


Prepare^{the} Way

Issue No. 128

PREPARING THE BRIDE OF CHRIST FOR THE RETURN OF CHRIST

**Peter Pollock:
Behold!**



THE
HOLY BIBLE,
CONTAINING THE
OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS:
TRANSLATED OUT OF THE ORIGINAL TONGUES: AND WITH THE FORMER
TRANSLATIONS DILIGENTLY COMPARED AND REVISED,
BY HIS MAJESTY'S SPECIAL COMMAND.
APPOINTED TO BE READ IN CHURCHES.

Our call to humility and brokenness

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The virtue of humility

by William Law (1686-1761)

HUMILITY is the life and soul of piety, the foundation and support of every virtue and good work, the best guard and security of all holy affections. I recommend that you make humility a constant subject of your daily devotions, earnestly desiring you to think no day safe or likely to end well, in which you have not early humbled yourself before God and called upon Him to carry you through the day in the exercise of a meek and lowly spirit...

Humility does not consist in having a worse opinion of ourselves than we deserve, or in abasing ourselves lower than we really are, but as all virtue is founded in truth, so humility is founded in a true and just sense of our weakness, misery and sin.

He who rightly feels and lives in this sense of his condition, lives in humility...

You must practice humility like a young beginner who has all of it to learn, who can learn but little at a time, and with great difficulty. You must consider that you have not only humility to learn, but that you must be content to proceed as a learner in it all your time, endeavouring after greater degrees of it, and practicing every day acts of humility as you every day practice acts of devotion.


In order to begin and set out well in the practice of humility, you must take it for granted that you are proud, that you have all your life been more or less infected with pride. You should believe also, that it is your greatest weakness, that your heart is most subject to it, that it is so constantly stealing upon you that you have reason to watch and suspect its approaches in all your actions.

There is no one vice that is more deeply rooted in our nature or that receives such constant nourishment from almost everything that we think or do, than pride. There is hardly anything in the world that we want or use, or any action or duty of life, where pride does not find some means or other to take hold of it.

Any time we begin to offer ourselves to God, we can hardly be surer of anything, than that we have a great deal of pride to repent of.

If you find it disagreeable to your mind to entertain this opinion of yourself, and cannot put yourself among those who want to be cured of pride, you may be as sure as if an angel from heaven had told you, that you have not only much, but all your humility to seek.

You can have no greater sign of a confirmed pride, than when you think that you are humble enough. He who thinks he loves God enough shows himself to be an entire stranger to that holy passion.

So, he who thinks he has humility enough shows that he is nothing more than a beginner in the practice of true humility. 



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The contrite heart

"For thus says the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones (Isaiah 57:15)."

GOD'S right to dwell among men has been challenged by evil forces in every age. Every opposing spirit has sought to claim the affections of men so fully that no one would desire His presence. But God has chosen to dwell *"with him also who is of a contrite and humble spirit."* The Psalmist also tells us that – *"The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart; and saves such as have a contrite spirit (Psalm 34:18)."*

The words of Isaiah, the Old Testament prophet, may seem strange in an hour when the powerful dealings of God with the heart are not deemed necessary. We live in an hour when the searchings of the Spirit are not appreciated; His probings are not welcomed.

An atmosphere of proud independence in the heart is an insult to a holy God. It is only the broken heart and the contrite spirit that is prepared to have his need fully met. Our seeking must get us on the bottom of humility before God.

Isaiah had a glimpse of what could and would happen if the fallow ground of a hard and impenitent heart could be broken up. The trouble lies in the fact that many have been content to go along religiously without going in for an old-fashioned, Holy Spirit revival.

When we find our place in humility before God, He takes His place in our hearts. He comes in to abide.

Isaiah was not ashamed of the tie that forever exists between a contrite spirit and a revival atmosphere. That peculiar tie still exists. God still revives the hearts of the contrite ones.

Across the years it has been the place of lowliness and brokenness before God that has brought Heaven on the scene. It was this route of humility that caused Isaiah to anticipate a breaking out of revival fires. When we take God's way, we get through.

A sophisticated approach is being demanded more and more rather than the humble way of repentance. An intellectual treatment of the truth is destroying its effectiveness in too many lives. Struggling in a religious way has caused many to evade the humbling process. Heartbrokenness and contrition are too rare today.

What do hearts know about sorrowing after a godly sort? Where are those strange reactions that testify clearly as to "what diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication (2 Corinthians 7:11)!"

The reproach is upon taking the way of humility before God. This could mean that having God's presence dwelling with us is at stake.

Pride goes cross-grain with God's breaking process. Pride has left many souls stubbornly independent from being moulded by the divine Potter. It has left many hearts seeking around an altar of prayer without crumbling on the inside. God's leadership promotes this crumbling; it is the way down.

The opposition in spirit toward the breakdown necessary to having a true,

Heaven-sent revival has become strong. The real issue of surrender is the despised issue. The truth that brings on that issue is becoming more and more a despised message.

We need to be awakened to the fact that we are not making any spiritual progress when we have a "hands-off" attitude toward the Holy Spirit. So-called seekers who are the victims of self-determination and a wavering unbelief are not true seekers.


God always comes on the scene when He finds a contrite spirit. It has been the shocking absence of this brokenness of heart that has left many a child of God yearning for a real revival. We must see the tide turn Godward. When the breakdown comes, the revival will be on, and not until then.

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise (Psalm 51:17)." The contrite heart is a sacrifice to God that goes beyond all external religious duties. A spirit rightly broken and a heart truly contrite is an excellent thing in God's sight. It is what saints of other days have called "being on the bottom." Soul trouble has stemmed from not getting there.

One sure cure for our whining efforts is a broken heart. Revivals still come on the same rugged lines that they always have. Heaven's favour rests on the obedience of the broken-hearted. God is always on hand to assist the contrite one into the glorious certainty of hope and assurance. We do not need to fear the bottom of humility, for it is God's appointed meeting place with a contrite heart.

Do you want to find God? Make the sacrifice. Let the Holy Spirit bring on a revelation of your real need. Let your heart be rent and broken down in humility before God. Face the issues of perfect obedience.

Hearts need to stop living on the memory of the wretched failures that they have made and do as the Apostle exhorts in Romans 12:1 – "present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service."

We can welcome God's humbling process by a reckless abandonment of ourselves to Him forever. 

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by Peter Pollock

“SEE I have set the land before you; go in and possess the land which the Lord swore to your fathers – Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – to give to them and their descendants after them,” says Deuteronomy 1:8 in the New Kings James Version.

Verse 21 of the same chapter reads: “Look, the Lord your God has set the land before you; go up and possess it.”

Verse 8 has the translator choosing the word “see,” and in verse 21 the word “look” – but the original King James version in both instances uses the word “behold!”

To “see” and to “look” don’t come anywhere near the impact of the word “behold!” Behold, according to the dictionary, means to “look intently” or to observe something of truly remarkable nature, certainly a long way from just “looking” and “seeing.”

In John 1:20, John the Baptist said “Behold, the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” He is pointing definitely and resolutely at the very specific sacrificial Son of God, who is the Messiah and who is to take away the sin – not the sins – of the world!

And that, notably, is the original sin, the sin of unbelief, which saw Adam and Eve succumb to the wiles of the devil. In fact, unbelief is the father of all sins simply because Jesus died for every other abomination except the abomination of not believing in Him.

If you don’t believe you will not appropriate His great mercy and grace. And you will go to hell! Jesus is not just another person vaguely pointed out over

yonder. He is the Christ, emphasised John – BEHOLD the Lord!

It’s not just an Easter story made up of a Good Friday and an Easter Sunday. It’s not just a death and resurrection. It’s so much more! It’s the greatest weekend in the history of man. It’s the greatest event affecting mankind.

Christmas comes once a year, and we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. But it’s so much more than holiday time, a forced break for most, with the warehouses and factories closed down.

A gross misrepresentation

It’s not just family-focus time, with generosity and goodwill abounding, and it’s not just Boney M singing those familiar annual lyrics. If Christmas is Jesus Christ and the sum total of Christianity, it’s a gross misrepresentation!

Jesus Christ is so, so much more than that. He is the pearl of Great Price! Once you truly find Him, all else pales into insignificance by comparison.

Easter is so much more than a religious weekend, a convention or a conference. It’s vital that we do more than just “look” and “see” in terms of this truth, we truly need to take hold and behold!

It’s more than what we see with our eyes, think with our brains and construe with our minds. It’s a vision! It’s an epiphany of understanding, and it’s grabbed only with heart, soul, mind and strength by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The dictionary defines an epiphany as the manifestation of Christ. A moment of great and sudden revelation.

Truly beholding is life-changing and

mind-boggling. It’s not just playing semantics, manipulating and twisting the meaning of words. In the original King James version there are plenty of “sees,” “looks” and “beholds” – suggesting very clearly that they are different and that the difference is meaningful and significant.

Thus, the intentional elimination of “behold” is a purposeful misdemeanour – a sad spiritual reality of what is being done to important doctrinal issues in these modern end-time years. “Behold” is mentioned 1 298 times in the original KJV and only once in the NIV.

Behold implies that we should “be sure to see” and allow the eyes of our hearts (Ephesians 1:18) to be enlightened. Synonyms are to receive, to discern or to discover.

Etched on our hearts by the Holy Spirit

Intellectually we are translating the power out of the Word. “Look” and “see” are definitely NOT “behold!” Beholding is a revelation and understanding that is written and etched on our hearts by the power of the Holy Spirit!

The Bible tells us further that the people perish without a holy vision. That vision is the Gospel, the revelation of Jesus Christ and Him crucified as Paul aptly sums up.

The vision, the seeing and the understanding are all dependant on the entering, as Nicodemus was told. You have to be “born again,” “seeing” and “entering” and with “water” and the “spirit,” meaning repentance and dying to self.

How can that be, asked a confused Nicodemus? Beholding begins and ends with Jesus the Christ, and the Cross and understanding their full and profound spiritual significance.

Unfortunately, outside the Holy Spirit it just cannot be understood. In Matthew 16:13-19 Jesus asks who do men say I am? John, Elijah, Jeremiah, a prophet? “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.”

Flesh and blood did not reveal that to you, Peter, noted Jesus – it was My Father in Heaven. And on this rock – Holy Spirit guidance and revelation – Jesus promises to build His church. The gates of hell shall not prevail, for these are the keys to the Kingdom.

Yes, it’s all about Jesus! It’s not about the gifts, the ministries, the blessings and the benefits. It’s about the Son of God, the Chosen One of God.

When you call Him Jesus Christ, you are tending to emphasise His humanity – but placing Christ first emphasises His deity.

He is the Christ! Hallowed be His name. Honoured and awed be His Mighty Name. It’s the name above every other name. He is the Christ, He is the Messiah, and one day every knee shall bow and tongue confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord.

Behold! Look intently, that you may understand spiritually, that it might be a revelation, a rhema, logos word, an epiphany – and that God might write and etch this truth indelibly on your heart.

They were always there

So, once we have beheld, the next step is to possess that land which God has placed before you. We are not to fear and we are not to be discouraged, and it is vital to note that as God showed the land the giants were always there.

The Amorites and the Sons of Anakim were always there. So were the mountains, and their people were greater and taller and their cities were more fortified.

Joshua and Caleb saw exactly that same scenario, but while the others saw the obstacles, the hassles and the problems, Joshua and Caleb saw God and His Promise.

They had the faith to see and trust in God. And it’s always been the same,

because the land does lie with its hardships. It is, after all, the Valley of the Shadow of Death that we are born into and live, in thanks to Adam and Eve.

Look the giants straight in the face. Nobody denies they are there. Avoid denial, telling yourself that they are not there, or just plain ignoring them. God never promised to fix everything at our call.

God is not going to remove them or clear out the obstacles, but He will be with us. The road was never promised to be an easy one – it is narrow, and “few,” the remnant, make it.

Yes, He will be with us till the end of the age and He will fight for and with us, but we have to trust, and obey and believe and have faith. And NO denial!

