



Morning Glory

“The Coming of the Lord Draweth Nigh” — James 5:8

EXPERIENCED SALVATION • CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP • SIMPLICITY IN WORSHIP

Hauge Lutheran Innermission Federation • March 2023

New Life Now

Have you ever wondered what life is all about?
Where did you come from?
Why are you here?
Where are you going?
What is your purpose in life?
Have you felt life was many times boring, empty,
lonely like there was something missing?

God, who created you, has a wonderful plan of complete fulfillment of Life. **“I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly.”** (John 10:10)

I. GOD’S PROVISION

“And the witness is this that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.” (I John 5:11,12)

God loves you and the whole human race and has provided for us eternal life. This is the witness: God has given us eternal life. This life is in His Son. Note: Eternal life is in a person, not in Going to church.

- Being religious
- Doing church work
- Saying one’s prayers
- Living by the Golden Rule
- Doing the best you can.

He who has the Son has life, God’s Word has now told us. God gave eternal life in a Person, Jesus, His Son. And the only way to have eternal life is to have Him. Eternal life can be a personal possession now when we have Christ, who is eternal life. It is not Christ near, or around you, but in you.

II. THE SIN BARRIER

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (Rom. 3:23)

Sin is rebellion against God, known or unknown, and also reveals itself in acts and deeds. I Cor. 6:9-10 is descriptive of this condition:

“Do you not know the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God.” **“For the wages of sin is death.”** (Rom, 6:21)

This death is spiritual death, **dead in trespasses and sins**, which means separation from God. (Eph 2:1)

GOD’S LOVE. For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Rom. 5:6,8.

REPENTANCE. Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. Luke 13:3. God has only one remedy for sin, and that is repentance. Repentance means to turn from the ways of sin, to confess and forsake sin. Past sins cannot just be overlooked or forgotten. All known sins, past and present must be confessed to Christ if one is to be forgiven. He that covers his sins shall not prosper; **“But he that confesses and forsakes them shall obtain mercy.”** (Prov. 28: 13)

HOW TO REPENT. At this point it is very helpful to pray a prayer something like this: Lord Jesus, reveal to

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New Life Now	1-3
Shock Proof Christian	3
Who Are the Blessed of God? – The Humble.....	4
Editorial	5-6
Hope for Easter	6
Believable ... Yet Unbelievable.....	7-8
The Sin of Pride	8
Remembering My Beloved Friend	9
Look to Christ and Live	10-11
A Finisher Finishes • The Blessed Way of Life.....	11
Grow in Grace • No Root • Snow	12
The Lost Soul’s Request.....	13
For Whom the Bell Tolls.....	14-15
Life and Death • Dark Times.....	15
Hauge Book Store • A Never Ending Stream.....	16

me right now all the sins you want me to confess to you. This should be followed by a confession to Christ of all the sins that are brought to mind.

“I acknowledged my sin unto thee and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said I will confess my transgression unto the Lord and thou forgives the iniquity of my sin.” (Ps. 32:5) **“If we confess our sins. He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”** (1 John 1:9)

III. CHRIST MUST BE RECEIVED BY FAITH

“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name: who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” (John 1:12-13)

Christ, who is Eternal life, must be received before He is possessed. Believing in Christ must be receiving. A believing which is only historical or mental is dead faith. A believing which receives is a Living faith. Receiving Christ then becomes a definite personal act.

BY PERSONAL SURRENDER Our body has been likened to a temple or house. Jesus says, **“Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears My voice and opens the door. I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me.”** (Rev. 3:20) As we do in in-

viting a friend into our home, Christ must be told He can have complete possession of our heart and life, by a surrender to Him. He then comes into our lives and indwells us through the Holy Spirit.

