set it all out for Moses, it was a narrative that was intended to enhance our “revelation” knowledge of Him. “Now the earth was dark and formless and covered with water... and God said let there be light.” And so came into being the world/cosmos as we know it now.

God’s Word was born. God’s Word is not a history lesson nor is it a science lesson, but it does not deny either history or science. It is His “revelation” of Himself to us, His creations.

It is not a system, or a method or a religion or a secret formula and it is not something we can earn, learn or acquire. It only comes from Him and is a “revelation” – revealed by the Holy Spirit. It is an epiphany.

Now the crunch question is how do you read your Bible, with your mind and intellect or with your heart? The Bible either serves as a manual and textbook or as a spiritual well or oasis in life’s desert.

It is either your skeleton or your lifeblood! It is either read at an arms-

length with your head or close to your chest with your heart.

Seek Me and you will find Me if you seek me with all your heart, said the Lord. John 5:38 states “You don’t have His Word abiding in your heart.” That, precisely, is the problem for many believers.

As I travel around I hear constantly: The Word! The Word! The Word! Insistently the intellectuals promote Bible knowledge. It’s so right, but also so wrong. When there is no Holy Spirit involved in reading His Word there is no life and no passion. It must become a living word!

Oswald Chambers writes that theology is useless without intimacy with Jesus Christ. Doctrine is not your saviour. In Jeremiah 23&24 we read about “knowing” God and “understanding” God as distinct from knowing “about” Him and understanding “about” Him.

Again, the major crunch issue is having the Holy Spirit. It’s the difference between night and day and it is huge, serious and – quite frankly and basically – a matter of life and death!

There is a cost in following Jesus, a huge cost. Christianity has a price and all God wants from every one of us is everything. He is a jealous God and a consuming fire and you and I were bought at a huge price – His Son, Jesus when He died on the Cross.

Jesus died for His Father, was born to this end, and we are the major beneficiaries – but to benefit we have to get born again. And to get truly “born again” we need to repent and give up our independent right to ourselves. That is all, and its everything!

Jesus Christ is coming back to rule and reign, as prophesied, and the Millennium rule will involve Him ruling with a fist of iron. It will be preceded by the “Judgement of the Nations” and that will involve the “nations mourning” because no unbelievers will survive that judgement. That, most certainly, is not playing games. It is really serious!

We are not saved by reading a book, we are not saved by working out some formula or applying rules and regulations. We are not saved by studying the Bible, and we are not saved by studying the life of Jesus, nor by biblical history and facts.

You are saved by Jesus, recognising your sin, repenting genuinely and earnestly and meeting Jesus personally, intimately and experientially at the foot of the Cross. The Bible reveals God, it is the “revelation” of Him just as the Gospel – as Paul so often insisted – is “the revelation of Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”

That only comes via the Holy Spirit. Many times, Jesus confirmed that He had come to “reveal” the Father. Many times, I have been asked why there are no dinosaurs in the Bible. The answer? They are irrelevant to the God story!

It cannot save you, just point you in the right direction...

Oh yes, the Bible is a story, it is a gathering of words and illustrations and unquestionable facts, and it does most assuredly stimulate the intellect and the mind. But it can’t save you. It can only help point you in the right direction.

And it only comes alive through God Himself, the Holy Spirit, by “coming” to Jesus.

Indeed, we search the scriptures day and night, avidly, articulately and even with relentless commitment and passion. But there is no joy, there is no fruit and there is no inner peace that comes from that ministry of His Word.

God’s Word “from His mouth” never returns void, again stressing the importance of the message being carried by God’s chosen and anointed agents and heralds through the power of the Holy Spirit.

When Jesus comes into a life, that life changes. If there is no change, there is no Jesus.

There is the investigative route of debate and analysis, but the answer isn’t there – even though that road is stacked with spiritual signposts for the spiritual man. But it’s all foolishness for the man without the Spirit!

As Jesus said, all the Bible does is “testify” of Him and God’s amazing grace.

The mountain to be climbed is to “come to Me.” “You are not willing to come to Me,” lamented Jesus.

It’s a matter of your independent will, that very essence of you and I, which is just not willing to truly submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. It is personal, intimate a one-to-one relationship.

I am life! Only I am life. I am the way, the truth and the life, nobody comes to the Father except through Me. You simply cannot get more categorical, emphatic or absolute.

“He who has the Son has life (1 John 5:12).” In other words, if you do not have the Son, are not “born again,” you do not have life – irrespective of how you have come to view what “life” is, or truly means.

You can be the richest, fittest, healthiest and most dynamically successful person in the world, but if you are not “born again” and don’t have Jesus as your Lord, you do not have “life” says God.

John 5:24-27 tells us that if you are “born again” you have “crossed over from death to life.” That’s interesting! We all have this idea of “life,” that it is about first getting born, thanks to your mother, and then dying some 70 years later.


But here we are told about crossing over from “death to life” while here on earth, when we give our lives to Jesus. The explanation is simple!

Thanks to Adam and Eve and their Fall in the Garden of Eden, we are all born dead spiritually. And it is Jesus who enables us to come alive spiritually. In Adam we all die, in Jesus Christ we all come alive.

“I am the resurrection and the Life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die (John 11:25&26).”

Again, this is a profound spiritual truth that can only be understood in the Spirit. It doesn’t make sense to the unbeliever or pagan. All of this is so much more than Sunday school, church services, Bible studies or even Christmas.

It doesn’t matter how fancy the place, the preacher or the presentation – the truth is simple and unavoidable. There is just too much flirting around with intellectualism, humanism and biblical analysis – and not enough simply “coming to Me” as a child. Childlike, not childish, and with a determination to forsake everything as we seek Him and Him alone.

As the “Casting Crowns” group so challengingly sing, it’s time to throw away the book of “Second Opinions” and come to Jesus! 



by **Zac Poonen**

"I came down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me (John 6:38)."

JESUS tells us here in His own words what He came on earth to do. And in this one sentence we have a description of how Jesus lived every single day of His entire life on earth.

The 30 years of Jesus' life in Nazareth are referred to as hidden years. But here Jesus reveals what He did during every day of those 30 years: He denied His own will and did His Father's will.

When Jesus was with the Father in heaven from eternity past, He never had to deny His own will, for His own will was the same as His Father's. But when He came to earth in our flesh, that flesh had a self-will that was diametrically opposed to the Father's will at every single point. The only way in which Jesus could do the Father's will then was by denying His own self-will all the time. This was the cross that Jesus bore throughout His earthly life – the crucifixion of His self-will – and which He now asks us to bear every day, if we are to follow Him.

It was the consistent denial of His own will that made Jesus a spiritual Man. And it is the denial of our self-will that will make us spiritual, too.

Every day we make decisions concerning various matters. We make decisions in relation to how we are going to spend our money or our spare time, or how to speak to, or about someone, or how to write a particular letter, or how to react to another's behaviour, or how much time to spend in studying the Word or in prayer or in serving the church, etc.

We react to the actions and words and

behaviour of people around us from morning till night. We may not be realising it, but we make at least a hundred decisions every day – and in each of these decisions we decide either to please ourselves or to please God.

Many of our actions are not the result of conscious decisions. But even then, we do them in one of these two ways – either seeking to please ourselves or to glorify God.

Our unconscious actions are determined by the way we make our conscious decisions. Finally, it is the sum total of these decisions that determine whether we become spiritual or remain carnal.

Think of the millions of decisions that we have made ever since we were first converted. Those who have consciously and consistently chosen to deny their self-will many times each day and do the will of God, have become spiritual.

On the other hand, those who have rejoiced merely in the forgiveness of their sins, and who therefore chose to please themselves most of the time have remained carnal. Each person's decisions have determined what he has finally become.

As humble, holy and loving as you have chosen

You are today as humble and as holy and as loving as you yourself have chosen to be, through the thousands of decisions that you have made in the various situations of life in past years.

Spirituality is not something that comes through one encounter with God. It is the result of choosing the way of self-denial and doing God's will consistently day after day, week after week and year after year.

Consider the spiritual state of two

brothers (both converted to Christ on the same day), 10 years after their conversion. One is now a mature brother with spiritual discernment, to whom God can commit much responsibility in the church. The other is still a child, without discernment, and needing to be fed and encouraged by others constantly.

What is it that has made such a difference between the two?

The answer is: The little decisions that they took during each day of the 10 years of their Christian life.

If they continue on the same way, in another 10 years, the difference between them will be even more pronounced. And in eternity, their differing degrees of glory will be as different as the light emitted by a 2 000-watt bulb and a 5-watt bulb!

"One star differs from another in glory (1 Corinthians 15:41)."

Consider a situation where you are visiting a home and you are tempted to say something negative about a certain brother (whom you don't like) who is not present. What do you do? Will you yield to that temptation and backbite, or will you deny yourself and keep your mouth shut?

Nobody ever gets struck down by God with leprosy or cancer just because they spoke evil about someone. No. And therefore many imagine that such a sin will not destroy their lives. Alas, it is only in eternity that many brothers and sisters will realise how every time they pleased themselves, they destroyed themselves a little. Then they will regret the way they wasted their lives on earth.

Jesus, too, was tempted in similar situations for 30 years in Nazareth. It is written about those hidden years that "He never pleased Himself" at any time (Romans 15:3)." He always denied Himself. Thus, He pleased the Father at all times.

Pleasing oneself can be done in many areas of your life – for example, in the area of eating. Consider a situation where, even when you are not hungry, you decide to spend some money to buy some tasty snacks to eat. There is nothing sinful or wrong in that. But it speaks of a certain way of life.

Because you have money, you buy what you like, whether you need it or not. You do what pleases yourself.

If you feel like buying something, you buy it. If you feel like going somewhere, you go. If you feel like sleeping late, you sleep late. What is the end result of living like that, even if you go regularly to the meetings and read your Bible every day? You may not lose your salvation, but you will certainly waste the one life that God gave you to live for Him.