The same old challenges

There is no change in the land. It’s the same old challenges. There is nothing new under the sun. We have to be in the world and not of the world, and holiness has never been anything other than separation unto God.

We have a vision – the beholding and the venue is there before us – the Land! Accept the calling and go in and possess the land. Most importantly, we need to do it Gods way, definitely not the world’s way or the way of the false spiritual prophets, the many self-proclaimed experts who manipulate Gods Word so deceptively.

God’s instructions and definitions are clear in Deuteronomy 10 from verse 11: Arise... go... possess!

What does God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God... walk in His ways... to love and serve Him with all your heart... with all your soul... and keep His commandments... for your own good. You shall fear the Lord your God!

In Jeremiah 32:3-40 God says “They shall be My people and I will be their God... I will give them one heart and one way that they may fear Me forever for the good of them and their children after them. I will make an everlasting covenant with them and I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me.”

That was God’s promise that His Spirit in them would place within them the

fear of God. In other words, it would be a fruit of the Holy Spirit working. It would bring continual conviction in terms of sin, righteousness and judgement, and would give them all a very balanced understanding of the fear of God.

They would realise that it has more to do with His awesomeness than the rules and regulations of the law. The Holy Spirit in us keeps us on track. If we get easily and regularly derailed, there is no Holy Spirit. Sorry, but it is so!


By that same Spirit we understand that God is a jealous God and He is a consuming fire and that all He wants from each one of us is everything. More than conquerors is what we become (Romans 8:35-39).

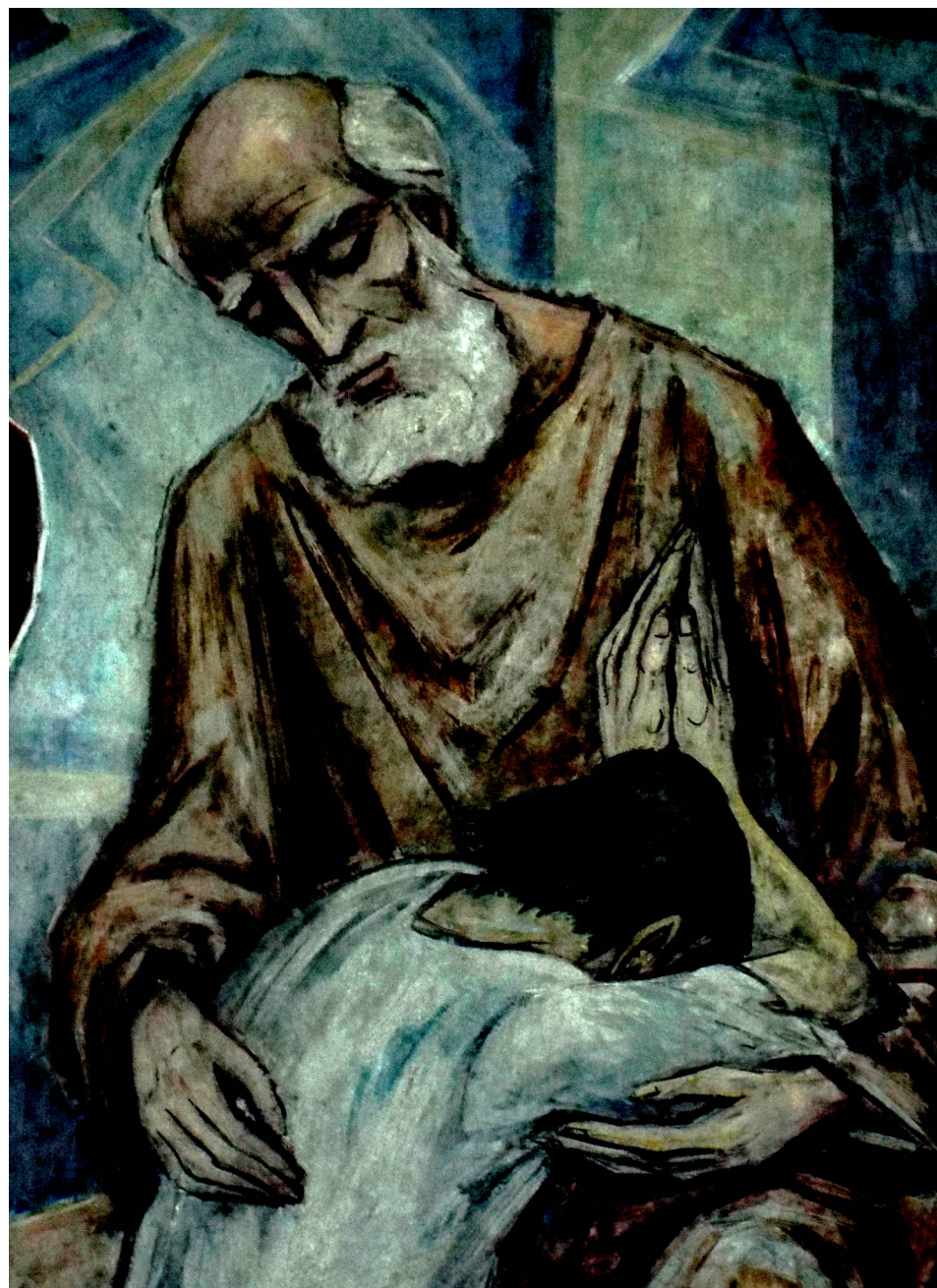
Paul said: I am persuaded, convicted, convinced, utterly, irrefutably compelled to believe that we are more than conquerors. But “more than” means that there is no English, Greek or human word, or intellectual disposition that can really describe the spiritual condition of being in Christ. Its indescribable!

Beyond our imagination

Conqueror is a strong word and conjures up thoughts of immense power. Physically. Mentally. Intellectually. Materially. But it’s infinitely greater than that. It’s awesome beyond imagination or understanding. Incomprehensible!

It’s more than crusaders fighting causes, building temples, debating doctrines or trying to change the world. It’s a spiritual condition, not flesh and blood. It’s not intellectual, psychological or philosophical. It’s not about beating up the brothers of Anakim or the Amorites, it’s not about building churches, denominations or ministries.

Oswald Chambers said: “Our battle is not against sin, difficulties or circumstances or being too absorbed in service to Jesus Christ. The greatest need is not facing our beliefs and doctrines but the need to face Him. It’s a readiness brought through intense spiritual reality, expecting Jesus at every turn – and this sense of expectation will give our life the attitude and childlike wonder He wants us to have. Stop being religious, or following some lofty lifestyle. We must be spiritually real!” 



LOVE

THE GREATEST GIFT OF ALL

by Francis MacNutt

WE all know Jesus' answer to the scribe's question (What is the greatest Commandment?): "You must love the Lord God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind (Matthew 22:37)." The second part is like the first: "Love your neighbour as yourself."

The rabbis of Jesus' time already knew

this from their study of the Scriptures. What is not so well-known – and certainly not lived – is that Jesus amazingly expanded this commandment by teaching a new version at the Last Supper: The New Command is "to love one another as I have loved you (Matthew 15:12)."

This command goes counter to all our natural inclinations, because it means that God now wants us to love our

enemies. The history of the last 2 000 years shows that most Christians have not been able to do this. We have often simply ignored Jesus' teaching or have found clever ways of making exceptions to it. This is because the natural way of dealing with enemies is to kill them or dominate them.

No longer is it enough merely to love our family, our friends (our "neighbours"), or our national group. We now must love our enemies. We must have compassion on their suffering and not rejoice in their getting what they deserve.

It seems so unfair!

Yet our unredeemed humanity does not want to do this. It seems unfair, unjust – even immoral. Even the people Jesus taught felt this way: the first attempt on Jesus' life came very early (Luke 4) when he pointed out in the synagogue that God chose to bless and heal Syrians rather than Israelites. This came immediately after his audience marvelled at how well he spoke about liberation and healing in his commentary on Isaiah 61 (Luke 4:22).

Even today, you can imagine how chilly a reception you would get if you talked about how God healed an Arab (Syrian) general of his leprosy when there were many Jewish lepers that God could have chosen.

The other example he used was the feeding of an Arab widow in Zarephath when many Jewish widows were suffering from a three-and-a-half-year famine in Israel (Luke 4:25). The congregation's response was to try to throw Jesus off a cliff (Luke 4:29-30).

First, we need to recognise in our own lives that Jesus has really given us a New Commandment – and then we need to repent of the ways we use to argue our way out of his command.

In Jesus, we find that God's intention is to unify the entire human race and bring us all into his Kingdom. He especially wants to bring in the outsiders: the disreputable, the poor, and the outcasts. Jesus was first sent to the lost sheep of the House of Israel, and then his Kingdom was extended to the entire human race.

This is the main point of many of Jesus' parables, such as the Good Samaritan (Samaritans were considered

heretics and, moreover, were a mixed race), the Prodigal Son (compared to the respectable Elder Son), and the Rich Man (who scorns the starving Lazarus at his gate).

The most common criticism made about Jesus by religious people was that he consorted with "sinners," such as prostitutes and tax collectors. When the religious elite of his day quoted the Law to him, he responded that his "Father wanted mercy and not sacrifice (Matthew 12:7)."

He taught us to avoid seeking possessions, fame and power, the ordinary perks that come with advancing in society – everything in our lives that would set one group over or against another. His teachings were so counter to our natural inclinations that he said – even to his chosen disciples – that they were not yet ready to receive all his teachings, but that the Spirit would be sent to give them the further, deeper instruction that they needed.

What we have done to justify our hatred...

Historically, what we have always done to justify our hatred and willingness to kill has been to claim that the enemy group is not worthy of being loved. We do this because the person or group is evil. Therefore, the most moral action is to eradicate the person or the group.

We believe that the other group is part of an "axis of evil" (and you do not even talk to people like that). Over and over this happens. Heretics should be killed by the Inquisition; we need the Death Penalty to rid society of major criminals; the French Revolution rids France of its destructive upper class; communists get rid of capitalism by executing capitalists.

Another way out is simply to regard some people as subhuman – beings that have no rights. For 2 000 years, Christians justified slavery and, as a result, the enslaved race could be tortured or killed like animals. Consider how the Spaniards dealt with the Native Americans in Central and South America, how the English dealt with Native Americans in their colonies, and how Americans massacred them later. Oliver Cromwell claimed that the Irish soldiers they killed had tails on them; and so it goes.

The groups who are our enemies are

evil or subhuman and have no rights.

Our prison system is another example. Its primary intent is to punish, and the saving and restoration of criminals is not a jail's major purpose. Many countries retain the death penalty and some Christians do not sense that this goes counter to the primary purpose of a Christian prison system, which is to redeem and save whatever can be salvaged in a criminal's life.

Easier to see evil

It seems much easier for us to see evil than to see good in people.

Redemptive violence seems to be part of our ethic – even among Christians, in spite of Jesus' non-violent teachings. The myth assumes that evil can be wiped out by wiping out violent people, provided your intentions are good.

Many of our movies are based on this traditional, pre-Christian myth. For example, a typical Mel Gibson movie, like *Braveheart*, features a hero who is pushed to the brink by evil men, but then fights back and kills them all, or dies trying. We all feel like applauding at the end.

In *Born to Fight*, which is a history of the Scottish-Irish people, the author points out with pride that his race (my race, too) never backs down from a fight. They were the pioneers in

Kentucky who, unlike the Quakers, sought to fight with Native Americans.

To them, mercy was seen as weakness. They were the gunslingers in the West (Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid) and, like General Patton, were often the heroes in our wars. In the face of evil enemies, they got out the posse and a rope. Many Christians praise these warlike attitudes. Yet, Jesus chose to be the victim – the Lamb of God – rather than the victorious warrior, the Lion of Judah.

Our first need is to know, to realise, what Jesus' teaching on love was.

Next, we need the Spirit to live it. We need the power of the Spirit to transform us so that we see people with God's own love and love them with His love – "the love of God is poured into our heart by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5)." The traditional understanding of Pentecost and the gift of tongues is that the Spirit removes the curse of the tower of Babel and enables the human race to communicate and love each other once again.