BY WORD OF MOUTH. “If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved, for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. For whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.” (Rom 10: 9,10,13)

To receive Christ and His forgiveness right now, the following prayer can be used: Lord Jesus, I come to you, a lost sinner. I confess that I cannot save myself, but I believe you are the living Savior who can save me. Come into my heart right now. Cleanse me from all my sins, and save me. I surrender my heart and life to you. I want to live for you, and I receive you as my Savior and Lord. Now give me the assurance of the Holy Spirit that I belong to you. Amen.

IV. HOW TO BELIEVE

Every Scripture verse that pertains to salvation has in it a condition and a promise. We must meet the condition by the act of fulfilling what it requires of us. Then God fulfills his part by giving what He has promised. This, in reality, is the same as Christ telling it to us. Having met all conditions in preceding verses by the act of doing it, my experience should be: I have confessed in true repentance all known sin.

God’s Word says I am forgiven.

I have received Jesus into my heart. God’s Word says He gives me the right to be a child of God.

I have surrendered my heart to Christ by inviting him in. He said He would come in.

I have eternal life because I have the Son.

I am saved because I have confessed Him with my mouth as my only Savior. God’s Word says if I confess Him as Lord with my mouth, I am saved.

A DAILY PRAYER. Thank you Jesus, for saving me. Thank you for coming into my heart and life. Now live in me today, and with the power of the Holy Spirit make me what you want me to be. Amen

HOW TO LIVE A SUCCESSFUL CHRISTIAN LIFE

Daily read God’s Word for spiritual nourishment. Begin with I John, or the Gospel of John.

Be honest with sin. Do not compromise. If you sin, confess it immediately and ask Christ to give you power not to do it again.

Trust in the power of the Holy Spirit to guide and

control your life.

Share Christ with others through personal witness.

Evangelist Nels Pedersen

Lutheran Evangelistic Movement

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Shock – Proof Christians

Modern man, like the modern watch, has developed a shock-proof reaction to the impact of life! Surrounded and bombarded by evil many people *gradually* lose their sensitivity to sin.

In order to be socially acceptable, even Christians learn to “get along,” to *remain silent* to stay out of trouble. So, the big lie goes unchallenged. The dirty joke is tolerated! Pornographic literature — both the classical and the barnyard variety — gains endorsement. Low language becomes popular in high places. Immorality graduates from secret practice to public-lifestyle.

The majority of Christians avoid evil but do not oppose it! Most Christians love the good but do not fight for it! The church militant often appears to be the church muzzled! The Christian-life is often presented as a refuge for the weak rather than an army for the strong.

In his response to the world, the Christian has three options: **1.** To conform to it; **2.** To flee from it; or **3.** To stand against it in judgment and love.

To conform to the world is spiritual suicide. The worldly spirit is the self-declared enemy of GRACE! The wine of worldliness is not a valid substitute for the milk of spirituality!

To flee from the world is to ignore the Christian obligation of making new disciples! **JESUS** labeled Christians as “*the salt of the earth*.” To effectively “salt the earth.” The *Christian* must be poured into the stream of life! If all Christians fled from society, they would form one gigantic salt pile. But no one is attracted to a pile of salt.

To stand against the world in judgment and love is the biblical approach to life. The Christian confronts the world with a Christ-centered view of life which continually challenges sinful behavior! He also presents to the world a God-sustained love which continually reminds sinners of redemptive possibilities in Christ!

Shock-proof watches symbolize mechanical progress — but shock-proof Christians indicates spiritual decline!!!

By Donald S. Metz

Who are the blessed of God?

The humble

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. 5:3)

Who are those who are the blessed of God? They are those who recognize that they are poor in spirit, or spiritually bankrupt. They are totally dependent on God’s grace; they are the ones who can say, “Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to the cross I cling.”

Let me ask you a question. Where does God Dwell? We talk about God being Omni-present, that He is everywhere. But how do we understand that? We know that God is here with us. The Bible says we can’t get away from Him; we can’t hide from Him, that no matter where we go, he is there. But yet, God tells us that he dwells specifically in three places. Listen to what God says, as recorded by the prophet Isaiah. **For thus says the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: “I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite.”** (Isa 57:15)

God inhabits eternity. Meditate on that for a while. God does more than just inhabit a holy place, Heaven, He inhabits eternity. He says, **I dwell in the high and holy place**, and there is someplace else he dwells. God says; **And also with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit**. Blessed are the poor in spirit because it is there that God can find a dwelling place.