Another brother however acts differently. He decides to discipline his body. When he is not hungry, he decides not to eat anything unnecessarily. He decides never to buy any unnecessary things for himself. He decides to get up 15 minutes earlier each day to spend time with God. When someone speaks to him angrily, he decides to reply gently. He decides to remain in love and goodness always.

He decides not to read certain news items in the newspapers that will stimulate his lusts. In every situation, he decides to humble himself and not to justify himself. He decides to give up certain friendships that are influencing him towards the world. Through constantly deciding to deny his own will (what pleased him), he becomes strong in his will to please God alone.

What did he lose by not buying that unnecessary thing, or getting out of bed 15 minutes earlier, or by giving up his human sense of dignity and asking for forgiveness? Nothing.

But think of what he has gained!

A man like that, who is consistently faithful in the little things will in a few years' time become a trustworthy man of God – not because of the Bible-knowledge that he possesses, but because of his faithfulness in the little decisions he takes in life not to please himself but to please God.

Don't be weak-willed then. Exercise your will to please God at all times. Mature Christians are those who "because of practice (in exercising their will in the right direction through many years) have their senses trained to discern good and evil (Hebrews 5:14)."

Consider an illustration: Two fat men go to a doctor to remove their flabbiness. The doctor gives them a course of exercises for the next 12 months. One man goes through the discipline of those exercises consistently every day, and slims down and becomes

strong. The other man does the exercises for the first few days and then slackens off and finally gives up altogether. His pot-belly gets fatter and fatter with his undisciplined ways, until he finally dies prematurely. This is an illustration of how we can make our wills strong to do God's will, or leave them flabby and weak for the devil to exploit.

I remember reading once of a young servant of the Lord who felt that he had been watching too much television (even though he had been watching only clean programmes), and who decided one day not only to sell his TV set, but also to use the time he had spent watching TV, in prayer every day. As a direct result of that little decision that he took – and maintained – God gave him a ministry that blessed thousands.

God is a rewarder...

Those who see nothing wrong in watching clean programmes over TV, find that God does not entrust them with much – for He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him and there is no partiality with Him.

Yes, you are what you are today because of the many, many little decisions they you have taken in relation to either denying yourself or pleasing yourself in the areas of food, money, sleep, reading, etc.

Time is running out fast. Those who are more than 40 years of age, and who have spent their lives pleasing themselves cannot expect to do much for God now, for they have wasted the best years of their lives. Those past years of your life are gone – gone forever. Even Almighty God cannot restore them to you.

But if you repent even now, you may yet be able to do something useful for God with the second half of your life.

But I want to speak primarily to those who are still in their teenage years and in their 20s. Let me tell you that God wants to bless you in such a way that you become a blessing to others. He wants to entrust an important ministry in His church to you by the time you are 30 or 35 years old. But will He find you faithful in the next 10 years or so of your life, so that He can accomplish His will in your life?

If you determine to be faithful from now on, you will have no regrets in

eternity, no matter how much you may have failed in your past life up until now. Take life seriously then. Think of how Jesus lived in the days of His flesh in Nazareth, and follow His example. Say to yourself, "I have been born on this earth, to DENY my own will, and to do the will of my Heavenly Father."

Do you think the devil will allow you to take seriously what I am telling you now? No. He will tell you that there is plenty of time. He will tell you that such a life of self-denial will be a strain. He will tell you that God doesn't mind you enjoying yourself, or indulging yourself a little bit here and there. He will tell you to take it easy, etc, etc.


Why? Because he wants you to drift aimlessly for the next twenty years, and to wake up when it is too late. Young people, don't be fooled by Satan. God has given you only one life, and time is running out fast. Don't waste it.

You will find more than enough believers around you (even among those who have understood the new and living way) who have no interest in living such a disciplined, wholehearted life. Don't judge them. Don't be a Pharisee and despise them. Mind your own business and don't be a busybody in their affairs. Believe the best about them and leave them alone.

But at the same time don't follow their example. Be different. Let Jesus alone be your Example. You have a calling over your life and you cannot afford to lose that, no matter what else you may lose on this earth. Think often of the day when you will have to give an account of your life at the judgement seat of Christ.

So, forget the blunders that you have made in life. Repent radically of your sins and be wholehearted in the days to come. God forgives you and blots out your past. Don't mope over your failures now, or you will be a drifter in the future too. The memory of your failures will help you to recognise that you are what you are today only by the grace of God. It will also enable you to keep your face in the dust at all times before God.

Determine that you will become a true man/woman of God.

He who has an ear to hear, let him hear. 

Copyright: Zac Poonen



by Arthur W. Pink (1886-1952)

SATAN is busy at work in the same field which the Lord sowed the good seed. He is seeking to prevent the growth of the wheat by another plant, the tare, which closely resembles the wheat in appearance.

By a process of imitation he is aiming to neutralise the work of Christ. Therefore, as Christ has a Gospel, Satan has a gospel too, the latter being a clever counterfeit of the former. So closely does the gospel of Satan resemble that which it parodies, multitudes of the unsaved are deceived by it.

It is to this gospel of Satan the apostle refers when he says to the Galatians, “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ (1:6-7).”

This false gospel was being heralded even in the days of the apostle, and a most awful curse was called down upon those who preached it. The apostle continues, “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed (verse 8).”

The gospel of Satan is not a system of revolutionary principles, nor yet a programme of anarchy. It does not promote strife and war, but aims at peace and unity. It seeks not to set the mother against her daughter nor the father against his son, but fosters the fraternal spirit whereby the human race is regarded as one great “brotherhood.”

It does not seek to drag down the natural man, but to improve and uplift him. It advocates education and cultivation and appeals to “the best that is within us.”

It aims to make this world such a comfortable and congenial habitat that Christ’s absence from it will not be felt

and God will not be needed. It endeavours to occupy man so much with this world that he has no time or inclination to think of the world to come.

It propagates the principles of self-sacrifice, charity and benevolence, and teaches us to live for the good of others, and to be kind to all. It appeals strongly to the carnal mind and is popular with the masses, because it ignores the solemn facts that by nature man is a fallen creature, alienated from the life of God, and dead in trespasses and sins, and that his only hope lies in being born again.

In contradistinction to the Gospel of Christ, the gospel of Satan teaches salvation by works and justification before God on the ground of human merits. Its sacramental phrase is “Be good and do good;” but it fails to recognise that in the flesh there dwelleth no good thing. It announces salvation by character, which reverses the order of God’s Word – character by, as the fruit of, salvation.

Thousands of those who occupy our modern pulpits are no longer engaged in presenting the fundamentals of the Christian faith, but have turned aside from the truth and have given heed unto fables. Instead of magnifying the enormity of sin and setting forth its eternal consequences, they minimise it by declaring that sin is merely ignorance or the absence of good.

Instead of warning their hearers to “flee from the wrath to come” they make God a liar by declaring that He is too loving and merciful to send any of His own creatures to eternal torment. Instead of declaring that “without shedding of blood is no remission,” they merely hold up Christ as the great Example and exhort their hearers to “follow in His steps.”

Of them it must be said, “For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own

righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God (Romans 10:3).”

Their message may sound very plausible and their aim appear very praiseworthy, yet we read of them – “for such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves [imitating] into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing [not to be wondered at] if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works (2 Corinthians 11:13-15).”

In addition to the fact that today hundreds of churches are without a leader who faithfully declares the whole counsel of God and presents His way of salvation, we also have to face the additional fact that the majority of people in these churches are very unlikely to learn the truth themselves. The family altar, where a portion of God’s Word was usually read daily is now, even in the homes of nominal Christians, largely a thing of the past.

The Bible is not expounded in the pulpit and is not read in the pew. The demands of this rushing age are so numerous, that multitudes have little time and still less inclination to make preparation for the meeting with God. Hence the majority who are too indolent to search for themselves, are left at the mercy of those whom they pay to search for them, many of whom betray their trust by studying and expounding economic and social problems rather than the oracles of God.

In Proverbs 14:12 we read, “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death.” This “way” which ends in “death” is the devil’s delusion – the gospel of Satan – a way of salvation by human attainment.

It is a way which “seemeth right,” that is to say, it is presented in such a plausible way that it appeals to the natural man: it is set forth in such a subtle and attractive manner, that it commends itself to the intelligence of its hearers.

By virtue of the fact that it appropriates to itself religious terminology, sometimes appeals to the Bible for its support (whenever this suits its purpose), holds up before men lofty ideals, and is proclaimed by those who have graduated from our theological institutions, countless multitudes are

decoyed and deceived by it.

Heresy is not so much the total denial of the truth as a perversion of it. That is why half a lie is always more dangerous than a complete repudiation. Hence, when the father of lies enters the pulpit it is not his custom to flatly deny the fundamental truths of Christianity, rather does he quietly acknowledge them, and then proceed to give an erroneous interpretation and a false application.

For example: he would not be so foolish as to boldly announce his disbelief in a personal God; he takes His existence for granted and then gives a false description of His character. He announces that God is the spiritual Father of all men, when the Scriptures plainly tell us that we are “the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:26),” and that “as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God (John 1:12).”

Further, he declares that God is far too merciful to ever send any member of the human race to hell, when God Himself has said, “Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:15).”

Again, Satan would not be so foolish as to ignore the central figure of human history – the Lord Jesus Christ; on the contrary, his gospel acknowledges Him to be the best man that ever lived. Attention is drawn to His deeds of compassion and works of mercy, the beauty of His character and the sublimity of His teaching.

His life is eulogised, but His vicarious death is ignored, the all-important atoning work of the Cross is never mentioned, while His triumphant and bodily resurrection from the grave is regarded as one of the credulities of a superstitious age.

It is a bloodless gospel, and presents a crossless Christ, who is received not as God magnified in the flesh, but merely as the Ideal Man.