Without the Spirit, it does not happen (Romans 7).

We desperately need the fruits of the Spirit, the first being LOVE, or we will never be transformed and become like Jesus. ☺

HOW THEY PRAYED

George Whitefield, the English evangelist, said: "O Lord, give me souls, or take my soul!"

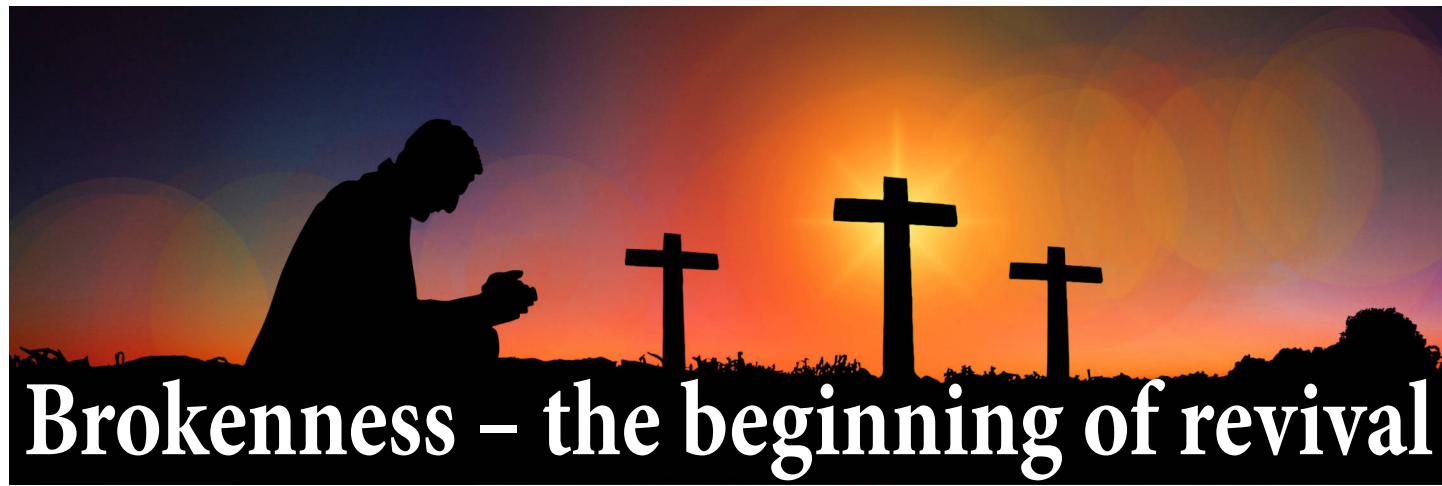
Henry Martyn, missionary, kneeling on India's coral strands, cried out, "Here let me burn out for God!"

David Brainerd, missionary to the North American Indians (1718-1747): "Lord, to Thee I dedicate myself. Oh, accept of me, and let me be Thine for ever. Lord, I desire nothing else, I desire nothing more." The last words in his diary, seven days before he died: "Oh, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen."

Dwight L. Moody, "Use me then, my Saviour, for whatever purpose and in whatever way Thou mayest require. Here is my poor heart, an empty vessel; fill it with Thy grace."

Martin Luther, a few words from his great agony of prayer on the night preceding his appearance before the Diet of Worms: "Do Thou, my God, do Thou, God, stand by me against all the world's wisdom and reason. Oh, do it! Thou must do it. Stand by me, Thou true, eternal God!"

John McKenzie, a prayer of a young missionary candidate as he knelt on the banks of the Lossie: "O Lord, send me to the darkest spot on earth!" ☺



by Roy Hession (1908 – 1992)

WE want to be very simple in this matter of revival. Revival is just the life of the Lord Jesus poured into human hearts. Jesus is always victorious. In heaven they are praising Him all the time for His victory. Whatever may be our experience of failure and barrenness, He is never defeated.

His power is boundless. And we, on our part, have only to get into a right relationship with Him, and we shall see His power being demonstrated in our hearts and lives and service, and His victorious life will fill us and overflow through us to others. And that is revival in its essence.

If, however, we are to come into this right relationship with Him, the first thing we must learn is that our wills must be broken to His will. To be broken is the beginning of revival. It is painful, it is humiliating, but it is the only way. It is being “*Not I, but Christ*” (Galatians 2:20), and a “C” is a bent “I.”

The Lord Jesus cannot live in us fully and reveal Himself through us until the proud self within us is broken. This simply means that the hard unyielding self, which justifies itself, wants its own way, stands up for its rights, and seeks its own glory, at last bows its head to God’s will, admits it’s wrong, gives up its own way to Jesus, surrenders its rights and discards its own glory – that the Lord Jesus might have all and be all.

In other words, it is dying to self and self-attitudes.

And as we look honestly at our Christian lives, we can see how much of this self there is in each of us. It is so often self who tries to live the Christian

life (the mere fact that we use the word “try” indicates that it is self who has the responsibility).

It is self, too, who is often doing Christian work. It is always self who gets irritable and envious and resentful and critical and worried. It is self who is hard and unyielding in its attitudes to others. It is self who is shy and self-conscious and reserved.

God can do little with us

No wonder we need breaking. As long as self is in control, God can do little with us, for all the fruits of the Spirit (enumerated in Galatians 5), with which God longs to fill us, are the complete antithesis of the hard, unbroken spirit within us and presupposes that it has been crucified.

Being broken is both God’s work and ours. He brings His pressure to bear, but we have to make the choice. If we are really open to conviction as we seek fellowship with God (and willingness for the light is the prime condition of fellowship with God), God will show us the expressions of this proud, hard self that cause Him pain.

It is then that we can stiffen our necks and refuse to repent, or bow the head and say, “Yes, Lord.” Brokenness in daily experience is simply the response of humility to the conviction of God.

This can be very costly

And because this conviction is continuous, we need to be broken continually. And this can be very costly, when we see all the yielding of rights and selfish interests that this will involve, and the confessions and restitutions that may be sometimes necessary.

For this reason, we are not likely to be broken except at the Cross of Jesus. The

willingness of Jesus to be broken for us is the all-compelling motive in our being broken too.

We see Him, who is in the form of God, counting not equality with God a prize to be grasped at and hung on to, but letting it go for us and taking upon Him the form of a Servant – God’s Servant, man’s Servant.

We see Him willing to have no rights of His own, no home of His own, no possessions of His own, willing to let men revile Him and not revile in return, willing to let men tread on Him and not retaliate or defend Himself.

Above all, we see Him broken as He meekly goes to Calvary to become men’s scapegoat by bearing their sins in His own body on the Tree.

A pathetic passage

In a pathetic passage in a prophetic psalm, He says, “*I am a worm and no man*” (Psalm 22:6).” Those who have been in tropical lands tell us that there is a big difference between a snake and a worm, when you attempt to strike at them. The snake rears itself up and hisses and tries to strike back – a true picture of self. But a worm offers no resistance, it allows you to do what you like with it, kick it or squash it under your heel – a picture of true brokenness.

And Jesus was willing to become just that for us – a worm and no man. And He did so, because that is what He saw us to be – worms having forfeited all rights through our sin, and to deserve nothing but hell. And He now calls us to take our rightful place as worms for Him and with Him.

The whole Sermon on the Mount with its teaching of non-retaliation, love for enemies and selfless giving, assumes that this is our position. But only the vision

of the Love that was willing to be broken for us can constrain us to be willing for that.

But dying to self is not a thing we do once for all. There may be an initial dying when God first shows these things, but ever after, it will be a constant dying, for only so can the Lord Jesus be revealed constantly through us. Every day the choice is made in a thousand ways..

All day long the choice will be before us in a thousand ways. It will mean no plans, no time, no money, no pleasure of our own. It will mean a constant yielding to those around us, for our yieldedness to God is measured by our yieldedness to man. Every humiliation, everyone who tries and vexes us, is God’s way of breaking us, so that there is a yet deeper channel in us for the life of Christ.

But inasmuch as our self-centred life is the exact opposite of His, we can never be filled with His life unless we are prepared for God to bring our life constantly to death. And in that we must co-operate by our moral choice.

Brokenness, however, is only the beginning of revival. Revival itself is being absolutely filled to overflowing with the Holy Spirit, and that is victorious living. If we were asked this moment if we were filled with the Holy Spirit, how many of us would dare to answer “yes?” Revival is when we can say “yes” at any moment of the day. It is not egoistic to say so, for filling to overflowing is utterly and completely God’s work – it is all of grace. All we have to do is to present our empty, broken self and let Him fill and keep filled.

Andrew Murray says, “Just as water always seeks and fills the lowest place, so the moment God finds you abased and empty, His glory and power flow in.”

The picture that has made things simple and clear to so many of us is that of the human heart as a cup, which we hold out to Jesus, longing that He might fill it with the Water of Life. Jesus is pictured as bearing the golden water pot with the Water of Life.

As He passes by, He looks into our cup and if it is clean, He fills to overflowing with the Water of Life. And as Jesus is always passing by, the cup can be always

running over. That is something of what David meant, when he said, “My cup runneth over.”

This is revival – you and I – full to overflowing with blessing ourselves and to others – with a constant peace in our hearts.

People imagine that dying to self makes one miserable. But it is just the opposite. It is the refusal to die to self that makes one miserable. The more we know of death with Him, the more we shall know of His life in us, and so the more of real peace and joy. His life, too, will overflow through us to lost souls in a real concern for their salvation, and to our fellow Christians in a deep desire for their blessing.

Only one thing prevents Jesus filling our cups as He passes by, and that is sin in one of its thousand forms. The Lord Jesus does not fill dirty cups. Anything that springs from self, however small it may be, is sin.

They all make our cups unclean

Self-energy or self-complacency in service is sin. Self-pity in trials or difficulties, self-seeking in business or Christian work, self-indulgence in one’s spare time, sensitiveness, touchiness, resentment and self-defence when we are hurt or injured by others, self-consciousness, reserve, worry, fear – all spring from self and all are sin and make our cups unclean.

But all of them were put into that other cup, which the Lord Jesus shrank from momentarily in Gethsemane, but which He drank to the dregs at Calvary – the cup of our sin. And if we will allow Him to show us what is in our cups and then give it to Him, He will cleanse them in the precious blood that still flows for sin.

That does not mean mere cleansing from the guilt of sin, nor even from the stain of sin – though thank God both of these are true – but from the sin itself, whatever it may be. And as He cleanses our cups, so He fills them to overflowing with His Holy Spirit.

And we are able daily to avail ourselves of that precious blood. Suppose you have let the Lord Jesus cleanse your cup and have trusted Him to fill it to overflowing, then something comes along – a touch of envy or temper.

What happens? Your cup becomes dirty and it ceases to overflow. And if we are constantly being defeated in this way, then our cup is never overflowing.

If we are to know continuous revival, we must learn the way to keep our cups clean. It is never God’s will that a revival should cease, and be known in history as the revival of this or that year.

The secret of cups cleansed and overflowing

When that happens, it is due to only one thing – sin, just those little sins that the devil drops into our cup. But if we will go back to Calvary and learn afresh the power of the blood of Jesus to cleanse moment by moment from the beginnings of sin, then we have learnt the secret of cups constantly cleansed and constantly overflowing.

The moment you are conscious of that touch of envy, criticism, irritability, whatever it is – ask Jesus to cover it with His precious blood and cleanse it away and you will find the reaction gone, your joy and peace restored and your cup running over. And the more you trust the blood of Jesus in this way, the less will you even have these reactions.

But cleansing is only possible when we have first been broken before God on the point concerned. Suppose we are irritated by certain traits in someone. It is not enough just to take our reactions of irritation to Calvary.

We must first be broken, that is, we must yield to God over the whole question and accept that person and their ways as His will for us. Then we are able to take our wrong reaction to Jesus, knowing that His blood will cleanse away our sin; and when we have been cleansed from sin, let us not keep mourning over it, let us not be occupied with ourselves. But let us look up to our victorious Lord, and praise Him that He is still victorious.