Again being poor in spirit is not salvation, but it is a prerequisite, if one remains proud and arrogant and thinks they are good enough to please God on their own virtues, that person will remain far from the grace of God. But if a person sees his lost condition, and sees the utter folly of trying to please God in his own strength, and sees that he is spiritually a pauper, that person is then in an awakened state and God is able to bring salvation into that life.

And of course the redeemed remain in that state of contrition and humility, and live in that state of complete dependency on the Spirit of God for as long as they live. That’s true, isn’t it, brothers and sisters? I’ve been walking with the Lord now going on 52 years, and that hasn’t changed. I still see myself as poor in spirit. Oh, there have been times when I’ve started to think that maybe I was somebody, but it usually didn’t take long for me to fall off my ivory tower and come to reality. God has a way of jolting you back to reality.

If God says the ones who are blessed are the ones who are spiritually bankrupt, what does the world say? The world says blessed are the rich, the proud, the self righteous, and the self-reliant. Blessed are those who pull themselves up by their own bootstraps. Blessed are those who help themselves.

Have you ever had anybody try to tell you that God helps them that help themselves? That is not biblical. No, the message of the Bible is, God helps those who are poor in spirit; He dwells with those who are of humble and contrite hearts.

Blessed are the poor in Spirit, are you among the blessed of God? Do you see yourself in truth today? If you do, praise the Lord, that’s evidence that you are to be counted as one of the redeemed. If you don’t see yourself in this first beatitude, that’s good too, because the recognition that you have fallen short of God’s righteousness is the starting point of finding God’s mercy for your life. If this is where you are, then you are ready for the next step, and that’s to go to the cross and see Jesus, the one who was wounded for your transgressions, and bruised for your iniquities; then fall on your face like Thomas and proclaim, my Lord and my God. And if your heart is humble and contrite, you’ll know it, you’ll be changed.

The night I received Jesus as Lord and Savior, I was all alone, it was late at night in my bedroom, nobody saw me, nobody knew. I got down on my knees by my bed and I gave up, I quit running, I asked Jesus to come into my life and save me. What I did the next morning I would not recommend to any new Christian, I didn’t tell anyone. You need to make a public profession and I eventually did. But the next morning I didn’t tell anyone. Nobody knew, I could have just shrugged off what had happened the night before and kept living the way I was living. I didn’t tell anybody, nobody knew, except me and God. It was just some words, it was just a prayer, hardly anything of any consequence. But do you know what? I was different, I knew I was different, the night before I was lost and headed for hell, that next morning I was redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb and I knew it. I was a new person and because of my words and my changed behavior it wasn’t long before everyone knew it.

That’s the miracle of regeneration my friends, that’s the God of Heaven coming to a humble and contrite heart and dwelling there.

Wayne Almlie

Editorial

RES

There is HOPE!

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! Let your forbearing spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.”
(Philippians 4:4-6)

Most gifts we receive are temporary. Though we are excited when we receive them, they soon lose their luster and usefulness. In stark contrast to such worldly **gifts**, there is one gift which will never fade or lose its value. This greatest gift of all is the wondrous Eternal Life through our Lord Jesus Christ! JESUS/GOD is always on time, never too early nor tardy, but EXACTLY on time! He is PERFECTLY on time, the Christmas Gift and the same is true with Advent, etc. May this gift be yours as you rejoice in “Even so.”
“Even so when we children were in bondage under the elements of the world. But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman; born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!” Therefore, you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. But then, indeed, when you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods. But now after you have known God, how is it that you turn again ...” (Galatians 4:3-9)

By nature we are dead towards GOD and are actually *anti-god!* (Rebellion, is hate towards GOD: we not only rebel, but we rebel against GOD). We are born as attorneys towards God; defending our “old-nature”. Not a pretty picture of our old nature which we are born in! (From birth we are liars, also).