It has been said with considerable truth that the way to hell is paved with good intentions. There will be many in the lake of fire who commended life with good intentions, honest resolutions and exalted ideals – those who were just in their dealings, fair in their transactions and charitable in all their ways; men who prided themselves in their integrity but who sought to justify themselves before God by their own righteousness; men who were moral, merciful and magnanimous, but who never saw themselves as guilty, lost, hell-deserving sinners needing a Saviour.

Such is the way which “seemeth right.” Such is the way that commends itself to the carnal mind and recommends itself to the multitudes of deluded ones today. The devil’s delusion is that we can be saved by our own works, and justified by our own deeds; whereas, God tells us in His Word – “...By grace are ye saved through faith... Not of works, lest any man should boast (Ephesians 2:8&9).” And again, “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us (Titus 3:5)...”

There are thousands who, perhaps, have been brought up in Sunday School, taught about the birth, life and teachings of Jesus Christ, who believe in the historicity of His person, who spasmodically endeavour to practice His precepts, and who think that this is all that is necessary for their salvation.

Frequently, this class when they reach manhood go out into the world, encounter the attacks of atheists and infidels and are told that such a person as Jesus of Nazareth never lived. But the impressions of early days cannot be easily erased, and they remain steadfast in their declaration that they “believe in Jesus Christ.”

Things believed about Jesus

Yet when their faith is examined, only too often it is found that though they believe many things about Jesus Christ they do not really believe in Him. They believe with the head that such a person lived (and because they believe this they imagine that therefore they are saved), but they have never thrown down the weapons of their warfare against Him, yielded themselves to Him, nor truly believed with their heart in Him.

The bare acceptance of an orthodox doctrine about the person of Christ without the heart being won by Him and the life devoted to Him, is another phase of that way “which seemeth right unto a man” but of which the end thereof “are the ways of death.”

Have you truly forsaken the Broad Road which leads to death? Has the love of Christ created in your heart a hatred and horror of all that is displeasing to Him? Are you desirous that He should “reign over” you (Luke 19:14)? Are you relying wholly on His righteousness and blood for your acceptance with God?

A yet more specious form of Satan’s gospel is to move preachers to present the atoning sacrifice of Christ and then tell their hearers that all God requires from them is to “believe” in His Son. Thereby thousands of impenitent souls


are deluded into thinking they have been saved.

But Christ said, “...Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish (Luke 13:3).” To “repent” is to hate sin, to sorrow over it, to turn from it. It is the result of the Spirit’s making the heart contrite before God. None except a broken heart can savingly believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Son of God did not come here to save His people in their sin, but “from their sins (Matthew 1:21).” To be saved from sins, is to be saved from ignoring and despising the authority of God, it is to abandon the course of self-will and self-pleasing, it is to forsake our way (Isaiah 55:7). It is to surrender to God’s authority, to yield to His dominion, to give ourselves over to be ruled by Him. The one who has never taken Christ’s “yoke” upon him, who is not truly and diligently seeking to please Him in all the details of life, and yet supposes that he is “resting on the Finished Work of Christ” is deluded by the devil.

In the seventh chapter of Matthew there are two scriptures which give us approximate results of Christ’s Gospel and Satan’s counterfeit. First, in verses 13 and 14, “Enter ye in at the straight gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. Because straight is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”

Second, in verses 22 and 23, “Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied [preached] in Thy name? And in Thy name cast out devils, and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity.”

My reader, it is possible to work in the name of Christ, and even to preach in His name, and though the world knows us, the church knows us, yet to be unknown to the Lord! How necessary is it then to find out where we really are; to examine ourselves and see whether we be in the faith; to measure ourselves by the Word of God and see if we are being deceived by our subtle enemy; to find out whether we are building our house upon the sand, or whether it is erected on the Rock which is Jesus Christ. May the Holy Spirit search our hearts, break our wills, slay our enmity against God, work in us a deep and true repentance, and direct our gaze to the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. 



SEEK THE LORD'S MERCY IN THE MIDST OF JUDGEMENT

by John Newton

"Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from His fierce anger, that we perish not? (Jonah 3:9)?"

WHEN afflictive providences (God's judgements) lead men to a sense of their sins, and excite a spirit of humiliation, repentance and prayer, the Lord often mercifully averts from them the impending evil.

Such was the effect of Jonah's message to the Ninevites. The people humbled themselves, and repented of their wickedness; and God suspended the execution of the sentence which He had pronounced against them.

My brethren, may we not fear, that the men of Nineveh will rise up in judgement against us and condemn us (Matthew 12:41), if we do not imitate their example, and humble ourselves before God? They repented at the preaching of Jonah (and immediately, on their first hearing him), and they

sought for mercy, when they could say no more, than, "Who can tell whether there may be the least room to hope for it, after what the prophet has so solemnly declared?"

We have free access to a throne of grace, and, like Israel, we have power, by prayer, to prevail with God and with man (Genesis 32:28). And shall it be said of any of us, that the Lord gave us space to repent, and invited us to repentance, and we repented not (Revelation 2:21)? May His mercy forbid it!

They must, they shall see

God's judgements are abroad in the earth (Isaiah 25:9-11). His hand is lifted up, and if any are so careless, or obstinate, that they will not see, yet, sooner or later, they must, they shall see.

The great God has controversy with the inhabitants of the earth (Jeremiah 25:31; Hosea 4:1). The point to be decided between Him and many

abroad, and, I fear, too many at home, is, whether He is the Governor of the earth or not?

But He will surely plead and gain His own cause; and either in a way of judgement or of mercy, all men shall know that He is the Lord. I believe there is no expression in the Old Testament so frequently repeated as this: "Ye shall know that I am the Lord (e.g., Exodus 6:7; Ezekiel 25:11)!"

God is not acknowledged in many places, He has been formally disowned and renounced. Therefore men are left to themselves, their furious passions are unchained, and they are given up, without restraint, to the lusts of their own evil hearts! A more dreadful judgement than this cannot be inflicted on this side of hell.

I should think the prospect dark indeed, if I did not rely on the Lord's gracious attention to the united prayers of those who fear and trust Him, and

who know it is equally easy to Him either to save or to destroy, by many or by few (1 Samuel 14:6).

In many things, we all sin in thought, word, and deed. The sins of the Lord's own people are so many, and so heightened by the consideration of His known goodness, that if He was to enter into judgement with them alone, they could offer no other plea than that which He has mercifully provided for them, "If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared (Psalm 130:3&4)."

Those who know the magnitude of their own sin...

It is easy to exclaim against the wickedness of the times. But only they who are duly affected with the multitude and magnitude of their own sins can be competent judges of what the prophet meant or felt, when he said, "...I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips (Isaiah 6:5)..."

It is not necessary to inform you that infidelity, licentiousness, perjury, profaneness, the neglect and contempt of God's worship, abound. The laws of God, and the laws of the land, so far as their object is to enforce the observance of His commands, are openly and customarily violated in every rank of life.

In a day when the Lord Almighty calls to weeping and mourning, thoughtless security, dissipation, and riot, are the characteristics of our national spirit (Isaiah 22:12&13).

The loss of public spirit, and that impatience of subordination so generally observable, so widely diffused, which are the consequences of our sins against God, are, in themselves, moral causes sufficient to ruin the nation, unless His mercy interposes in our behalf.

But though we have much cause to mourn for our sins, and humbly to confess our deserved judgements, let us not despond. The Lord our God is a merciful God. Who can tell? Perhaps even yet God will have pity on us and hold back His fierce anger from destroying us!

If, by His blessing, our praying may produce sincere repentance, then I am

warranted to tell you, from His Word, that there is yet hope!

You that tremble for the cause of God, whose eyes affect your hearts, who grieve for sin, and for the miseries which sin has multiplied upon the earth – take courage.

He who loved you, and died for your sins, is the Lord of glory. All power in heaven and in earth is committed unto Him. The Lord reigns, let the earth be never so unquiet (Psalm 99:1).

All creatures are instruments of His will. When the enemies would come in like a flood, He can lift up a standard against them (Isaiah 59:19). As He has set bounds and bars to the tempestuous sea, beyond which it cannot pass, saying, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed (Job 38:10&11)," so, with equal ease, He can still the madness of the people (Psalm 65:7).

You do well to mourn for the sins and the miseries of those who know Him not. But if you make Him your fear and your dread, He will be a sanctuary to you, and keep your hearts in peace, though the earth be removed, and the mountains cast into the midst of the sea (Isaiah 8:13&14; Psalm 46:2).

Our loins girded and our lamps burning

Let us pray for ourselves, that we may be found waiting, with our loins girded up, and our lamps burning, that we may be prepared to meet His will in every event (Mark 13:35; 14:38). Let us pray for the peace of Jerusalem, for God's church, for the spread of His Gospel, and the extension of His kingdom – until His great name is known and adored from the rising to the setting of the sun (Malachi 1:11), and the whole earth shall be filled with His glory!

Let us earnestly pray for a blessing from on high, upon our rulers, upon the counsels of government, and upon all subordinate authority in church and state – that we may lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty, that true religion and good order may be established, and iniquity be put to shame and silence!

And let us pray in faith. Let us remember what great things the Lord has done in answer to prayer. When sin had given Sennacherib rapid success in


his invasion of Judah, he did not know that he was no more than an axe or a saw in the hand of God (Isaiah 10:15; 37:14-36). He ascribed his victories to his own prowess, and thought himself equally sure of capturing Jerusalem. But Hezekiah defeated him upon his knees. He spread Sennacherib's blasphemous letter before the Lord in the temple and prayed, and the Assyrian army melted away like snow.

Our enemies are enraged! Our sins testify against us!

The present is a very important crisis. All that is dear to us, as men, as Christians, is threatened. Our enemies are enraged! Our sins testify against us.