Everything that disturbs the peace of God is sin

There is one simple but all-inclusive guide the Word of God gives to regulate our walk with Jesus and to make us know when sin has come in. Colossians 3:15 says, “*Let the peace of God rule in your hearts.*” Everything that disturbs the peace of God in our hearts is sin, no matter how small it is, and no matter

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Brokenness the beginning of revival

how little like sin it may at first appear to be.

This peace is to “rule” our hearts, or (a more literal translation) “be the referee” in our hearts. When the referee blows his whistle at a football match, the game has to stop, a foul has been committed. When we lose our peace, God’s referee in our hearts has blown his whistle!

If there is no peace, it’s because we are not broken...

Let us stop immediately, ask God to show us what is wrong, put by faith the sin He shows us under the blood of Jesus, and then peace will be restored and we shall go on our way with our cups running over.

If, however, God does not give us His peace, it will be because we are not really broken. Perhaps we have yet to say “sorry” to somebody else as well as to God. Or perhaps we still feel it is the other person’s fault. But if we have lost our peace, it is obvious whose fault it is. We do not lose peace with God over another person’s sin, but only over our own.

God wants to show us our reactions, and only when we are willing to be cleansed there, will we have His peace.


Oh, what a simple but searching thing it is to be ruled by the peace of God, none other than the Holy Spirit Himself! Former selfish ways, which we never bothered about, are now shown to us and we cannot walk in them without the referee blowing his whistle.

Grumbling, bossiness, carelessness, down to the smallest thing are all revealed as sins, when we are prepared to let our days be ruled by the peace of

God. Many times a day, and over the smallest things, we shall have to avail ourselves of the cleansing blood of Jesus, and we shall find ourselves walking the way of brokenness as never before.

But Jesus will be manifested in all His loveliness and grace in that brokenness.

Many of us, however, have neglected the referee’s whistle so often and for so long that we have ceased to hear it. Days follow days and we feel we have little need of cleansing and no occasion of being broken. In that condition we are usually in a worse state than we ever imagine.

It will need a great hunger for restored fellowship with God to possess our hearts before we will be willing to cry to God to show us where the blood of Jesus must be applied. He will show us, to begin with, just one thing and it will be our obedience and brokenness on that one thing that will be the first step into revival for us. 



by Ruth Paxson (1889–1949)

DEAR Heavenly Father, Thou who dost neither slumber nor sleep, I thank Thee for Thy protecting care during the night watches and for the dawn of a new day. Cleanse my life now of every stain of yesterday’s sin and create in me a clean heart.

The hours of this day are golden, for with their passing they are gone forever; therefore unfold to me the plan for their life. Let me not mar that plan by any omission of service because of fear, timidity or unwillingness; let me add nothing to it which mere human impulse or selfish ambition dictates.

My life is but one, but as Thou didst multiply the lad’s meagre luncheon so that it was enough to feed thousands, with food to spare, so multiply my life that it, through prayer and rich self-giving, may bless multitudes.

Dear Lord Jesus, touch me before the hurrying world touches me, so that the fever of haste and restlessness may leave me and I may rise and minister unto others with a still heart, testifying through my life of the blessed heritage of peace Thou didst bequeath us.

Teach me to enjoy life, not so much through the retrospection of a dead past and the anticipations of an uncertain future, as through a hearty separation of my whole

being unto the things and people of the living present.

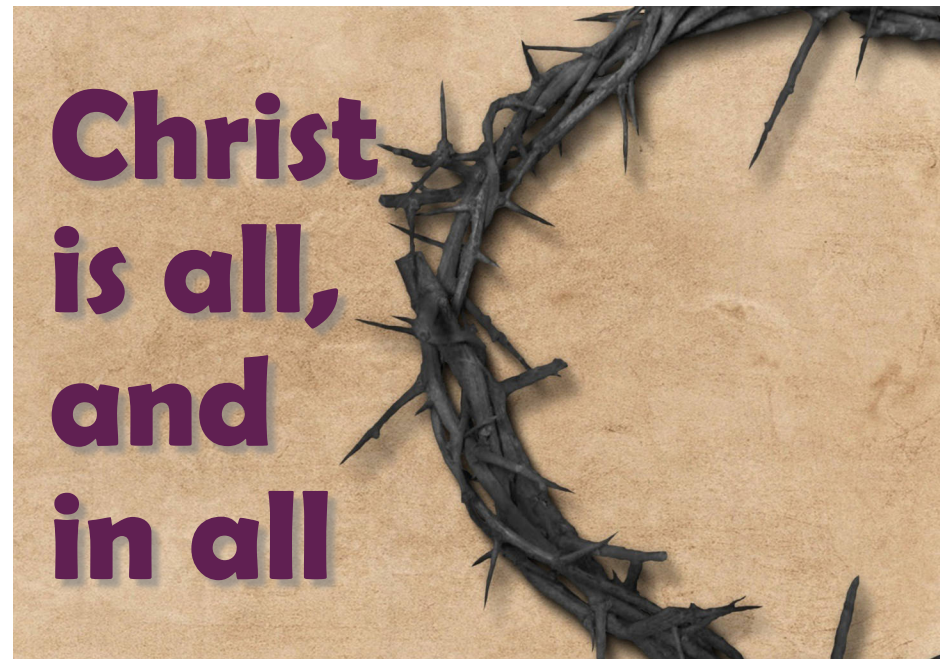
Tender Father, I thank Thee for the many lovingkindnesses and tender mercies with which Thy children are constantly crowning my life; today may I be as kind, good and thoughtful to others. There will be many weary, discouraged, tempted, lonely, heartsick, needy ones in the crowd today.

O tender Son of Man, live in me, so that I may... by a smile, a letter, a word, a touch of sympathy and love, meet the need and satisfy the longing of some human souls. If it be only a cup of cold water for one of Thy little ones, let me carry it for Thy sweet sake, and tonight may I hear Thee say, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto Me.”

Today my life may be the only Bible some person will read. So teach me how to understand and incarnate Thy truth that my life may be a living message, written with the Spirit of the living God.

Today, precious Christ, let me become more like Thee, and let each tomorrow be but a daily transformation into Thy image, whom, having not seen, I love, until that promised day comes when I shall be really like Thee, for I shall see Thee as Thou art.

Dear Father, grant these petitions in the name of Thy dear Son. Amen. 



MORE and more, I am made to feel that Christ does not have His proper place among the children of God. He is not the object. It is either a doctrine, a dogma, a party, or our experience – something besides Christ.

We seem possessed with very much the same spirit that actuated Peter on the mount, when he said: “Let us make here three tabernacles (Matthew 17:4).”

The Father solemnly rebukes this, “Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, ‘Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.’ While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!’

“And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. But Jesus came and touched them and said, ‘Arise, and do not be afraid.’ When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only (Matthew 17:4-8).”

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

“Christ is all (Colossians 3:11).”

Do we make Him this?

Is it a question of my salvation? “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and You shall be saved (Acts 16:31).”

Is it a question of relationship with God? “You are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:26).”

Is it a question of experience? “For to me to live is Christ (Philippians 1:21).”

Is it a question of service? “I can do all things through Christ Who strengthens me (Philippians 4:13).”

Is it a question of my path? “I am the way (John 14:6).”

Is it a question of heaven or the place to which my path leads? He would define it as “where I am (John 14:3).”

O, let us know more of that rich blessedness which comes of making “Christ all,” of seeing “Jesus only.” Our cry should be – “O, to know Him (Philippians 3:10)!”

In our selfishness we cry and beg for blessings. It is the Blessor we need, Himself.

He is the joy of the Father’s heart. Let us taste with Him the delight He takes in His Son. Christ is infinitely higher than doctrine or experience. Experience we shall have, but only with Him can our hearts be ravished and raptured.

Why is it we are not changed more from “glory to glory (2 Corinthians 3:18)?” The veil has been rent; the blood has been sprinkled; the Holy Spirit has been given. The reason is we are occupied with ourselves and the work of the Spirit in us rather than with Christ alone. This is the weakness in

some “movements” – so much of which is superficial.

Let us look more in that unveiled face, from which streams the light of the knowledge of the glory of God (see 2 Corinthians, chapters 3 and 4). All else will pale and fade if we will but linger there.

Let me say here – the Spirit never occupies me with His work in me, or with my experience. And if I am thus occupied, I am experimentally out of the Spirit. The Lord said of the Spirit, “He shall not speak of Himself... He shall glorify Me (John 16:13&14).”

To go further, the work of Christ, wonderfully blessed as it is, can never be the object of my heart. It gives my conscience peace, sweet peace, but only His Person can satisfy my heart. And O, how His Person does! Ten thousand hallelujahs to Him!


The Father directs our attention to Him (Matthew 17:5). The Holy Spirit would occupy us with Him (Acts 7:55&56).

The Word of God testifies of Him (John 5:39). He is the object of faith; He is the object of love; He is the object of hope. And the faith, or love, or hope that does not make Him the object – is spurious and unreal.

He is all for my path; He is all for my service; He is all for my worship; blessed, blessed be His Name! He is not on the Cross, He is not in the grave. He is on the Throne!

Wondrous fact, a Man in the glory of God, and that One my Saviour; my Priest; my Advocate, the One who died for me; the One who lives for me; the One who is coming for me; the Bridegroom of His Church.

It is not surprising that Peter should say, “Unto you therefore which believe He is precious (1 Peter 2:7).” The ungodly world as well as the religious world are equally bent on shutting Him out. The former is “reserved unto fire,” the latter He will “spew out of My mouth (2 Peter 3:7; Revelation 3:16).” Therefore keep clear from them both, “Let us go forth therefore to Him (Hebrews 13:13).”

“Worthy is the Lamb Who was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour and glory and blessing (Revelation 5:12).” 

Spiritual signs of the last days

by Lee Brainard

WHEN I was a babe in the Lord, I often nursed disappointment that I had not been born during one of the periods of revival, like the First Great Awakening or the Second Great Awakening – led by men like John Wesley and Charles Finney. But as my eyes were opened to prophetic truth, it dawned on me that I was privileged to live in the most exciting time since the days of Christ and His apostles – the end of the age.

This generation shall witness the great falling away, the Rapture of the church, the Tribulation, the coming of the Lord in glory, Armageddon, and the establishment of the Kingdom. What an amazing time to be alive! What an incredible opportunity to earn battlefield glory.

On every hand we see compromise, Laodiceanism, and apostasy. Don't let this discourage you. Let it inflame your heart with zeal for the honour of God. Be strong in the Lord, put on the full armour of God, and stand for the truth of the Word of God against the wiles of the devil (Ephesians 6:10-17). The battle is fierce. But the fiercer the battle, the greater the glory.

Sadly, many people seem oblivious to the hurricane of prophetic convergence that is blowing all around us. When confronted with the signs of the times, they manifest indifference if not open hostility. In their estimation, the prophetically awakened are unstable men and women who are living in a make-believe world.

But who is guilty of living in a fantasy? Those who see end-times signs happening around them? Or those who close their eyes and deny their existence or validity? And make no mistake – signs are multiplying all around us, including spiritual signs whose effects are quite apparent.

This article will focus on those signs

that pertain to the spiritual realm, both negative and positive.

NEGATIVE SIGNS

Let's start with some of the negative signs, that is, signs which are indicative of man's end-times departure from the will and ways of God. Those listed here are by no means exhaustive, but they are certainly characteristic.

Last days scoffers

2 Peter 3:3 warns us that "scoffers will come in the last days." This scoffing is characterised by a denial of catastrophism and defence of uniformitarianism (verse 4), unbelief in the second coming in fiery judgement (verses 4, 7&10), unbelief in creation (verse 5), unbelief in the flood (verse 6), unbelief in God's timetable (verse 8), and unbelief in the goodness of God (verse 9).

This is definitely a prophecy with a time stamp. Until the rise of evolution and God-denying rationalism in modern times, such unbelief did not characterise most people.