There is HOPE!

As a concerned believer, we know a darkness has fallen as economic woes rise, politics remain contentious and Freedom in the great USA is threatened. In this sinful world Evil seems to be winning the war for hearts and minds in a culture where morality is subjective, and Christianity is being maligned and Satan is working overtime to destroy the traditional, and especially the Christian home! The traditional family which the USA was built upon, is being ripped-apart

but GOD intends that a family should be one-male and one-female until death separates them! GOD’S order of one man and one woman are now in the minority in our USA, percentage-wise! We are experiencing a searing of the national conscience over issues such as abortion, religious freedom, socialism, patriotism, marriage, gender identity, and so much more! Don’t kid-yourself as the ‘battle’ is REAL! **But**, Romans 12:12 is still in God’s Holy Book, the BIBLE, and HIS WORD is forever settled in Heaven!

The Battle is Real!

&

“ We shall BEHOLD him”!

The word ‘Behold’ in Scripture is like the Octagon at a stop sign. Whenever you find ‘But’, especially at the beginning of a Bible verse, it does mean ‘stop, look & listen’! GOD has something that HE wants us to pay ATTENTION to!

“REJOICING IN HOPE, PATIENT IN TRIBULATION, CONTINUING STEADFAST IN PRAYER”

The Wings of Hope

Hope gives us wings to rise above life’s disappointments too! *The Blue sky is always waiting just beyond the clouds!*

“Overheard in an Orchard

***Said the Robin to the Sparrow,
“I should really like to know***

***Why these anxious human beings
rush about and worry so.”***

***Said the Sparrow to the Robin;
“Friend, I think that it must be***

***That they have No Heavenly Father
such as cares for you & me.”*** — Elizabeth Cheney

It is our privilege and joy to pray for you also during this wonderful season of LENT.

BEHOLD the LAMB of GOD, who died for each one of us and the whole world that our sins could be taken away; through His Shed Blood on CALVARY! The ground at the foot of CALVARY is level!

Indeed it is my privilege to write to you, Behold the LAMB that taketh away your repentant confessed sins, through HIS Shed Blood on Calvary to be remembered no more/forever!

Now with Spring just around the corner, our schedules seem to be fuller; but may I ask you to pour yourself a hot cup of tea or coffee or hot chocolate to behold the SAVIOR!

Behold is not a word we often use and when we do, we usually think of it as a quick glance or a casual glance. BUT in the Bible, it is calling its readers to watch intensely, look deeply, and observe carefully the person or subject as it is about to reveal something of great importance!

For example: in the Old Testament, when the prophet Isaiah foretold the birth of the coming Messiah he wrote: “Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel (God with us)” (Isaiah 7:14) “But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying ...” (Matthew 1:20 & 1:23) In Isaiah 7:14 as the prophet foretold the birth (Incarnation). Isaiah was saying, “watch intensely” for the unique and miraculous sign God will authenticate the future birth of His Son (actually the word ‘unique’ means one

and only one of its’ kind!)

Approx. 700 years later, an angel announced to Mary that she would give birth to the Son of God, and he said: “**Behold** (look deeply) *with anticipation and wonder at what God is going to do through you, Mary!*” (Luke 1:31-32)

AND when the Shepherds were in their fields keeping watch over their flocks by night, the angel said unto them, “Fear not, for BEHOLD I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.” (Luke 2:10-11)

Beloved reader of the *Morning Glory*, are you taking time to “Behold JESUS’ in the midst of all the busyness and flurry of the Spring-Season, which is just around the corner? Are you ‘beholding’ deeply the meaning of the Lenten-Season? Are you looking deeply at the beauty and wonder of His miraculous virgin birth? Are you keeping your eyes fixed on HIM AS YOUR SOURCE AND HOPE and strength for the coming days, etc.?