But if we humble ourselves before God, forsake our sins, and unite in supplications for His mercy, who can tell but that He may be entreated to give us that help which it would be in vain to expect from man? Yes, we have encouragement to hope, that He will be for us (Romans 8:31), and then none can prevail against us. But without His blessing, our most powerful efforts and best concerted undertakings cannot succeed for a moment!

You who have access to the throne of grace, whose hearts are concerned for the glory of God – you, I trust, will show yourselves true friends to your country, by bearing your testimony and exerting your influence against sin (the procuring cause of all our sorrows), and by standing in the breach and pleading with God for mercy, in behalf of yourselves, and of the nation.

If 10 people, thus disposed, had been found even in Sodom, it would have escaped destruction (Genesis 18:32)! 

John Newton (1725-1807) was an Anglican minister who had previously been involved in the slave trade before renouncing it and working to abolish it. He wrote a number of hymns including "Amazing Grace."

This article is condensed from a message preached by him in 1794 on a day appointed for a fast because of deep concerns for his nation and beyond. The message provides a powerful reminder of the hope we can have as we seek the Lord for His mercy in the midst of danger and judgement.

by Dr David R. Reagan

HARVARD University celebrated its pagan world view this year by inviting Jacinda Ardern to deliver the school's commencement address. She is the Prime Minister of New Zealand. As one observer put it, her speech sounded like "a homily advancing the doctrinal ideology of religious secularism."

She glowingly bragged about her parliament and its legislative accomplishments: "We have a mixed member proportional system which means... it's ensured our parliament better reflects our communities. Almost 50 percent of our parliament are women [applause], 20 percent Maori, the indigenous people of New Zealand, and our Deputy Prime Minister is a proud gay man [huge cheers] and sits among several other rainbow parliamentarians [applause]. In the past 10 years, we have passed laws that include everything from the introduction of gay marriage [joyous cheers] and the banning of conversion therapy [applause], right through to embedding a 1.5-degree climate change target into law [applause], banning military-style semi-automatics and assault rifles [applause], and the decriminalisation of abortion [ecstatic ovation]."

He departed as a pariah

The occasion reminded me of the commencement speech that the great Russian novelist, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, delivered at Harvard in June of 1978. His reception was quite different from that of New Zealand's Prime Minister. Like her, he arrived on campus a hero; but unlike her, he departed a pariah.

That's because what he had to say outraged the Harvard intelligentsia, some of whom actually booed him.

The New York Times even went so far as to declare him to a "dangerous zealot." Other critics denounced him as a "Tsarist reactionary, an Orthodox Christian ayatollah, a hater of democracy and a Russian ultranationalist." As one of his biographers, Daniel J. H. Mahoney, has put it: "Solzhenitsyn wasn't just dismissed; he was demonised."

What did Solzhenitsyn do to provoke

so much anger? The answer is simple. He spoke from a Christian worldview, denouncing the increasing degradation of American society in politics, business, journalism, art and religion. In the process he chastised the Harvard religion of Humanism because, as he put it, "Humanism always leads to Materialism, and Materialism produces moral poverty."

This observation brought Solzhenitsyn to his concluding and defining statement: "On the way from the Renaissance to our days... we have lost the concept of a Supreme Complete Entity which used to restrain our passions and our irresponsibility."

Solzhenitsyn developed his Harvard thesis more fully and bluntly five years later in 1983 when he received the Templeton Prize for his "exceptional contribution to affirming life's spiritual dimension." His acceptance speech was titled, "Godlessness: The First Step Toward the Gulag" (The gulag being the system of Soviet forced labour camps).

He began with a reminiscence from his childhood: "More than half a century ago, while I was still a child, I recall hearing a number of older people offer the following explanation for the great disasters that had befallen Russia: Men have forgotten God; that's why all this has happened."

Another problem he identified was the

refusal of people to realise the evil that is in the individual human heart and the consequent unwillingness to declare anything as good or evil. The result, he declared, is that the West "is ineluctably slipping toward the abyss."

Solzhenitsyn emphasised that the West must come to the realisation "that human salvation can be found neither in the profusion of material goods nor in merely making money." Rather, the aim should be "the quest of worthy spiritual growth." He then asserted that Mankind's hope can be found only by re-directing our consciousness "in repentance to the Creator of all; without this, no exit will be illumined, and we shall seek it in vain."

Putting the same thought in different words, Solzhenitsyn concluded his remarks by urging his listeners to engage in "a determined quest for the warm hand of God, which we have so rashly and self-confidently spurned."

America came into being based on a Christian worldview. That is the viewpoint of the Declaration of Independence and the Nation's Constitution. The Christian worldview served throughout the 19th Century and the first half of the 20th as the glue that held our society together.

So strong was the widespread acceptance of the Christian worldview that in 1892, the American Supreme

Your Worldview: Pagan or Christian?

Court declared, "This is a Christian Nation... We are a Christian people, and the morality of the country is deeply engrafted upon Christianity." Yes, our political parties disagreed over many things, but they agreed on the fundamental principles of the Christian worldview.

That agreement began to fall apart during the second half of the 20th Century, resulting in an ever-increasing virulent culture war. By the time the century came to an end, the Humanist worldview had triumphed, resulting in tensions so extreme that they menace the future existence of our nation.

What is a worldview?

So, what is a worldview? The term actually defines itself. It is how a person philosophically views the world.

What is your worldview? Are you focused on Jesus and serving Him? Are you standing for the truth of God's Word, or have you gotten in bed with the world and become a Christian in name only? Have you fallen in love with the world and forgotten that you are supposed to be distinct from the world? There's an old Negro spiritual song that always challenges me to examine my attitude toward the world. The first verse goes as follows:

*This world is not my home,
I'm just a passing through.*

*My treasures are laid up
Somewhere beyond the blue.
The angels beckon me
From heaven's open door,
And I can't feel at home
In this world anymore.*

Do those words express your feeling about this world? What word would you use to summarize your feeling? Zealous? Anxious? Enamoured? Estranged? Are you comfortable or do you feel ill-at ease?

Jesus said, "...he who hates his life in this world shall keep it to life eternal (John 12:25)." The apostle Paul gave a very similar strong warning about getting comfortable with the world. In Romans 12:2 he wrote: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."

How do you measure up to this exhortation? Are you conformed to the world? Have you adopted the world's way of dress? What about the world's way of speech or the world's love of money? Are your goals the goals of the world – power, success, fame and riches?

The brother of Jesus expressed the matter in very pointed language. He said, "Do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of

God (James 4:4)."

Are you a friend of the world? Are you comfortable with what the world has to offer in music, movies, television programmes and best-selling books? Friendship with the world is hostility toward God!

In fact, James puts it even stronger than that, for at the beginning of the passage I previously quoted (James 4:4), he says that those who are friendly with the world are spiritual adulterers. The apostle John makes the same point just as strongly in 1 John 2:15-16:

"Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world."

Do you love the world?

There is no way to escape the sobering reality of these words. Do you love the world? If so, the love of the Father is not in you!

If you are to survive the perilous end-times in which we are living, you must commit yourself to living with an eternal perspective.

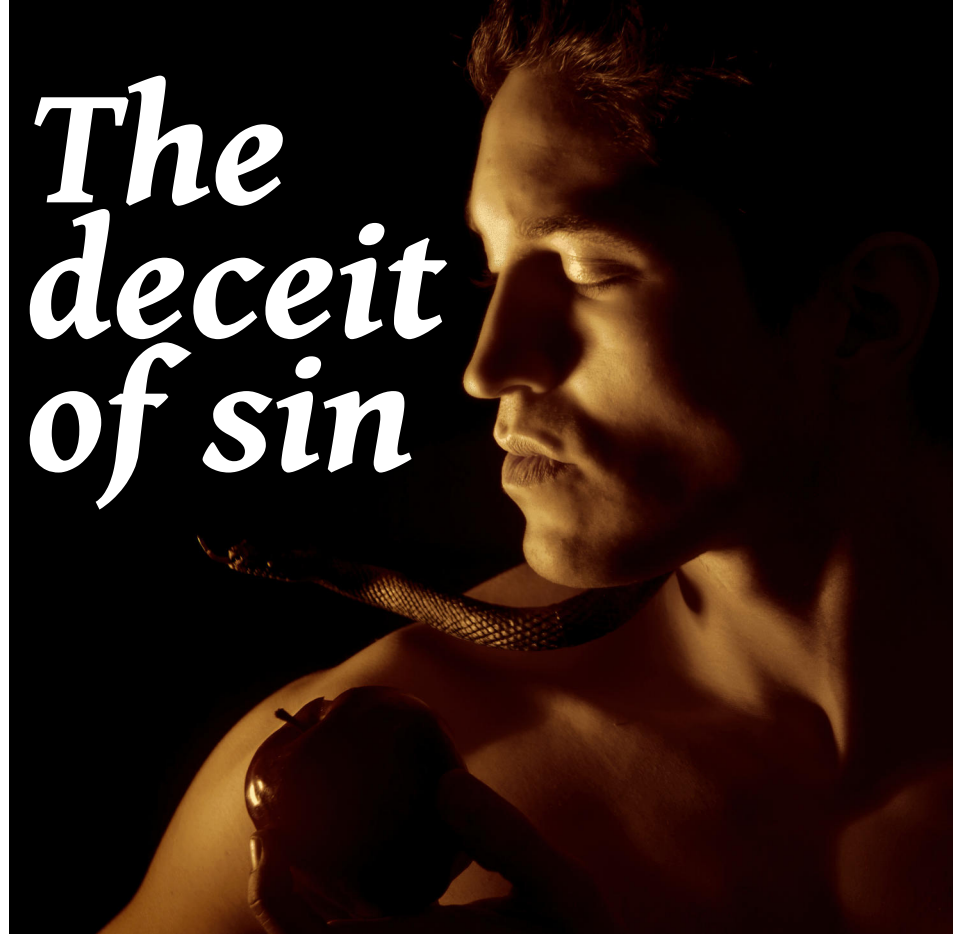
What does that mean? In the words of Peter, it means living as "aliens and strangers" in this world (1 Peter 2:11). Similarly, in the words of the writer of Hebrews, it means living as "strangers and exiles (Hebrews 11:13)."