Militant, religious atheism

In 2 Thessalonians 2:3&4 we read that the Antichrist will sit in the temple of God, declare himself god, and exalt himself above all that is called god or worshipped. In short, he will seek to exterminate all religion that does not glorify him.

This will be universally enforced, as seen in Revelation 13:8 where we read that everyone on earth will worship him except those whose names are in the book of life. And this foul man will make war against the saints who resist his wicked demands and overcome them (Revelation 13:7).

While this prophecy hasn't been exhaustively fulfilled yet, we are certainly witnessing the rise of this

atheistic juggernaut and the demise of Christendom.

Self-centred Christianity

In 2 Timothy 3:1-5 we read that in the last days Christendom will be dominated by "Christianity" that has the form of godliness but lacks the power thereof. Such "christians" will be lovers of themselves and will love pleasure rather than God.

This sad state of affairs is already dominating the scene. The Protestant churches long ago, by and large, became formalised and fossilised institutions. Now with the rise of the Laodicean spirit, the prosperity gospel, the emergent message, the NAR ("New Apostolic Reformation") message, and a host of other virulent errors, too many churches are succumbing to a tide of apostasy and heresy. They give lip service to biblical Christianity, but their heart is far from it.

Moral perversion

In Luke 17:28-30 we read that the last

days will be like the days of Lot. We know that Lot's days were characterised by earthliness (verse 28) and sexual perversion (2 Peter 2:6; Jude 1:7).

So, we know that these moral blemishes will characterise the last days. And the last days are here. Fifty years ago, such debauchery was largely a matter of the societal elite that was kept in the closet. In the past couple of decades, it has come to dominate educational, informational, financial, entertainment, and governmental institutions.

Biblical morality is now the position of the moral minority. We are teetering on the brink of complete moral collapse.

Deceiving Spirits

1 Timothy 4:1 informs us that in the latter times men will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of devils. Two lies that are specifically mentioned are forbidding to marry and forbidding to eat foods that God created to be received with

thanksgiving.

Decades ago, I warned my friends that we would see the new world order try to ban meat eating, animal husbandry, and dairy. This is exactly what we see going on.

How did I foresee this? Because the devil hates every institution of God, and one of these institutions is a land flowing with milk and honey.

The rise of explanations for the mass disappearance known as the Rapture

Beginning in the early 1800s, the concept of an imminent and Pre-Tribulation Rapture grew in popularity.

The resurgence of anticipation and excitement that belief caused was scorned by many as ridiculous. Yet over the past decade the New Age elite have begun to prepare the world with ready explanations for the possible vanishing of Christians. The most common suggestions are alien abduction and the universe purging itself of all bad energy.

This implies that fallen spirits behind the deep state and the world elite are fully aware of the truth of the Rapture, and they are brainwashing the world ahead of time.

POSITIVE SIGNS

Now there are several positive signs, too, which indicate that we are fast approaching the end of the age.

Increase in knowledge

Daniel 12:4 informs us, "Seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase." The prophetic Scriptures in general and Daniel in particular were mysterious for many centuries, lost in the swamp of allegorical interpretation. But beginning in the early 1800s, men began interpreting prophecy literally once again, which led to an explosion of prophetic light.

They reintroduced a clear distinction between Israel and the church, a future 70th week, a literal Tribulation, a literal Millennium, and a Pre-Tribulation Rapture of the church.

Based on God's Word, they also

predicted the return of the nation of Israel. The understanding of prophetic matters continues to increase, with greater discernment in areas like the new covenant, the Nephilim, the Antichrist, Ezekiel 38-39, and Psalm 83.

This understanding of the prophetic Scriptures indicates that we are nearing the time of the end.

Spread of the Gospel

We read in Matthew 24:14, "this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come." The church is nearing the completion of this monumental task.

This suggests that we are nearing the end of the age. But the church doesn't have to finish the job before the rapture. The Tribulation saints will take up the torch after the Rapture of the church, and they will finish the job. Every tongue, tribe, and nation will hear the Gospel in the language of their heart.

Messianic Judaism


During Christ's earthly ministry, He introduced instruction that became central to the message of the Church Age. It was necessary to lay the foundation before the Church was raised.

In a similar fashion, at the tail end of the Church Age, we have witnessed the rise of Messianic Judaism, which is a precursor to the God-ordained form of worship and service that shall prevail in the Tribulation.

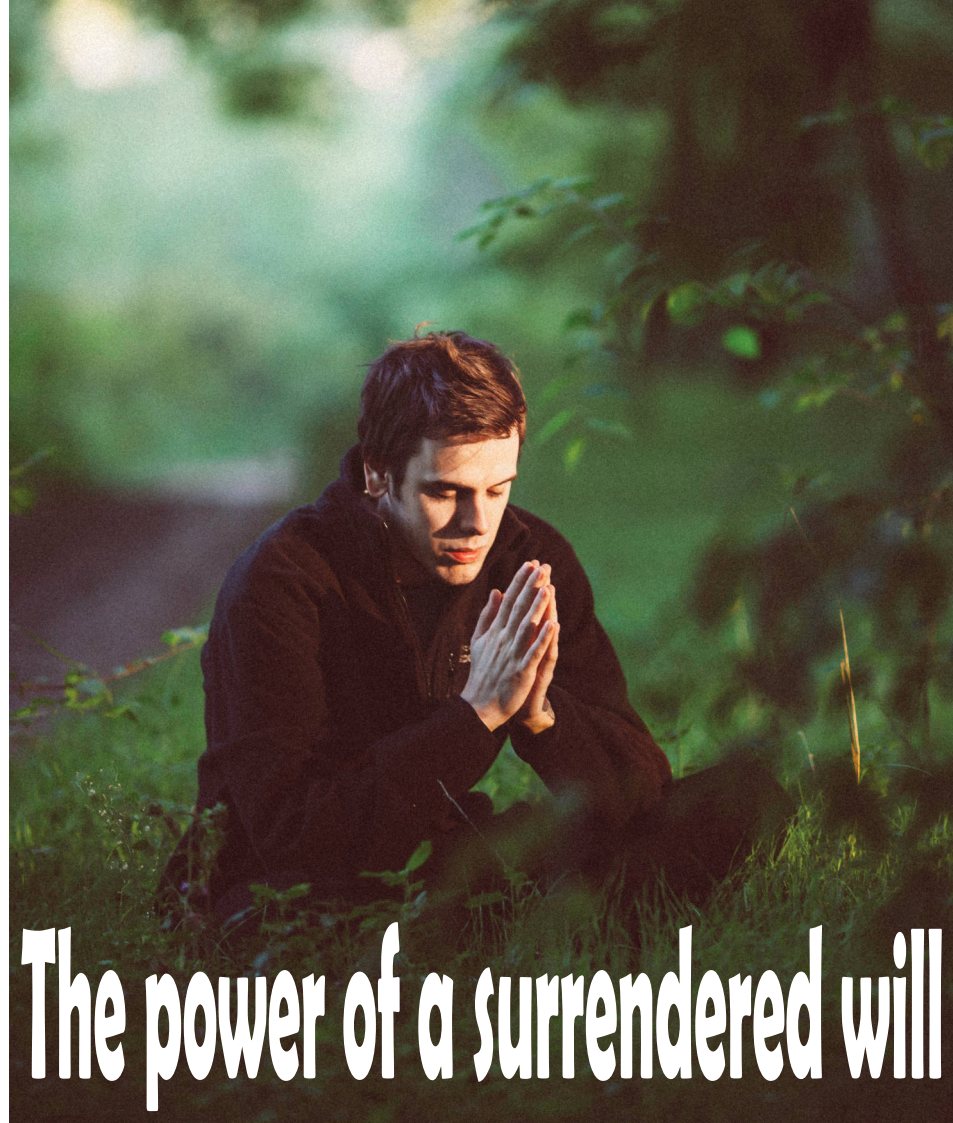
People hungering for Truth immediately after the Rapture will treasure the books, websites, videos, and literature born-again followers of the Messiah leave behind. The light we offer today will shine bright in the darkness of the Tribulation.

CONCLUSION

Everywhere we look, we see signs that the end of the age is just over the horizon. While these signs don't speak directly to the Rapture of the Church, that is, they don't point to a date or even a definite year, they do imply that we should be looking for the imminent Rapture of the Church.

May we all take our eyes off the passing vanities of this world and place them on the glories that shall be revealed to us when Jesus comes for His own. 





by R. A. Torrey (1856-1928)

“POWER belongs to God (Psalm 62:11),” but there is one condition upon which that power is bestowed upon us – that is absolute surrender to Him.

“Neither yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those who are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God (Romans 6:13).”

Again in Romans 6:22 we read, “But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, you have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.”

The great secret of blessedness and power is found in these verses. “Yield yourselves unto God” – the whole secret is found in those words.

“Put yourselves at God’s disposal” is the thought. In other words, surrender yourselves absolutely to God, to be His property, for Him to do with you what He will, and use you as He will.

If anyone asks, “What is the one thing

for me to do if I wish to know all that God has for me?” the answer is very simple. Surrender absolutely to God.

Say to Him, “Heavenly Father, henceforth I have no will of my own. Thy will be done in me, through me, by me, and regarding me, in all things. I put myself unreservedly in Your hands – now do with me just what You will.” When one does that, God, who is infinite love, and infinite wisdom, and infinite power, does the very best thing with that one.

Knowledge of the truth comes with surrender of the will. “If any man wills to do His will, he shall know of the teaching (John 7:17)...” Nothing so clears the spiritual vision as surrender to the will of God.

“God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all (1 John 1:5).” Surrender to Him opens our eyes to the light which He Himself is. It brings us at once into harmony with all truth.

Nothing so blinds the spiritual vision as self-will or sin. I have seen questions which bothered men for years solved in a very short time when those men

simply surrendered to God. What was dark as night before has become light as day.

“If therefore your eye is good,” says Jesus, “your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body shall be full of darkness (Matthew 6:22&23).”

A surrendered life and will is the secret of light and knowledge.

The next result of a surrendered will and life is power in prayer. The greatest secret of prevailing prayer is that which John records from his own joyous experience in 1 John 3:22: “And whatever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.”

Note those wonderful words, “Whatever we ask, we receive of Him.” Think of it! Not one prayer, great or small, that fails to get what is sought. Then note the reason: “Because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.”

A life entirely surrendered to the doing of God’s will, as revealed in His Word, and to doing the things that are pleasing in His sight – a life wholly surrendered to God’s will and pleasure, a life wholly at God’s disposal – this is the secret of prevailing prayer.

Why do you not get what you ask?

Do you ask why you do not get what you ask, why you cannot say like John, “Whatever I ask I get?” It is not because he was an apostle and you are just an everyday Christian. It was because he could say, “I keep His commandments, and do those things (and them only) which are pleasing in His sight.” And you cannot say that. It was because his life was entirely surrendered to God, and yours is not.

It is when we make God’s will ours that He makes our will His. “Delight yourself also in the Lord; and He shall give you the desires of your heart (Psalm 37:4).”

Jesus said to the Father, “You hear Me always (John 11:42). But why? “Oh,” you say, “because He was His only begotten Son.” Not at all, but because Jesus could say, “I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but

the will of Him that sent Me (John 6:38).” And again, “My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me (John 4:34)...” And again, “Lo, I come... to do Thy will, O God (Hebrews 10:7).”

A surrendered will and a surrendered life is the great secret of prevailing prayer. George Müller perhaps stands out as one man who, above all others, wrought things by prayer. Why? Because many years ago he set out to be and do just what God would have him to be and to do, and to daily and deeply ponder God’s Word that he might know His will. He yielded himself to God. There is not one of us who cannot become a mighty prince of God if we will do the same thing.

The next result of a surrendered will is a heart overflowing with joy. In the face of awful trial and agony through which He was to pass, Jesus said to His disciples: “If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father’s commandments, and abide in His love. These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full (John 15:10&11).”

Jesus had found joy in keeping His Father’s commandments, by complete surrender to His will, and now, if they would follow on in that path, His joy would be in them, and their joy would be “fulfilled,” or filled full. This is the only way to find fullness of joy – complete, unconditional surrender to God. “Yield yourselves unto God.” There is no very great measure of joy in a half-hearted Christian life.