A glorious day is coming when JESUS CHRIST will return triumphantly! AND in that day, May you be ready and clothed in JESUS’ ROBE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS as a Bride-groom looks upon His Bride to be!!

BEHOLD JESUS Today!

Hope for Easter

May you and yours experience a very blessed Easter Season.

This is a desire and prayer from all the members of the Board of the Hauge Lutheran Innermission and each one wants the best for you!

Also, please keep in mind/heart that this Christian movement is not a Synod, no membership required and stands as a Free biblically Faith Lutheran movement!

In sharing this biblical hope; are you willing/able to share a little more now during This LENTEN SEASON?

TOGETHER

Together, we share the biblical hope of JESUS as we proclaim the Law and the Gospel and stand for free-

dom against the radical, totalitarian Left – reaching across the great USA and beyond!

And of course, lift up the Name of Jesus in our culture with the power of the Law & Gospel of God’s Holy Word; according to His Book, the BIBLE!

Most certainly to unify, guide and heal our Nation!

Our hope is in JESUS and we are committed to seeking to expand our out-reach in the days to come, as we continue proclaiming the glorious Gospel through the Morning Glory, Evangelistic Meetings, Hauge Lutheran Bible Conferences, and Hauge Bookstore.

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.” (Romans 15:13)

Believable ... Yet Unbelievable

Christian Singer Amy Grant to Host Niece's Same-Sex Wedding

Amy Grant, the Queen of Christian pop who crossed over to the mainstream with several hit songs, recently announced she is hosting the same-sex marriage of her niece.

The Grammy winner, 2022 Kennedy Center Honor recipient, and the first Christian artist to have an album go platinum described her progressive views to The Washington Post: "Jesus, you just narrowed it down to two things: love God and love each other. I mean, hey, that's pretty simple." Grant also detailed her reaction when her niece first came out: What a gift to our whole family to just widen the experience of our whole family.

Grant, in 2013, told Pride Source, "I know that the religious community has not been very welcoming [to LGBTQ+ people], but I just want to stress that the journey of faith brings us into community, but it's really about one relationship. The journey of faith is just being willing and open to have a relationship with God. And everybody is welcome. Everybody."

And in 2021, Grant was more outspoken, saying in an interview on Proud Radio, "Who loves us more than the one who made us? ... None of us are a surprise to God. Nothing about who we are or what we've done. That's why, to me, it's so important to set a welcome table. Because I was invited to a table where someone said, 'Don't be afraid, you're loved.' ... Gay. Straight. It does not matter."

Grant told The Washington Post that the wedding, which will be hosted at the farm she shares with husband Vince Gill, will be the family's first "bride and bride" nuptials.

JD Gill, *Advocate.com* on 12/26/22

Biden signs law to 'strike a blow against hate'

President Joe Biden signed the Respect for Marriage Act on Tuesday

A celebratory crowd of thousands bundled up on a chilly Tuesday afternoon to watch President Joe Biden sign gay marriage legislation into law, a joyful ceremony that was tempered by the backdrop of an ongoing conservative backlash.

"This law and the love it defends strike a blow against hate in all its forms," Biden said on the South Lawn,

"That's why this law matters to every single American."

Lawmakers from both parties attended Tuesday's ceremony, reflecting the growing acceptance of same-sex unions, once among the country's most contentious issues.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi told the crowd that "inside maneuvering only takes us so far," and she thanked activists adding impetus with "your impatience, your persistence and your patriotism."

Despite Tuesday's excitement, there was concern about the nationwide proliferation of conservative policies on gender issues at the state level. Biden criticized the "callous, cynical laws introduced in the states targeting transgender children, terrifying families and criminalizing doctors who give children the care they need."

"Racism, antisemitism, homophobia, transphobia, they're all connected. But the antidote to hate is love," he said.