Paul put it this way: "Do not set your minds on earthly things, for our citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:19&20)." Paul explained why he felt that way: "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us (Romans 8:18)."

Keep in mind those are the words of a man who was taken to Heaven and personally experienced its glories (2 Corinthians 12:1-4).

The great Christian writer, C.S. Lewis, explained that to live with an eternal perspective means "living as commandos operating behind the enemy lines, preparing the way for the coming of the Commander-in-Chief."

Maranatha (1 Corinthians 16:22)!✝



The deceit of sin

by Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892)
“But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin (Hebrews 3:13).”

THE deceitfulness of sin is most ruinous. We have grave cause to watch and pray against secret sins, veiled sins, popular sins, fascinating sins, deceitful sins.

Sin has singular power to deceive. Its deceit may be seen in the manner of its approaches to us. Sin does not uncover all its hideousness, nor reveal its horrible consequences; but it comes to us in a very subtle way, offering us advantage.

The practice of sin may be encouraged by a doubt as to its penalty. “Yea, hath God said?” is the speculative question which is meant to undermine the foundations of godly fear in the heart. How tiny a drop of sinful distrust of God’s Word will poison all the thoughts of the soul!

Sin frequently comes as a bare suggestion, or an imagination; an airy thing, spun of such stuff as dreams are made of. You do not think of committing the fault, nor even of talking of it; but you think of it pleasantly, and view it as a thing bright and lustrous to the imagination.

The thought fascinates, and then the

words are smoother than butter, but inwardly they are drawn swords.

Next, sin is deceitful in its object, for the object which it puts before us is not that which is its actual result.

We are not tempted to provoke our Maker, or wilfully cast off the authority of righteousness. We are not invited to do these things for their own sake. No, no; we are moved to do evil under the idea that some present good will come of it.

The man thinks, when he yields to sin, that he shall enjoy an additional pleasure, or shall gain an extra profit, or at least shall avoid a measure of evil, and escape from something which he dreads. He does the wrong for the sake of what he hopes will come of it. In brief, he does evil that good may come.

Thus, the seeming good is dangled before the short-sighted creature, man, as the bait before the fish. In every case, this object is a piece of deceit.

Evil never leads to good

Evil does not lead to good, nor sin promote our real profit; we are fooled if we think so. Yet, in most cases, the man does not commit the sin with the design of breaking the law of God, and defying his Maker, but because he fancies that something is to be gained; and, in his judgement, he better understands what is good for him even than the Lord God, by whose wisdom he ought to be guided.

Just as in the case of the old serpent, the argument is – God refuses you that which would be for your advantage, and you will be wise to take it.

The arch-deceiver insinuated that God knew that if Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit their eyes would be opened, and they would be as gods; and therefore, to keep them under subjection, he denied them the charming fruit.

The object set before us is delusive: the reward of sin may glitter, but it is not gold, and yet as gold it thrusts itself upon our erring judgement. This deceitfulness of sin is everywhere present: the street, the house, the private room, all come to be enchanted ground unless we dwell in God.

Are we not often caused to think that we could make at least a little gain, or do a measure of extra good, if we might

just to a small degree quit the straight and narrow way? This is falsehood, corrupt as hell.

Sin also shows its special deceitfulness in the arguments which it uses with men. Have you never heard its voice whispering to you, “Do not make much ado about nothing. Is it not a little one? There is no need to boggle over so small a matter as this. It is not right, but still it is a mere trifle, unworthy of notice. Do it! Do it!”

Is there such a thing as a small sin?

My friends, can there be such a thing as a small sin? The point of the rapier is small, and for that reason the more deadly. That which grieves the Lord cannot be a little evil. To pluck the fruit from the forbidden tree was of all actions the simplest, yet brought it death into the world, with all its train of woe; and that which seems most trifling may have infinite consequences following in its track.

Then will sin raise the question, and say, “Is this really wrong? May we not be too precise? Have not the times changed? Do not circumstances alter the command?” He who wills to do wrong is eager to find a loophole for himself. He who has begun to seek an excuse is on the borderland of the enemy.

He who is loyal to the core and true to his King in everything makes short work of questions; for when he is not sure that a thing is right he lets it alone.

Sin will also flatter a man with the notion that he can go just so far, and no farther, and retreat with ease. He can tread the verge of crime and yet be innocent. Another person would be in great danger; but this self-satisfied fool thinks that he has such power over himself, and that he is so intelligent, and so experienced, that he can stop at a safe point.

This moth can play with the candle, and not singe its wings. The deceivableness of sin is such that it makes those most secure who are most in peril. Oh, for grace to watch and pray, lest we also become “hardened through the deceitfulness of sin!”

Sin will also add, “And, after all, though you were wrong, yet you were not so bad as you might have been; and, considering the temptation, you may

wonder at your own moderation in transgression. On the whole, you have behaved better than others would have done.”

Thus, the sinner will weave a garment out of the cobwebs of his sins. Self-righteousness is poor stuff when it can be fashioned even out of our faults. Such is the deceivableness of sin that it makes itself out to be praiseworthy.

Then sin will suggest, “Well, you can soon make up for lost time. Live nearer to God, and be more useful! And then your little divergence will soon be made up.” It even ventures coarsely to propose a price for pardon. “Give something extra to the good cause, and make amends for offences.”

The deceitfulness of sin is seen again in its promises; for we shall not go far into sin without finding out how greatly it lies unto us. It promises liberty, and the man who yields to it becomes the greatest slave. It promises light, and the man gives up the old faith to go after the new light, and before long the darkness thickens about him into sevenfold midnight.

Sin promises elevation of mind and spirit, and before long the wretch is worldly, pleasure-loving, grovelling, superstitious. Sin keeps none of its promises, save only to the ear. Holiness is truth; but sin is a lie. Sin is false through and through: it promises pleasure, and it leads to misery; it feigns a heaven, but inflicts a real hell.

Let no man think that he cannot be deceived; he is already deluded by his pride. Let no woman dream that she has come to such a state of perfection that she cannot be deluded by sin: she is even now in imminent peril.

A cunning enemy

We have a cunning enemy, and we have no wit of our own wherewith to match the subtlety of the old serpent, and the deceitfulness of sin. Unless we call in the help of Him who is “the Wisdom of God,” we shall be led as an ox to the slaughter, and perish in our folly.

This deceitfulness of sin, and the tendency to become hardened, need to be fought against. How is it to be done?

The way to keep from hardness of heart, and from the deceitfulness of sin, is to believe. We read, “To whom did He

swear that they should not enter into His rest, but to those who did not believe? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief (Hebrews 3:18&19).”

Believe faith has saved you! Believe faith will save you! Believe faith has brought you to Christ! Believe it will keep you in Christ! Believe against the present temptation. Believe against all future deceitfulness of sin.

You shall find that, just in proportion as faith grows strong, the deceit of sin will be baffled. Believe in the living God, and in His righteousness, and in your obligation to serve Him – then sin will appear exceeding sinful.

Believe in Christ, who took your sin, and bore it in His own body on the tree – then sin will be seen in its black colours.

Believe in the Holy Spirit, by whose power you can be delivered from the deceitfulness of sin; and as you believe, so shall it be unto you, and you shall stand fast where the half-believer slides.

Lay bare your heart before the living God

The next advice I would give is this – if you would be saved from the deceitfulness of sin confess it honestly before God. It is necessary to lay bare your heart before the living God. Confess the great evil of your wickedness; for this humble penitence will be not only your way to pardon, but to future purity. Oh, that the Spirit of God may teach you this!

Again, cultivate great tenderness of heart. As for myself, I would be swayed by the Word of God as the ripe corn is swayed by the summer wind. I would be by God’s Spirit as readily moved as the leaves of the aspen by the breeze.

I would be sensitive to the gentlest breath of my Lord.

And then let us endeavour, if the Lord is keeping us by His grace, to “exhort one another daily.” The best of believers may grow better by the communications of his friends.

But, oh, dear friends, after all that I have said, he is well kept whom the Lord keepeth. Commit yourselves unto the Lord, the Holy Spirit, who is able to keep you from stumbling. Trust in Him, who is the faithful and true Witness, to deliver you from all falsehood and sin, and to keep you true to the end. ☞



by R. A. Torrey (1856-1928)

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you (John 16:12-14)."

WHILE we may learn much from men, we are not dependent upon them. We have a Divine Teacher, the Holy Spirit.

We shall never truly know the truth until we are thus taught directly by the Holy Spirit. No amount of mere human teaching, no matter who our teachers may be, will ever give us a correct and exact and full apprehension of the truth.

Not even a diligent study of the Word either in English or in the original languages will give us a real understanding of the truth. We must be taught directly by the Holy Spirit and we may be thus taught, each one of us. The one who is thus taught will understand the truth of God better even if he does not know one word of Greek or Hebrew, than the one who knows

Greek and Hebrew thoroughly and all the cognate languages as well, but who is not taught of the Spirit.

The Spirit will guide the one whom He thus teaches into all the truth. The whole sphere of God's truth is for each one of us, but the Holy Spirit will not guide us into all the truth in a single day, or in a week, nor in a year, but step by step.

"He shall glorify Me [that is, Christ]: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you." The Holy Spirit's special line of teaching with the believer, as with the unbeliever, is Jesus Christ. It is His work above all else to reveal Jesus Christ and to glorify Him. His whole teaching centres in Christ. From one point of view or the other, He is always bringing us to Jesus Christ.

There are some who fear to emphasise the truth about the Holy Spirit lest Christ Himself be disparaged and put in the background, but there is no one who magnifies Christ as the Holy Spirit does.