Many so-called Christians have just enough religion to make them miserable. They can no longer enjoy the world, and they have not entered into the “joy of the Lord.” There they stand, deprived of the “leeks and the onions and the garlic” of Egypt, and without the milk and honey and the finest of the wheat of Canaan. That is a wretched place to be in. The way out is simple, absolute surrender to God. Then your joy will be fulfilled.

I have known so many who have entered into this fullness of joy. Sometimes it has been after a great struggle. They were so afraid to yield absolutely to God, so afraid to say: “O God, I put myself unreservedly into Thy

hands. Do with me what You please.”

They were afraid God would ask some hard thing, afraid God might whisper “China,” “India,” or “Africa,” and sometimes He has. Sometimes there has been what to the world seemed great sacrifice, the giving up of cherished ambitions, the giving up of those dearly loved, the giving up of very much money, perhaps all one had. But there has been joy, joy “fulfilled,” joy filled full.

One way to find fulness of joy

There is but one way to find that fullness of joy – a surrendered life. A will and life completely surrendered to the God of love will bring joy under all circumstances. In the olden days one who was thus surrendered to God was led out to be burned at the stake, and he threw his arms around the stake, and cried out, “Welcome, cross of Christ! Welcome eternal life!”

The next result of a surrendered life is Christ manifesting Himself to us. On the night in which Jesus was betrayed, He said to His disciples: “He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him” (John 14:21).

A surrender of self to Christ brings Christ to us. The full manifestation of Jesus lies, it is true, in that future glad day when “the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God (1 Thessalonians 4:16).” But there is a present manifestation of Jesus to us now, when the Son and the Father come to us and make Their abode with us (John 14:23).

He will manifest Himself to us. “I do not know what that means,” some will say. Have you yielded yourself to Him, are you keeping His commandments, not asking which commandment is great and which is small, which is important, and which is unimportant, but only asking which commandment is His, and keeping that? If you are, you will know what it is to have Him manifest Himself to you, and that is joy.

We are told in one place, “...Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord (John 20:20).” { You will be glad,

when you see the Lord, and you will see Him when you go to Him and say: “I will surrender my life absolutely to Thee, now show me Thyself.”

Finally, one more result of the surrendered will and life is the great secret of receiving the Holy Spirit. Peter tells it in Acts 5:32, “...The Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him.”

It all turns upon surrender. We may deal with individual sins, and we may cry to God for the filling of the Holy Spirit, but unless there is total surrender to God at the centre of our being, unless we yield ourselves to God – nothing is likely to come of it.

Oh, how many have longed and prayed, and agonised that the Holy Spirit might come upon them, but He came not. There was no complete surrender, there was no yielding of self to God.

And then they have yielded to God. They have bowed their faces and said: “O God, I yield, I give myself up utterly to Thee. I place myself unreservedly at Thy disposal. I hold nothing back, and I hold back from nothing that Thou biddest,” and as they have bowed, the Holy Ghost has fallen upon them.

Perhaps it was with great surging waves of power and joy; perhaps in a gentle calm that stole over their whole being; perhaps in a still small voice.

But whatever way He came, He came. And when He came, power came. The great secret of power for God is the Holy Ghost upon us (Acts 1:8). And the great secret of the Holy Ghost coming upon us is the surrendered will, a yielded life. Oh, how wondrous, how blessed, how glorious is the Holy Spirit’s power!

Will you have it? “Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.” Will you do it now? Will you yield?

Oh, how foolish, how utterly foolish, are those who will not yield, or who hesitate to yield themselves unto God! You are robbing yourself of all that makes life really worth living, and that makes eternity rosy and golden with gladness, beauty, and glory.

Will you yield today? ☞



WATCH THEREFORE YOUR LORD IS COMING

by B. W. Miller and G. F. Owen

THE Holy Spirit inspired holy men of old to write concerning the Second Coming of Christ with such fullness that one out of every 25 verses of the New Testament deals with the Redeemer's return.

When Jesus wished to stress the vital importance of watchfulness and readiness, He linked His admonitions with His speedy, lightning-flash return. Faithful apostles grounded their converts in repentance, sobriety, truthfulness, holiness and heart purity, in brotherly love and holy conversation by using as a motive this great truth – that Christ is coming again.

No doctrine of the Bible is used to enforce holiness of conduct more than that of the Second Coming.

Watchfulness. “Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect (Matthew 24:42-44).”

Sobriety. “The day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night... Let us watch and be sober (1 Thessalonians 5:2&6).” “Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ (1

Peter 1:13).”

Repentance. “Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began (Acts 3:19-21).”

Fidelity. “After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.' His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord. (Matthew 25:19-21).”

Not to be ashamed of Christ. “For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels (Mark 8:38).”

Other-worldliness. “For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then

He will reward each according to his works. (Matthew 16:26-27).”

Moderation. “Let your moderation be known to all men. The Lord is at hand (Philippians 4:5).”

Mortification of fleshly lusts and desires. “When Christ, our life, is revealed, then you will also be revealed with him in glory. Put to death therefore your members which are on the earth: sexual immorality, uncleanness, depraved passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry (Colossians 3:4&5).”

Sincerity. “That you may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ (Philippians 1:10).”

Sanctification and holy living. “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 5:23).”

Ministerial faithfulness. “I charge you therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ... at His appearing... Preach the word; be ready in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort (2 Timothy 4:1&2).”

Keeping the commandments. “Keep this commandment without spot, blameless, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 6:14).”

Pastoral diligence. “Feed the flock of God... being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, you shall receive a crown of glory that does not fade away (1 Peter 5:2-4).”

Purity. “Beloved, now we are children of God, and it is not yet revealed what we will be. But we know that when he is revealed, we will be like him; for we will see him just as he is. Everyone who has this hope set on him purifies himself, even as he is pure (1 John 3:2&3).”

Abiding in Christ. “Now, little children, remain in him, that when he appears, we may have boldness, and not be ashamed before him at his coming (1 John 2:28).”

Endure temptations and trials of faith. “That the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honour, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:7).”

Holy conversation. “If any man speaks,

let him speak as the oracles of God... think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you... but rejoice... that, when His glory shall be revealed, you may be glad with exceeding joy (1 Peter 4:11-13).”

Brotherly love. “The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men... to the end He may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness... at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 3:12&13).”

Fight the fight of faith. “have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing (2 Timothy 4:7&8).”

Keeping your crown. “Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown (Revelation 3:11).”

Denying ungodliness; living godly. “Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ (Titus 2:12&13).”

Watchfulness for sudden coming. “For as the lightning that flashes out of one part under heaven shines to the other part under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in His day (Luke 17:24).”

Judge not. “Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes (1 Corinthians 4:5).”

Assurance of a time of rejoicing. “Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain (Philippians 2:16).”

A comfort while He is away. “I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there you may be also (John 14:3).”

The event for which we await. “Wait for His Son from heaven (1 Thessalonians 1:10).”

Time of judgement. “When the Son of man shall come in His glory... then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory:

and before Him shall be gathered all nations (Matthew 25:31&32).”

Resurrection of the saints. “In Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterwards those who are Christ's at His coming (1 Corinthians 15:22&23).”

The manifestation of the saints. “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall you also appear with Him in glory (Colossians 3:4).”

Consolation for the dead in Christ. “I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who are asleep... For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven... and the dead in Christ shall rise first... therefore comfort one another with these words (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).”

The time of the tribulation of unbelievers. “When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and that do not obey the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thessalonians 1:7&8).”

Proclaimed with the Lord's Supper. “For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes (1 Corinthians 11:26).”

Oh, that the ministry of every church should preach such vitally soul-touching messages as this, which is so intricately bound up with all the fundamentals of Christian faith and holy living, and which is the keynote of deep piety and spirituality.

Jesus and the apostles used the Second Coming to enforce many practical admonitions. We are to watch and be ready, robed in wedding garments. We are to confess Him before depraved and sinful men. We are to be faithful, to repent completely, to stem the fierce tide of worldliness.

We are warned to be moderate and patient; to mortify the deadly soul-blighting lusts of the flesh; and to be sincere and godly and righteous in this present world. We are commanded to be holy and unblameable, unrebukeable and upright. We are admonished to obey the commandments – for Christ is coming!

Our hearts, torn with inward battles, are to be established in holiness. We

must be sober, set our hopes on the grace of God, and be godly in conversation. As the branch in the vine so are we exhorted to abide in Christ – to have our lives hid, submerged, in Christ – to purify ourselves from the taints of evil.

As good soldiers we are to bear scathing persecutions and fiery trials and the testings of our well-grounded faith. Following the example of Christ we are to increase in brotherly love.

We are to keep our pure minds on the heavenly citizenship. As men dwelling in a world of crass materialism, we are asked to love and look for the Second Coming – for His coming draws nigh!

We are admonished to have complete confidence in Christ's power. As love-servants we are to hold fast our hope and let no man take our blood-bought crown. Looking for that better country on high, “the city whose builder and maker is God,” we are to be separated from entangling lusts wrapping their slimy cords about the soul, sinful practices and the delights from the deadly perfume of the flowers of passion's garden; and guard against hasty judgment – for He shall come with His holy angels!

Poor in worldly goods, a tent or a cottage, we are to hope and labour for a rich reward from the hand of the King of kings. We are to gain comfort from the thought of being resurrected with a glorified body – to be caught up during the rapture.

We are addressed to be ready, with garments washed in the redeeming flow from Calvary. Saved to new heights divine, we are to be the sons of the Mighty God – to shine forth as beacon lights with luminous power and might.

We are exhorted to abound in love and in the deep things of Christ – to look up, to gaze heavenward, to watch for the first gleams of the “Sun of Righteousness.”

We are to take hope, and, unsheathing the sword of faith, to fight and to labour and love – for the Lord comes as a thief in the night!

Let us preach it, and may our messages be rock-ribbed with its precious truth. May our songs herald it with sweet melodies of celestial strains!

Behold He comes! ☩

A broken, but filled, vessel

by Jonathan Goforth, missionary to China (1859-1936)

IN China, before they had newspapers, storytelling was very popular. It was about the only way the people gained outside information. A storyteller was supposed to tell about everything ancient and modern, at home or abroad.

As a storyteller, Wang Fu-lin was above the average. For hours each night he would hold large crowds, and thus made a good living.

When quite young he fell into the opium habit. This affected his throat so that, as time passed, he was obliged to give up storytelling; then, to make a living, he ran a gambling tent at fairs and theatres.

When Rosalind and I first met this man, he was 38 years of age – and a total physical and spiritual wreck. He was a bent-over, skin-and-bone skeleton. At that time, I spent 10 days in his home town of Hsintsun. Each afternoon I saw Wang Fu-lin with his opium outfit going over to the west room of the inn to ease the craving.

One evening I said to him: “Wang Fu-lin, I tremble for you. The road you have chosen leads straight to hell. You tell us you cannot resist the craving here, but the craving yonder may be increased 10 000-fold, and there you will not be able to obtain even opium ashes to ease it.”

I have given up in despair...

He answered with a broken voice: “I know what you say is only too true. I have read the New Testament and am well aware of the fate that awaits me. I have tried so often to break loose from this awful grip of opium that I have now given up in despair.”

“Wang Fu-lin,” I said, “you must not speak in that fashion. There is hope in our Saviour. He can save to the uttermost all who come unto God through Him. Go over to Chuwang and see what Dr Malcolm can do for you.”

“How could I walk such a distance?”

he asked. “It is 45 *li* away, and to save my life I could not walk five *li*.”

“But there is a way,” I urged. “They are sending a cart for me, and you can come along.” (I had a daily increasing fever – later diagnosed as typhoid fever – and a cart from home was being sent for me.)

Wang Fu-lin continued to object: “The doctor would not receive me as a patient without my paying down 1 500 cash, and I have not even five cash to my name.”