The new law is intended to safeguard same-sex marriages if the U.S. Supreme Court ever reverses *Obergefell v. Hodges*, its 2015 decision legalizing same-sex unions nationwide.

Dictionary adds trans women

The Cambridge Dictionary recently updated its definitions for "woman" and "man" to include transgender people, becoming the latest dictionary to formally expand what it means to be a woman.

A Cambridge Dictionary spokeswoman said Tuesday that its editors "made this addition to the entry for 'woman' in October," but the change only gained attention this week after Britain's Telegraph newspaper first reported the news.

In the Cambridge entry for "woman," the longtime definition for the word - "adult female human being" - is still there and "remains unchanged," spokeswoman Sophie White said. But an additional definition of the word appears below:

"An adult who lives and identifies as female though they may have been said to have a different sex at birth," it reads.

Additional updates were also made to the entry for "man."

WASHINGTON POST By CHRIS MEGERIAN

The two above articles were taken from the *Star Tribune*, Dec. 14, 2022

Small town enlisted in abortion fight

Prinsburg, Minn., pop. 500, considers allowing residents to sue providers of procedure and pills.

Minnesota's newest abortion battleground might be a town of 500 people on the western prairie.

The Kandiyohi County city of Prinsburg is considering an ordinance that would allow residents to file civil lawsuits against abortion providers. Though the town doesn't have an abortion clinic, the proposed law also would allow lawsuits against companies that provide abortion drugs by mail.

It's the first step in a campaign that organizers hope will spread across the state, especially in conservative rural areas. Tim Miller, a Prinsburg Republican who currently represents the area in the Legislature, said he's stepping down from office to devote himself to spreading the idea.

"This is not just an impulse," Miller said. "This is in God's timing. We need to start somewhere [and] we will be working to pass ordinances in other communities."

The proposed ordinance had its first public hearing at a City Council meeting last week. It's based on a Texas law passed last year that allows private citizens to sue anyone who "aids or abets" an abortion after six weeks of pregnancy – a time before many women know they're pregnant.

... The intent of the proposed law isn't to penalize a woman who has an abortion, Miller said, but to stop "the animals who tell her that's OK and profit from it."

Taken from the *Star Tribune*, Nov. 23, 2022

Small town backs away from abortion fight after being threatened

Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison told an editorial writer last week that the Prinsburg city attorney had contacted his office, "and we have every reason to believe the city attorney will review carefully and follow the laws of the state of Minnesota."

Writing to Prinsburg Mayor Roger Ahrenholz, who has already expressed support for Miller's proposal, Ellison advised that "Any municipal ordinance which limits the fundamental rights of pregnant Minnesotans to receive an abortion is unconstitutional" and that the state has extensive laws regulating the practices of medicine, nursing and pharmacology. No city in Minnesota has the power to restrict the right to abortion or enact conflicting regulations on health care providers," Ellison wrote.

In a statement posted to the city's website on Friday, city leaders said, "In reaching its decision, the council

took into account the position of the Minnesota Attorney General and its City Attorney stating that provisions described in the ordinance are unconstitutional and are not within the legal authority of the city to enact. The council plans no further discussion or comment regarding the proposed ordinance."

Taken from the *Star Tribune*, Dec. 5, 2022

The Sin of Pride

"I hate pride and arrogance!" (Proverbs 8:13)

A vile, creeping, insinuating thing, which will twist itself like a serpent into our hearts! There is nothing into which the heart of man so easily falls, as PRIDE; and there is no vice which is more frequently and more emphatically condemned in Scripture!

Pride is a groundless thing. It stands on bubbles, which soon must burst beneath its feet! We have reasons for almost everything—but we have no reasons for pride. Pride is a thing which should be unnatural to us, for we have nothing to be proud of!

Pride is a foolish thing, for it brings no profit with it. There is no wisdom in a self-exaltation. Other vices have some excuse, for men seem to gain by them. Avarice, pleasure, lust—have some plea. But the man who is proud, sells his soul cheaply! For one puff of empty wind, one word of sweet applause, the soul is gone!