We shall never understand Christ, nor see His glory until the Holy Spirit interprets Him to us. No amount of listening to sermons and lectures, no

matter how able, no amount of mere study of the Word even, would ever give us to see the things of Christ.

The Holy Spirit must show us and He is willing to do it and He can do it. He is longing to do it. The Holy Spirit's most intense desire is to reveal Jesus Christ to men.

On the day of Pentecost when Peter and the rest of the company were filled with the Holy Spirit, they did not talk much about the Holy Spirit, they talked about Christ. Study Peter's sermon on that day; Jesus Christ was his one theme, and Jesus Christ will be our one theme, if we are taught of the Spirit.

Jesus Christ will occupy the whole horizon of our vision. We will have a new Christ, a glorious Christ. Christ will be so glorious to us that we will long to go and tell everyone about this glorious One whom we have found. Jesus Christ is so different when the Spirit glorifies Him by taking of His things and showing them unto us.

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all

things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual (1 Corinthians 2:9-13)."

The deep things of God

The Spirit reveals to the individual believer the deep things of God, things which human eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, things which have not entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.

It is evident from the context that this does not refer solely to heaven, or the things to come in the life hereafter. The Holy Spirit takes the deep things of God which God hath prepared for us, even in the life that now is, and reveals them to us.

In the next verse to those just quoted we read, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned (1 Corinthians 2:14)."

Not only is the Holy Spirit the Author of revelation, the written Word of God: He is also the Interpreter of what He has revealed. Any profound book is immeasurably more interesting and helpful when we have the author of the book right at hand to interpret it to us, and it is always our privilege to have the Author of the Bible right at hand when we study it.

The Holy Spirit is the Author of the Bible and He stands ready to interpret its meaning to every believer every time he opens the Book.

To understand the Book, we must look to Him, then the darkest places become clear. We often need to pray with the psalmist of old, "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law (Psalm 119:18)."

It is not enough that we have the revelation of God before us in the

written Word to study; we must also have the inward illumination of the Holy Spirit to enable us to apprehend it as we study. It is a common mistake, but a most palpable mistake, to try to comprehend a spiritual revelation with the natural understanding.

The Jews of old had a revelation by the Spirit but they failed to depend upon the Spirit Himself to interpret it to them, so they went astray. So Christians today have a revelation by the Spirit and many are failing to depend upon the Holy Spirit to interpret it to them and so they go astray.

The whole evangelical church recognises theoretically at least the utter insufficiency of man's own righteousness. What it needs to be taught in the present hour, and what it needs to be made to feel, is the utter insufficiency of man's wisdom.

To understand God's Word, we must empty ourselves utterly of our own wisdom and rest in utter dependence upon the Spirit of God to interpret it to us. We do well to lay to heart the words of Jesus Himself, "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes (Matthew 11:25)."

We must daily be taught by the Spirit to understand the Word. We cannot depend today on the fact that the Spirit taught us yesterday. Each new time that we come in contact with the Word, it must be in the power of the Spirit for that specific occasion. That the Holy Spirit once illumined our mind to grasp a certain truth is not enough. He must do it each time we confront that passage.

Paul says, "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God (1 Corinthians 2:1-5)."

In a similar way in writing to the believers in Thessalonica, "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake (1 Thessalonians 1:5)."

We need not only the Holy Spirit to reveal the truth to chosen apostles and prophets, in the first place; and the Holy Spirit, in the second place, to interpret to us individually the truth He has thus revealed; but in the third place, we need the Holy Spirit to enable us to effectually communicate to others the truth which He Himself has interpreted to us. We need Him all along the line.

One great cause of real failure in the ministry, even when there is seeming success, and not only in the regular ministry but in all forms of service as well, comes from the attempt to teach by enticing words of man's wisdom (that is, by the arts of human logic, rhetoric, persuasion and eloquence) what the Holy Spirit has taught us. What is needed is Holy Ghost power, demonstration of the Spirit and of power.

Causes of failure...

There are three causes of failure in preaching today.

First, some other message is taught than the message which the Holy Spirit has revealed in the Word. (Men preach science, art, literature, philosophy, sociology, history, economics, experience, etc, and not the simple Word of God as found in the Holy Spirit's Book – the Bible.)

Second, the Spirit-taught message of the Bible is studied and sought to be apprehended by the natural understanding, that is, without the Spirit's illumination.

Third, the Spirit-given message, the Word, the Bible studied and apprehended under the Holy Ghost's illumination is given out to others with enticing words of man's wisdom, and not in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.

We need, and we are absolutely dependent upon the Spirit all along the line. He must teach us how to speak as well as what to speak. His must be the power as well as the message. 🐟



Cleansing for spiritual fullness

by Ruth Paxson (1889 – 1949)

The infilling of the Holy Spirit demands cleansing. Two commands given to Christians reveal this fact very clearly.

“Grieve Not the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30).”

Grieve is a love word. You cannot grieve one who does not love you. You can hurt him or anger him but you cannot grieve him. The Holy Spirit is a loving, tender, sensitive Personality. To grieve Him means that we are causing pain to Someone who loves us. How can we know what grieves Him? By His names which indicate His nature.

He is the Spirit of Truth (John 14:17). Anything false, deceitful, hypocritical – grieves Him. Is there a lie in your life? Then do not expect to be filled with the Spirit of Truth until your heart is cleansed.

He is the Spirit of Faith (2 Corinthians 4:13), so doubt, unbelief, distrust, worry, anxiety, grieve Him. Do you doubt His Word? Is there unbelief regarding the fundamental truths of salvation? Do you worry over your business, your children, your health? If so, you are grieving the Spirit of Faith and He cannot fill you.

He is the Spirit of Grace (Hebrews 10:29), so that which is hard, bitter,

ungracious, unthankful, malicious, unforgiving, grieves Him. Is there anybody whom you will not forgive or to whom you will not speak? Is there someone with whom you have quarrelled? Is there bitterness in your heart toward God? Do you spend your days in murmuring against your circumstances? Then do not pray to be filled with the Spirit unless you are willing to be cleansed.

He is the Spirit of Holiness (Romans 1:4), so anything unclean, defiling or degrading, grieves Him. Do you harbour unclean thoughts? Do you read unclean books? Do you have degrading pictures hung in your home? Do you listen to unclean stories? If so, you are grieving the Holy Spirit.

He is the Spirit of Wisdom (Ephesians 1:17), so ignorance, conceit, arrogance, and folly, grieve Him. The Holy Spirit stands ready to teach us and to reveal the deep things of the Word to us. Our ignorance of the Bible, our pride in our own knowledge and ability and our foolish ways, grieve Him.

He is the Spirit of Power, Love and Discipline (2 Timothy 1:7), so our weakness, fruitlessness, disorderliness and lack of control, grieve Him. There are thousands of people all around you who are still unsaved and who do not know the Gospel. Perhaps some of these

are in your family. Why cannot Christ win them? Because the channels through which His power should flow are choked with sin. Are you embittered because you have been wronged and is your life poisoned by hatred? Do you give way constantly to your bodily appetites, your fleshly desires and your temperamental weaknesses? All this grieves the Holy Spirit.

He is the Spirit of Life (Romans 8:2), so anything that savours of indifference, lukewarmness, dullness or deadness grieves Him. Do you go for days without opening your Bible? Do you prefer the haunts of pleasure to the house of prayer? This grieves this wonderful Spirit of life.

He is the Spirit of Glory (1 Peter 4:14), so that which is worldly, earthly or fleshly, grieves Him. Are you carnally minded? Do you love the world? Is your heart set upon the things of earth? This grieves the Holy Spirit.

He dwells within to enable us “to grow up into Christ in all things;” and to bring us daily “into conformity to His image.” So anything in us which hinders Him from carrying out this purpose grieves Him. Knowingly to permit anything which is contrary to what the Holy Spirit Himself is, to remain in your life must mean that you love sin more than you love Him. Such

unfaithfulness grieves Him.

Spirituality depends upon a harmonious relationship with the Holy Spirit. To indulge known sin means that we are living with a grieved Spirit. To be filled one must be cleansed. “God does not require golden vessels. Neither does He seek for silver ones, but He must have clean ones.”

“Quench Not the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19).”

We “grieve” the Spirit when we say “Yes” to Satan when he lures us into sin. We “quench” the Spirit when we say “No” to God when He woos us into sanctification and service.

To bring the believer wholly into the will of God is perhaps the Holy Spirit’s hardest task. Self-will is latent in every one of us and is always bursting out into rebellion. The only cure for it is a deliberate choice to do God’s will in all things, at all times, and at all costs. It is to have one’s heart firmly fixed upon the doing of God’s will as the rule for daily life and to permit no exception to the rule.

To grieve or to quench the Spirit is sin. He dwells within us to purify and cleanse us. In a darkened room there would be much of dirt which would pass unnoticed, but when the doors and windows are opened and the sun shines in, even the dust is revealed. The Holy Spirit brings out into the light the sin in our lives, and the more completely He fills us the more perfect will be the revelation and recognition of sin.

The nearer God comes to us the more sensitive to sin are we made. Some things which a year ago or even a month ago you would not have called sin you now acknowledge to be sin.

The Means of Cleansing

For sinner and saint alike nothing but the blood of Jesus suffices to cleanse from sin. *“The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:7).”*

The Christian is in constant contact with sin and the very tense of the verb shows that he never gets beyond the need of the cleansing blood of Christ.

The Method of Cleansing

The Holy Spirit will tell us what grieves Him, will point us to First John 1:9 and then our responsibility begins. God requires but one thing of us – a frank, full confession prompted by a

true heart repentance. *“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).”*

God will accept no substitute for confession and He instantly detects a counterfeit. Have you ever thought that God would accept from you a larger gift of money, greater activity in service or a longer prayer in lieu of a confession of sin? Or are you self-deceived in thinking that regret because of suffering for the punishment of sin, or a forced acknowledgment of some offence with no heart sorrow for the sin itself is confession?