Again I turned to Wang Fu-lin, unwilling to give him up, and said: “Don’t mind about the money; I will make that all right with Dr Malcolm. Just come along with me.” He came, and was received into the hospital.

The doctor warned me: “You will have to do your part. The medicine is little more than a bandage. Try as much as possible to keep him from thinking about himself and his misery.”

We had him brought to our house several times a day, giving him tea and cake and showing him pictures of the West and praying with him. On the fifth day, he seemed like a man demented. I arranged for a man to be with him every moment to keep him from climbing over the wall and going up the street to get opium. After the fifth day, the extreme suffering seemed to be eased. By the 15th day, he left us, apparently delivered from all craving.

An opium-user is the last man to suddenly place in a position of trust. We knew the family was in dire straits, and we needed assistance badly in the work of proclaiming the Gospel, but we left Wang Fu-lin alone for almost two years, not daring to use him at the mission without clear guidance.

In October of 1895 I moved my wife and children to Changte. A foreign woman and children had never been seen in that region before. People – young and old, men and women – by thousands flocked there out of curiosity. It was a common thing for us to have our windows banked with faces curiously watching us take our

breakfast, and from then on until sundown we would not be free from crowds.

The question ever present with us was: How could we make the most of this wonderful opportunity to win the people’s friendship and to make known to them the Gospel? The men were received and preached to in the front court, while the women and children went back to the inner court, where my wife and children were.

I had at that time no evangelist to help me, neither had my wife a Bible woman. Besides the strain of reaching these crowds, I had the oversight of building and planting the new mission station.

Sometimes, when feeling unable to stand the strain of preaching any longer, I would receive a note from my wife, begging me to come to her assistance and relieve her by speaking to the women, as her voice had given out.

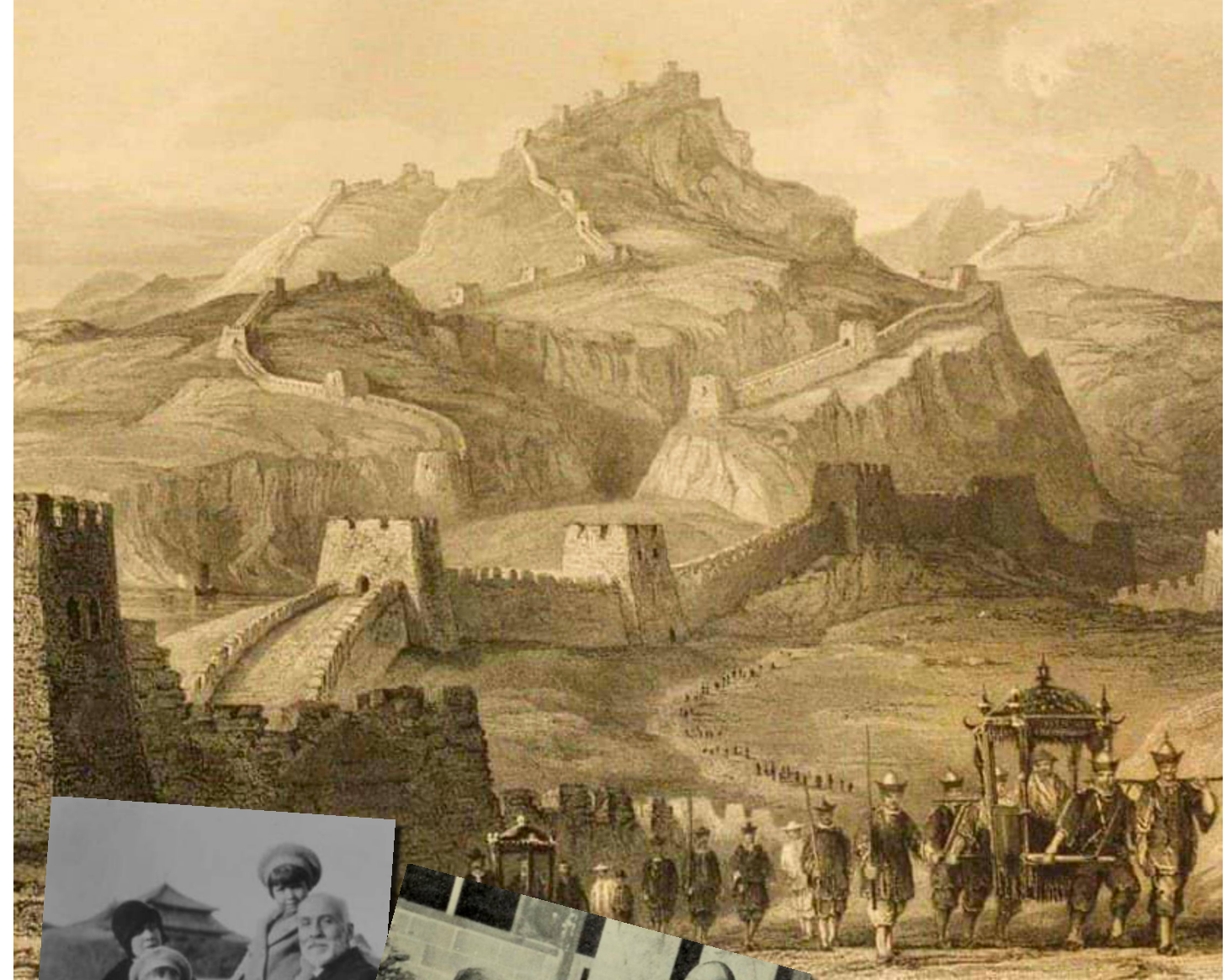
A place of desperation

Two weeks of this brought us both to a place of desperation. One day I went to my wife and, pointing to the words, “My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus,” I asked: “Do we really believe this? If we do, let us kneel down and ask the Lord to send us someone to help us in preaching the Gospel.”

Later Rosalind said that it seemed like asking for rain from a clear sky to expect such help when we had not even one convert in the Changte district. But God answered, and without delay, for the following day Wang Fu-lin started from his home to come to us.

But how unlike he was to our idea of a God-given helper on his reaching our mission gateway. His appearance was exactly that of a professional beggar – toes visible through shoes and socks, his hat torn, and a patched-up gown so stiff with grease that it looked as though it could stand alone.

Truly “the Lord seeth not as man seeth.” But, oh, how glad I was to see him!



At once I said: “Wang Fu-lin, I believe God has sent you to help us at this time. Will you stay and preach for us?” “Of course I’ll stay,” he replied.

It was out of the question that Wang Fu-lin, as he appeared on his arrival, could be put on the platform to face audiences in which were often gentry, official secretaries, and others of the educated class. In those days, I wore Chinese clothes; it was, therefore, an easy thing to have him clothed out in one of my suits. He looked well as I left him preaching in the chapel.

All the old storytelling powers seemed to come back to him. One outstanding characteristic of his preaching was that, in logical order, he would bring one fact after another in cumulative effect until all opposition was broken down.

The Bible stories glowed in living fashion while he held up the characters before his audience. This was especially true of the prodigal son. He knew the story well, for he himself had dwelt in the far country and had fed on husks

with swine.

He told the story with telling power, assuring his hearers at the close that since God had saved him, the chief of sinners, there was hope for everyone.

From the beginning of his ministry with us, converts sprang up everywhere, both in the city and throughout the country. During those days, our chapel was always full and he never tired of telling the story of redeeming grace and exalting his Lord and Saviour.

For three years, the Lord spared him to preach with ever-increasing spiritual power, though with ever-increasing physical weakness. Wang Fu-lin knew his time was short and always spoke as “a dying man to dying men.”

During the few years he was spared to witness to the abounding grace of God, he was the means of winning all his relations to Christ. Wang Fu-lin, the redeemed storyteller, went on proclaiming the story of the Cross until his strength failed and he triumphantly passed into the presence of his Redeemer and King. ☞

The church and the world

by Adolph Saphir (1831–1891)

“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 (Matthew 28:19&20).”

THE church is the representative and the continuation of Christ. “And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world (John 17:11)...” Apart from Christ, the church has no light or life; unless His

presence go with us, we cannot continue our pilgrimage in the wilderness. Christ is with and in the church. In coming down from heaven He never left the Father, and in going up to heaven He never left the church.

As Christ was sent by the Father, so is the church sent by Christ. Jesus was sent to be the Revelation and Representative of the Father, to testify of Him, to declare Him, to do His will, and to finish the work.

He was a true and faithful Witness; He was the perfect Servant, whose meat it

was to do the Father’s will; He declared the name of God, and finished the work. Now Christ sends us into the world that we may show forth His life, that we may be His witnesses, that His light and love may shine, attract, and bless men through us, that men may behold in us Christ, as they beheld the Father in Him.

Dazzled by superficial success

To remember both her duty to, and her danger in, the world is difficult; and experience shows that the church is apt, either to take a narrow view of her mission, and to fail in aggressive courage and breadth of love and sympathy – or to be dazzled by a superficial success, and, conforming herself with this present world, increase her numbers with those who, being dead and unrenewed, are without the Spirit, and therefore without the love of Christ.

In one aspect, the church and the world are a contrast, but not antagonistic. The one is in the sphere of nature; the other is in the sphere of the Spirit. The world is of the first Adam, who (even before the fall) was of the earth, earthy; the church is born of the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, the spiritual Man (1 Corinthians 15:47). Viewed as creation, the world is good, beloved of God, and made for the church.

But the world must be viewed in another light, sad, but equally true. The world lies in the wicked one. Humanity has fallen; we live in an evil world. And what the evil of the world is in which we are, we may easily know by the evil of the world which is in us – selfishness, pride, lust, covetousness, trust in that which is outward, and unbelief in that which is spiritual, seeking our own glory; in short, all manifestations of departure from God.

Against this world the church must continually fight. She must assert the opposition between nature and grace, flesh and spirit, anti-Christ and Christ, Satan and God. She must declare the judgement by which the prince and the spirit of the world are already condemned, and the wrath which is to come on the enemies of God, and must exhort men to separate themselves from the world, to save themselves from this

untoward generation.

Fancying themselves to be members of a mystical body

She must not allow her testimony to be so indistinct, her life and walk so colourless, her discipline so lax, that unrenewed men can fancy themselves to be members of the mystical body of which Christ is the Head.

The wisdom of this world is not able to recognise the truth as it is in Jesus. The world, as our Saviour has foretold, shall hate us.

The more we show forth Christ’s image, the more closely we follow Him, and testify for Him in word and truth, the more shall the enmity and persecution of the world among all nations rest on us – for the world loves its own, and hates what is not of the world, but from above.

Our hope is Christ’s return. We are not expecting days of peace and sunshine, but of storm and tempest; we are not looking forward to times of safety, of godliness and of truth, but to perilous times, in which worldliness and error shall become strong, attractive, and violent.

We expect the days which preceded the Flood and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. We believe God will gather many from among Jews and Gentiles into the church, and bless His testimony to multitudes, before the judgement comes. But our hope is nothing less and nothing else than the Lord Himself, who shall return to take to Himself the kingdom, according to the will of the Father.

If the church wishes to keep herself unspotted from the world, and to grow in grace and heavenly-mindedness, she must enter into the mind of her Lord, who, sent by the Father, came to seek and to save that which is lost, who went about doing good, and declared to all, Pharisee and publicans, the good news of divine love.

She is endangered of her very life

The church who feels no compassion for perishing souls, who is not constrained by the love of Him who died for the guilty, who does not walk in the footsteps of the great Deacon who came to minister unto others, has already become worldly; the spirit of

selfishness and unbelief has already entered into her heart, and is endangering her very life.

She keeps herself pure by going into the world, preaching glad tidings by word and work. When loyal to her heavenly Bridegroom, she keeps herself unspotted from the world and is most skilful and most blessed in gaining souls.

She loves the world most, and is its true benefactor, when most obedient to the apostolic precept, *“Love not the world.”* She cannot influence unless her standpoint is heavenly. When we seek the praise, and yield to the spirit of the world, our light loses its light, our salt its savour.