Sometimes a supposed confession is a confession of the other fellow’s sin and a justification of oneself. Oftentimes a confession is but a partial one. Some top sin is mentioned while the root sin is altogether unconfessed.

Some sins need to be confessed only to God because against Him only have we sinned (Psalm 51:4). Other sins need to be confessed to individuals against whom we have sinned (James 5:16), and again a public confession of sin is sometimes necessary when the whole company of God’s people have been wronged (Joshua 7:19-25).

The Measure of Cleansing

“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God (2 Corinthians 7:1).”

The cleansing must be from all defilement of both flesh and spirit. Separation from every defiling thing is God’s requirement.

God demands a cleansing that reaches from the innermost desire to the outermost deed; that goes from the core to the circumference of our lives. He asks us to take His conception of sin which regards a lustful look as truly sin as a lustful act, which sees a murderer in the one in whose heart there is hatred as truly as in the one in whose hand there is a bloodstained dagger.

Do you resemble the Pharisees of old who were like whited sepulchres, which appeared beautiful outwardly, but within were full of uncleanness? God commands us to cleanse both the inside and the outside. Is there a root sin in your life that has been there for years?

Roots multiply and spread. There is then a trail of sin marking the path of your life since. You must go back over it, claiming cleansing for all sin.

God’s withholding of His presence in power from His own children until sin is put away is very strikingly revealed in His dealings with the children of Israel over Achan’s sin. God had told them that, when Jericho was taken, no one was to take any of the spoils for himself. But Achan, coveting gold, silver and a Babylonish garment, took them and hid them under his tent.


No eye but that of the all-seeing God saw it done. Immediately afterwards, Israel met with overwhelming defeat at Ai. Joshua, falling upon his face in prayer, charged God with blame for such humiliation before their enemies.

But God commanded Joshua to stop praying. He told him that He would not presence Himself with power in their midst so long as the accursed thing was there. The man who had coveted, stolen and lied must be found and confession of sin made.

Is there an Achan in your church who hinders the manifestation of God’s power? Are you the man? Have you been praying fervently for the fullness of the Holy Spirit while all the time there has been the continued indulgence of some known sin, the wilful disobedience of some known command, or the deliberate resistance of God’s clearly revealed will?

If so, God is saying to you, *“Get thee up, wherefore liest thou upon thy face? Thou hast sinned, neither will I be with you any more except ye destroy the accursed from among you. Up, sanctify yourselves, thou canst not stand before thine enemies until ye take away the accursed thing from among you (see Joshua 7:10-13).”*

So long as you are living with a grieved or a quenched Spirit you cannot be filled. To be filled one must be cleansed of sin.

*“There’s a Man in the Glory
Whose life is for me,
He’s pure and He’s holy,
Triumphant and free.
He’s wise and He’s loving,
Tender is He;
And His Life in the Glory
My life must be.”* 



Encouragement for today's pastors

by Grant Phillips

REGARDLESS of the name over the door, many of today's churches have been experiencing a drop in attendance, and even more so since the Covid pandemic. Even the seeker-friendly churches have noticed a dip in attendance.

Governmental mandates caused many of the churches to close their doors during the lock-downs of the Covid episode of 2020-21. Even those who attended church somewhat regularly, have found it easier to stay home than return to their church's services. Now they spend time on the lake, in front of the TV, or elsewhere, rather than go to church.

I admire pastors like John MacArthur, who refused to close the doors, but instead obeyed the Lord. It's a shame the majority of other pastors didn't follow suit.

I wonder where the churches would be today if those in the first century decided to "close their doors," stay home, and let the government dictate

when, where and how they were to worship? The churches in the first and second centuries defied the governmental authorities and met anyway, even at the peril of persecution and death.

Where two or three are gathered...

It's understandable that churches are concerned their numbers are down, but didn't Jesus say, "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them (Matthew 18:20)." True followers of Christ have always been in the minority. It is recorded in the Gospel of John that many of Jesus disciples deserted Him, and so He asked the 12, "Do you also want to go away (John 6:67)?"

Jesus also said, "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it

(Matthew 10:37-39)."

There still remain many good Bible believing, Bible teaching/preaching pastors in the world today. Unfortunately, they are in the minority, but again, Christ's followers have always been in the minority.

Also, even though apostasy reigns in the pulpits, there still remains the true church built upon the Rock. Those few who remain true to the Lord and His Word simply must continue upon the road of:

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

Many often ask, "How can I make a difference? How can I go to all the nations?" We make a difference one person at a time, beginning in our own backyard – reaching family, friends, co-workers, neighbours, etc. When we each

take care of our own "backyard," God will do the rest. We must remember that we cannot save anyone, and we are not asked to do so. We are told by the Lord to be His messengers. The Holy Spirit will work on the hearts of those who will hear.

A strong local church is one that loves the Lord Jesus, and knows and obeys His Word, regardless of what is happening in the world.

Some say we need a worldwide revival, and that we do. However, there is no mention of a mass revival for the days we are in, except in the Tribulation. Actually, the Lord tells us that instead of a mass revival there will be a great apostasy in these last days (see 2 Timothy 3:1-9; 4:1-5).

The world will get worse and worse as it draws closer to the Tribulation, and that includes apostasy becoming worse and worse. That doesn't mean that there can't be small fires of revival here and there.

As a nation, I see no revival happening, but Jesus will still save any who come to Him with a repentant heart, and He will "revive" any of his followers who wants to actually live for Him.

When I open my Bible and then look at the world around me, "the blessed hope – the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13)" must be very close. The return of Jesus for His bride, the Church, is the next event on God's calendar.

Now speaking specifically to pastors, I'm sure many today who truly want to

follow the Lord's will are very discouraged. As I mentioned earlier there are still pastors who actually believe the Bible, and teach/preach it as the Holy Spirit guides them. However, most pastors today are wolves among sheep, or at best, incompetent. They do not belong in the ministry.

"Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching (2 Timothy 4:2)."

Paul told Timothy, "Preach the word!" He also told Titus to, "... speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine (Titus 2:1)..."

Proclaiming the Word accurately

In other words, pastors should be proclaiming all the Word, not just a few select verses, and they should be proclaiming them accurately.

I've always admired how J. Vernon McGee, and others, teach the entirety of the Bible, verse by verse. Jesus told Peter three times to feed His sheep. Many congregations of sheep are not being fed, or at the least, properly fed. Instead, they receive titbits instead of a complete meal. Others offer junk food instead of lasting nourishment. Still others speak a false gospel of lies.

Going back to Jesus' words again to Peter to feed His sheep, every pastor should ask himself a few simple questions such as:

Am I feeding the Lord's sheep? Am I serving meals from the entirety of God's vast array of spiritual food in His precious Word? How is my prayer life? How much time am I spending in

preparation of full-course meals from the holy Word of God? Am I compromising God's Word to comply with what the world wants to hear, or staying the course of, "thus saith the Lord?"

Peer pressure!

We are all familiar with the phrase "peer pressure" in conjunction with teenagers, but can the same be true of pastors? It most certainly can and does exist. The Lord says to all who preach and/or teach God's Word:

"I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom:

Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil your ministry (2 Timothy 4:1-5)."

Satan wants all of us, not just pastors, to get our eyes off God and stray from the truth and entirety of the Bible, but those who remain faithful will hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant" from the Master.

Continue in your faithfulness to Him, and let Him worry about the results. 🐟

Prepare for Him!

by Horatius Bonar

*The time is short!
If thou wouldst work for God it must be now;
If thou wouldst win the garland for thy brow,
Redeem the time!*

*Shake off earth's sloth!
Go forth with staff in hand while yet 'tis day;
Set out with girded loins upon the way.
Up, linger not!*

*Fold not thy hands!
What has the pilgrim of the Cross and Crown
To do with luxury or couch of down?
On pilgrim, on!*

*With His reward
He comes, He tarries not, His day is near;
When men least look for Him He will be here.
PREPARE FOR HIM!*

Atheist-vegan-pansexual dressed in lettuce bikinis & handed out veggie dogs!

by Dablia Gonzalez

HER Christmas Eve hope was to die in the hospital and put an end to the endless pain from Crohn's disease.

Then a Jamaican dietitian showed up and prayed for Cassidy Kellagher, and her Christmas gift was to wake up without pain for the first time in many months.

"I realised that was an angel," Cassidy says. A Christmas angel.

Before coming to the Lord, Cassidy was virulently anti-Christian to the point she wouldn't even say "Bless you" when somebody sneezed.

By her own account, she was "an extreme atheist, an extreme vegan, pansexual and an egotistical, terrible person." She marched in gay pride parades and, dressed in a lettuce bikini, handed out veggie dogs to Senators with PETA.

"I wouldn't eat with anybody who ate meat," she says. "I just went out of my way to shame people who didn't believe what I believed in."

In June, 2019 Cassidy began to have severe stomach aches. She soon went to the ER and got a CAT scan and was diagnosed with Crohn's disease. Within three months, she lost 30 kilograms. Doctors pumped her with pain meds to alleviate the excruciating pain.

"Nothing was working," she says.

She dwindled down to 35 kilograms and after six months wished to die.

"I wanted to kill myself," she says. "I woke up and hated my existence. I hated every second of it. I had no hope. I lost my personal life."

Then Christmas Eve came, and the pain was so intense that Cassidy asked her mom to take her back to the hospital.

"I felt like it was going to be my last day on Earth," she says. "I was excited, like no more pain, no more tears. Let's do it."



But she didn't die. On Christmas morning she woke up and met the Jamaican dietitian. She had never seen her before, which was strange because she had been in and out of the hospital so often, she thought she knew everybody. She didn't pay too much attention initially.

For the first time in a long time, Cassidy broke down in tears, which was strange because "I didn't really have any emotions at that time. I was pretty much a vegetable just waiting to die," she remembers.

The dietitian broke hospital protocol and told Cassidy she was going to pray for her – a decision Cassidy resisted with all the strength she could muster in her weakened condition. But since the Jamaican lady insisted, Cassidy relented. She didn't expect anything to happen as a result of the words spoken over her.

"She had so much passion for me," Cassidy recalls.

"You will be healed and you will be a healer," the woman prophesied.

The day after Christmas, Cassidy woke up and no longer felt any pain. As a matter of fact, she felt so good she wanted to be released from the hospital, which staff wouldn't allow because of the seriousness of her condition previously.

Her mom was mystified. What happened? Cassidy didn't know but responded: "I have a light in me."

After her condition dramatically improved, she was released the next day.

Since the pain had left her, Cassidy

went back to her old ways of fornicating and partying. She was still trying to fill a void in her heart. A friend of hers was Buddhist, and so she got some Buddhist tattoos.

Then Covid hit, and Cassidy went into lockdown. During this time, she really meditated on her life. She remembered the "beautiful" Jamaican lady who laid hands on her at the hospital to pray. She realised that she had jeopardised her job by inserting prayer into the professional context. She could have lost her job, Cassidy thought.

Her curiosity piqued; she searched the hospital's directory for her. She remembered that she had never seen the Jamaican lady prior to the Christmas visit. Among the staff, there was no Jamaican dietitian. As she pondered, Cassidy came to a conclusion that a confirmed atheist never wants to reach.

"It was an angel sent from God," she says. "I had to admit that there was no physical way that I could have woken up the next day with no pain."

She accepted Christ into her heart and became born-again. Today, she serves the Lord, witnessing to people. She still has health issues, but she is grateful for life and for her salvation.

"I can tell you with all of my might it is so much better with the Lord by your side," she says. "I didn't deserve his love, I deserved hell. Even through these hospital times and in these deep struggles I still see his hands the whole time."

"He has filled the void!" 🐟

WATCH & PRAY

by Elizabeth Kendal

MOZAMBIQUE: JIHAD RESUMES; CATHOLIC MISSION TARGETED

Having regrouped, Islamic State jihadists are again terrorising northern Mozambique. On August 19 Islamic State released a video calling for attacks on Christians in Mozambique and warning that jihad will continue until Islamic Sharia Law is applied and non-Muslims pay the jizya/tax (protection money). On September 6 they attacked the Catholic mission in Chipene city, Memba District, Nampula Province – further south than ever before. Four Christians were killed, including Sister Maria De Coppi (84), a nun who had served in Mozambique since 1963. Jihadists claimed they shot her in the head because she was "too committed to spreading Christianity." Six people were beheaded and three were abducted. The mission's church, hospital, primary and secondary schools, dormitories and new computer lab were burned, as were dozens of homes. Everyone is traumatised. Please pray.

THE BATTLE FOR ETHIOPIA: FROM TWO FRONTS TO ONE

On November 2, 2022 the Ethiopian Government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) signed an "Agreement for Lasting Peace Through a Permanent Cessation of Hostilities."

Encircled, depleted and without supply, the TPLF had little choice but to surrender. Now the difficult work of implementation (which includes disarming the TPLF) and negotiation (including over "contested areas") begins. Please pray!

Meanwhile, the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) continues to wage terror across Oromia Region's mostly Christian north and west, targeting the Amhara minority. Numerous students, local officials and church leaders are currently being held hostage. In North Shewa Zone, security is so bad that churches have ceased services. Nine deacons abducted from a prayer meeting on October 22 remain missing,

as do members of a church council abducted around the same time. Please pray.

SUPREME COURT IN INDIA SEEKS ACTION ON CONVERSIONS

Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay is a former BJP leader turned activist lawyer. His PIL (Public Interest Litigation) – which demands a federal anti-conversion law – is currently being considered by the Supreme Court. On November 14, the court ordered the government to submit an affidavit explaining what it will do to curb "forced" religious conversions.

Despite a total lack of evidence, the Justices and the Solicitor General agreed with Upadhyay that "forced" conversion is rampant and dangerous. No doubt Upadhyay and the BJP are hopeful that where the legislature has so far failed, judicial activism will succeed, and a federal anti-conversion law will be forthcoming. The court's action will further inflame religious tensions and fuel persecution. Please pray.

THE HORROR OF ERITREA: THREE MORE CHRISTIANS ARRESTED

Repression and human rights abuses are so severe in Eritrea that the state is often referred to as "Africa's North Korea." Much like North Korea's President Kim Jong-un, Eritrea's President Isaias Afwerki has long tied the regime's extreme and brutal repression to the lack of peace and the need to remain on a war footing.

The repression began in 2001. Protestant Christians have faced persecution since 2002; the Orthodox Church since 2004 and the Catholic Church since 2019. Since 2002, thousands of Eritrean Christians have endured incarceration; around 500 are currently imprisoned. Conditions are inhumane; slave labour and torture are routine. In mid-October a Catholic bishop and two priests were arrested for highlighting human rights abuses. However, with Ethiopia's defeat of the expansionist TPLF, Afwerki no longer has any excuse. Please pray.

CHINA'S GREAT LEAP BACKWARDS WILL KEEP THE CCP SAFE

On October 16, when President Xi Jinping spoke at the opening of the 20th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), his central theme was "security." According to Xi, China is facing "dangerous storms" and overcoming them will require sacrifice and obedience (i.e. a united front amidst increased hardship).

China will soon move into a whole new era: one of suffocating yet sophisticated, escalating repression and persecution. Having already enacted a raft of new laws and set up the punitive Social Credit System, Xi confirmed that the measures introduced in 2022 to chase zero-COVID will not be relaxed. Indeed, they are already being used to chase zero-dissent; to control and imprison people in their homes, to keep Christians from meeting or even communicating. Please pray.

PERSECUTION ESCALATES AND SPREADS IN UGANDA

Persecution is both escalating and spreading throughout Uganda. Islamic radicalisation and guaranteed impunity have combined to make Uganda (which is 84 percent Christian and 14 percent Muslim according to the 2014 census) an increasingly dangerous place for Christian evangelists, apologists and converts from Islam. Despite Muslims comprising a small minority, Uganda is a member of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and the Islamic Development Bank. Thus, Uganda is committed to promoting and defending Islam, which is growing in numbers, increasingly radical and overtly confident.

Meanwhile, President Museveni (a professing Christian) appears to have lost his way, trusting less in God and more in corruption – particularly patronage (rewarding supporters) and repression (punishing opponents) as he retains power by any means. Prayers for Uganda, its president and its Church are urgently needed. Please pray.



Dedication

by F.B. Meyer (1847-1929)

IN my inner life, I desire to be kept
absolutely pure and lovely.

O Holy and Spotless One, be in me
the Crystal Fountain of Purity!

O Lamb of God, be in me the Source
of absolute meekness and humility!

O Lover of men, be in me a Fire of
unwaning, all-subduing Tenderness!

Make me instantly sensitive to the least
taint of impurity and uncharity. Before
ever the suggestion has assumed a
tangible shape, may I detect it and
shelter in Thee.

In my home life, may I be made a
blessing; its sunbeam when the days are
dark; its inspiration when the days are
sad and hopeless; its tender comfort
when the days are full of pain and tears.

Always thinking of others before
myself; never imposing my private
sorrows or moods; ever with the girt
loin and the lighted torch; washing my
face, and anointing my head and
confiding my griefs to Thee only, that I
may ever have

“A heart at leisure from itself, to soothe
and sympathise.”

In my religious life, may the neglect of
prayer and Thy Holy Word be things of
the past. Wake me morning by morning
to hear as a disciple! Enable me to
spring up at Thy call, and, like all Thy

true servants, to rise up early in the
morning to gather the manna ere the
dew be gone from it.

May my fellowship with Thee be
unbroken through the day, that I may
often look up into Thy face, even if I
have not time to speak. Draw me, and I
will run after Thee!

“Each moment call from earth away
My soul that only waits Thy call.”

So as to please Thee

In my daily calling, make me diligent
in business, fervent in spirit, serving the
Lord. May I do my work, not for the
wages I may get, not to secure an
advance, but so as to please Thee!

May it be the only object of my daily
striving to do all to the glory of God –
not with eye-service, as pleasing men,
but in singleness of heart, fearing the
Lord, doing the will of God as it is
indicated in the circumstances of my
life, and looking for my reward from
Thy hand, O Divine Master (1
Corinthians 10:31).

In my use of money, I would not be
anxious about the future, nor hoard up
and keep for myself of that which Thou
hast given me: I want to be Thy very
slave, counting myself and all I have as
Thy purchased property, and using all
things as Thy representative and
steward.

In my use of time and health and all
the opportunities of life, I desire to act
with reverent care, redeeming the time,
buying up each opportunity, conserving
my body as the pure temple of the Holy
Ghost, so partaking of recreation, food,
natural scenery, travel, and all lawful
pastimes, that I may the better serve
Thy purpose in my creation and
redemption.

Show me what Thy talents are which
Thou hast entrusted to me, and help me
to make the two – four, and the five –
ten (Matthew 25:14-30).

Now bless me, even me, O Lord; I am
Thine; Thy Father gave me to Thee
before the world was made; Thou didst
purchase me for Thyself by Thy precious
blood; Thou hast begun a good work
within me by Thy Holy Spirit.

And now afresh take me to Thine
heart, and seal me with Thy Holy Spirit.
May He enlighten, comfort, and
sanctify me, teaching me to pray, and
opening the eyes of my heart that I may
know Thee and the power of Thy
resurrection, that, as Thou hast
ascended into the heavens, so I may
also, in heart and mind, thither ascend
– and with Thee continually dwell, who
livest and reignest with the Father and
the Holy Spirit, one God, world
without end!

Amen! 