David fighting with Saul’s armour

David cannot fight with Goliath in Saul’s armour. Our sufficiency is of God; our weapons are spiritual.

He only who has died with Christ, and is risen with Him, can follow the Saviour in His life and walk. The natural, unrenewed man cannot follow Jesus; but when we know the grace of the Saviour, and the power of His Resurrection, we understand the lessons of His life, and having received the Spirit of Christ, we can live and walk as the sons of God. To know Him is to know all things that pertain unto life and godliness.

Christ is all in all, yet every member of the body, every Christian, has an individual life, work, calling, a name of his own, a position and a talent assigned


to him for which he is responsible to the Master. *“Let your light so shine,”* says He who is the Light (Matthew 5:16).

We each possess some features of His character, some gift of His Spirit, some power and influence out of His fullness. Each of us is placed in a position, surrounded by opportunities and endowed with gifts. Each one is individual, peculiar; no one else can do what the Master, the great Householder, has appointed and given him to be and to do.

Let us remember that we are to let our light shine. Let us resemble the blessed Master in His loving wisdom, which directed men to what is easy and simple. Only the eye of faith can see that which is secret, spiritual, and rooted in the heart; but all can see the manifestations of love.

Recognising the influence of God on our lives

It is perfectly true that until the Spirit of God opens their eyes men do not see Jesus; but in one sense they are able to see, to judge, to appreciate; the world is able to see and to understand our good works; they can recognise the influence of God on our lives and conduct.

Accordingly, we find that the Lord Jesus commands us so to let our light shine before men, that they may behold our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven. 

Adolph Saphir was a Hungarian Jew who converted to Christianity, served as a missionary to Jews and later became a pastor.


Who will carry the cross?

by Thomas à Kempis

JESUS has many who love His heavenly kingdom, but few who carry His Cross. He has many who desire consolation, but few who desire tribulation. He finds more to share His table, few His fasting.

All wish to rejoice with Him, few want to bear anything for Him. Many follow Jesus to the breaking of bread, but few to drinking the cup of suffering. Many revere His miracles, few follow the shame of His Cross.

Many love Jesus so long as adversity does not befall them. Many praise and bless Him, so long as they receive some consolations from Him. But if Jesus should hide Himself for a little while, they fall into complaining or deep dejection.

But those who love Jesus for Jesus’ sake, and not for any consolation of their own, bless Him in all tribulation and anguish of heart, just as in the highest consolation. And if it is His will never to give consolation, they would nevertheless always praise Him, and always wish to be grateful. 





THE hour in which we live is fraught with spiritual dangers. The Bible tells us that there will be seducing spirits in these last days (1 Timothy 4:1). They will deceive the very elect if they can (Mark 13:22). Seducing spirits find entrance where there is sin in the life.

We are urged by Scripture to let “no man deceive you (Matthew 24:4; Mark 13:5; Ephesians 5:6; 2 Thessalonians 2:3; 1 John 3:7). And we are cautioned not to deceive ourselves (1 Corinthians 3:18; 1 John 1:8).

It often happens that when God uses a man greatly, Christians begin to admire the individual and to exalt him. This can easily lead to pride in that leader, and pride goes before destruction (Proverbs 16:18). These proud leaders may be led into deception, and the devoted followers fall into the same deception.

Leaders who have large followings but do not live righteous lives are not from God. There must be holy living, and holiness must be preached to the people. God will have a church without spot and without wrinkle

(Ephesians 5:27).

Judgement must begin at the house of the Lord (1 Peter 4:17). The way is narrow (Matthew 7:14). Beware of those who preach an easy, compromising Gospel.

There will be deceivers who will come preaching truth. Then after a following is gained, they will begin to teach doctrines that are not Scriptural. Christians would not follow one who came ministering error. But the unwatchful can be led gradually off into error by one whom they have come to admire. They remember the truths he first taught, and though they do not find what he later teaches in the Scriptures, admiring his person, they accept his teachings regardless.

The life of the minister of righteousness must agree with what he speaks. And what he speaks must agree wholly with Scripture. When there is a mixture, we must beware.

If we live righteously and hold the Word in our hearts and minds, we need not fear, for God will give us of His Spirit to keep us in the Truth. We must judge our own lives and purge

out any sin lest it become a snare to us. “If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged (1 Corinthians 11:31).”

These days are of intensifying temptation. As God moves in His people preparatory to the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ, Satan will intensify his efforts to lead God’s people into deception. Satan will seek to lead God’s people away from holiness and into the flesh-pleasing life.

Temptation need not overcome us. “For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:15&16).”

We need not be those who fall into darkness. We can be among those who finish the course with victory. But we must set our face like a flint now. We must be strong in purpose.

Dangers will beset us on every hand, but God has promised that His grace is sufficient for those who will seek Him for it (2 Corinthians 12:9). 🐟

WATCH & PRAY

By Elizabeth Kendal

CHRISTIAN CRISIS IN AZERBAIJAN AND IRAQ

A Christian crisis looms over Azerbaijan’s remnant indigenous Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh (N-K) and Iraq’s remnant indigenous Assyrians in the Nineveh Plains. The governments of Azerbaijan and Iraq – two US-allied, oil-and gas-rich, Muslim-majority pseudo-democracies – are poised to drive these indigenous Christian peoples off lands they have inhabited for millennia. Some 120 000 Armenian Christians are currently besieged in N-K, which is at ‘breaking point’. Meanwhile, up to 300 000 Assyrian Christians in Northern Iraq are being systematically disenfranchised and dispossessed. The departing Christians will be replaced by colonising Muslims who will quickly erase millennia of Armenian, Assyrian and Christian heritage, as if it never existed. All the while, the post-Christian West turns away, “ashamed” of their suffering. Please pray.

PERSECUTION LOOMS OVER HONG KONG

On May 18&19, for the first time ever, a seminar on “The Sinicisation of Christianity” was held in Hong Kong. The seminar undoubtedly heralds the end of an era for Hong Kong’s Church. Promoted as religion with “Chinese characteristics,” Sinicisation requires religion (Christianity and Islam) to serve the State/CCP. Indeed, the primary obligation of sinicised Christianity is to lead the people to love and obey the CCP. According to the high-level religious officials who spoke at the seminar, sinicised Christianity is “patriotic” Christianity, and true Hong Kong Christian patriots will sinicise their churches. The implication is that anyone who rejects the order to register with and serve the CCP will be branded unpatriotic and treated as a threat to national security – as occurs on the mainland. Persecution looms. Please pray.

PHILIPPINES STILL ‘RED-TAGGING’ MISSIONARIES

When authorities in the Philippines want to silence their critics – be they

journalists, conservationists, human rights activists and advocates, or even Christian missionaries tending to the needs of the vulnerable poor and downtrodden – they will simply “red-tag” them. That is, they will label them as communist recruiters or financiers. People who are “red-tagged” routinely end up disappeared, imprisoned and tortured, or murdered; usually at the hands of security personnel with sweeping powers and guaranteed impunity. Numerous Christian leaders and missionaries – both Protestant and Catholic – have been red-tagged, arrested, and driven into hiding since the May, 2022 elections. President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and VP Sara Duterte appear determined to continue and even accelerate the brutal and unjust policies employed by their fathers. Please pray.

VIETNAM: RELIGIOUS LIBERTY SITUATION CONTINUES TO DETERIORATE

On June 11 some 40 “reactionary subjects” in Vietnam’s Central Highlands launched a rare attack against government institutions. They attacked with guns, knives and petrol bombs leaving a trail of destruction and nine fatalities. In response, the ruling Communist Party of Vietnam has deployed massive military force into Dak Lak. The mostly Christian indigenous hills tribes are fearful the government will exploit the crisis to escalate its ethno-religious persecution across the region. Meanwhile, Vietnam continues to mistreat its many imprisoned pastors and Christian human rights/religious liberty advocates. The health of Protestant Pastor Nguyen Trung Ton (51) continues to deteriorate as authorities continue to withhold medical care. Lutheran Pastor Dinh Diem (60) died in Nghe An Provincial Prison No. 6 on January 5, five years into a 16-year prison sentence. Please pray.

UGANDA: ISLAMIC STATE TERROR ROCKS THE WEST

On Friday evening June 16, the roughly 60 boarding students at Lhubiriha Secondary School in Mpondwe, in Uganda’s Western Region, were singing Gospel songs (as is their custom at the

end of the day) when they came under attack. The five terrorists – presumed to be Islamic State Democratic Republic of Congo (ISDRC) – first targeted the boys’ dormitory. When the boys refused to open the door, the terrorists unleashed a volley of gunfire. They then doused the dormitory with flammable liquid and set it alight. They then moved on to the girls’ dormitory where they attacked the girls with machetes, all the while shouting “Allahu Akbar” (Allah is greater). The dead include 38 students, one guard and two members of the local community. Please pray.

SUDAN: NUBA MOUNTAINS BOMBED

On April 15 conflict erupted in Khartoum between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and its former partner, the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). Fighting quickly spread to Darfur, where genocide is currently underway (with Arab militias killing black Africans), and North Kordofan, where the capital, El Obeid is now besieged – its Cathedral hit by rockets. In recent weeks the conflict also spread to South Kordofan, where the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army-North (Hilu faction: which represents the interests of the predominantly Christian Nuba tribes) is fighting both RSF and SAF forces. On June 12 bombs fell on the Nuba Mountains for the first time since 2016. Hundreds of thousands of war-weary Christians in the jihad-ravaged Nuba Mountains – many of them genocide survivors – are again facing the spectre of war, famine and death. Please pray.

NORTH KOREA: ‘ALL FOR JESUS, EVEN IN DEATH’

At 5 a.m. on Sunday, April 30, five Christians gathered at a farmhouse in Tongam village for a secret time of prayer and worship, as was their custom. This time, however, police were there to arrest them. The believers’ “crime” is that they were worshipping and serving God in a country where the Kim dynasty alone is to be worshipped and obeyed. A local resident told Radio Free Asia: “At the site of the worship service, the police retrieved dozens of Bible booklets and arrested all in attendance.” Please pray.

“I Am...”



Exodus 3:14

I Am the “Way” for the traveller (John 14:6).

I Am the “Truth” if distressed (John 14:6).

I Am the “Life” for the dying (John 14:6).

I Am the “Bread” (John 6:48) and the “Rest” (Hebrews 4:9).

I Am the “Rock” for the fainting (Exodus 17:6).

I Am the “Light” for the groping (John 1:7).

I Am the “Bush” by the way (Exodus 3:2).

I Am the “Lion of Judah” (Revelation 5:5).

I Am the “Branch” (Isaiah 11:1) and the “Vine” (John 15:1).

I Am the “Friend at Midnight” (Luke 11:5).

I Am the “Captain Divine” (Joshua 5:14).

I Am the “Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6).

I Am the “Wonderful One” (Isaiah 9:6).

I Am the “Father Eternal” (Isaiah 9:6).

I Am the “Well Beloved Son” (Matthew 3:17).

I Am the “Coming Bridegroom” (Matthew 25:6).

I Am the “Manna” (Exodus 16:15) and the “Rod” (Exodus 4:2).

I Am the “Corn of Wheat” (John 12:24).

I Am the “Word of God” (John 1:1).

I Am the “Door to the Sheepfold” (John 10:7).

I Am the “Shepherd” there (John 10:11).

I Am the “Morning Star” (Revelation 22:16).

I Am the “Lily” so fair (Song of

Songs 2:1).

I Am the “Rose of Sharon” (Song of Songs 2:1).

I Am the “Fisher of Men” (Mark 1:17).

I Am the “God Almighty” (Revelation 1:8).

I Am the “First” and the “Last” (Revelation 1:11).

“Alpha,” “Omega” am I (Revelation 1:8).

I Am the “King of kings” (Revelation 17:14).

I Am “He who lives on High” (Revelation 21).

I Am the “Lamb of God” (John 1:29).

I Am the “Saviour of Men” (Luke 2:11).

I Am the “Faithful Witness” (Revelation 1:5).

“The Creator” (Colossians 1:16) and the “Amen” (Revelation 3:14)