Pride wins no crown. Men never honor it, not even the menial slaves of earth; for all men look down on the proud man, and think him less than themselves.

Pride is the maddest thing that can exist.

It feeds upon its own vitals. It will take away its own life.

It saps and undermines its own house, that it may build its pinnacles a little higher—and then the whole structure tumbles down! Nothing proves men so mad, as pride.

Pride is a protean thing.

It changes its shape and forms.

You may find it in any fashion you may choose.

You may see it in the beggar's rags—as well as in the rich man's garments.

It dwells with the rich, and with the poor.

The man without a shoe for his foot, may be as proud as if he were riding in a fine chariot! Pride is found in every rank of society, among all classes of men.

Pride can profess any form of religion. It attends all kinds of chapels and churches. Go where you will, you will see pride. It comes with us, to the house of God. It goes with us, to our houses. It is found on the mart and the exchange, in the streets, and everywhere!

Pride has ten thousand shapes! It is not always that stiff and starched gentleman whom you picture. It is a vile, creeping, insinuating thing, which will twist itself like a serpent into our hearts! It will talk of humility, and prate about being dust and ashes. I have known men talk about their corruption most marvelously, pretending to be all humility—while at the same time they were the proudest wretches that could be found this side Hell!

O my friends! you cannot tell how many shapes pride will assume. Look sharply about you, or you will be deceived by it; and when you think you are entertaining angels, you will find you have been receiving devils unawares!

The true throne of pride is the heart of man. If we desire, by God's grace, to put down pride—the only way is to begin with the heart. Let us seek that He would purify our hearts from pride—and then assuredly, our life also shall be humble.

Make the tree good, and then the fruit shall be good.

Make the fountain pure, and the stream shall be sweet.

Charles Spurgeon, *Words of Wisdom*,
taken from GraceGems.org

Remembering My Beloved Friend

By Antoinette Frank

“A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born in adversity.” (Proverbs 17:17)

My friend Lynelda was a radiant soul and an unsung saint who, through compassion and prayer, brought increase into my life when I was on a rapid downward spiral toward utter despair. Lynelda and I were both Police Officers fallen from grace — incarcerated into the Parish Prison, facing our own individual version of a dire predicament — when GOD-inspired friendship was wonderfully inaugurated. While in society, I had met Lynelda only on a single occasion, which happened to be on a professional level.

Lynelda and I were cellmates for nearly a year, during my stay at the Parish Prison 22 years ago! Through the commonality of our incarceration and former occupation, a unique fellowship emerged between us and by God's Grace, flourished. By the time Lynelda had been handed down a ten-year prison term, she had already

firmly rededicated her life to Christ Jesus, our Lord. I, on the hand, who was waiting trial at the time, was still spiritually lost and inwardly wounded! BUT our GOD is an awesome GOD Who lovingly declares, **“I will seek that which is lost ...”** Ezekiel 34:16.

Through her admirable faith (living faith no-less) Lynelda yielded to the call of Almighty GOD, and was the flesh and blood seed that “blossomed where she was planted.” She enthusiastically nestled me at her knee and shared the WORD of GOD with me, day after day, until I was a budding disciple of Christ with a sense of purpose, in spite of my circumstances.

In the throes of her own personal disappointments and sorrows, Lynelda took the time to minister to me. She brought me into a loop where I fell in love with God; and for the first time in my life, I felt truly alive. In godly love, Lynelda and I just like the first century Christians with one another shared our spiritual testimonies — how God revealed HIMSELF to us; and we also shared our meager prison possessions, as an expression of our faith. (Romans 10:9-10). I've heard it said; “By sharing with a friend, we divide our grief in half but we double our joy.” (Scripture says ‘we are to bear one another's burdens, BUT how ‘we’ do that when often a response says; (*Oh, I can handle this myself, etc.*)

After serving close to five years of her prison term, Lynelda stepped courageously back into society and continued to win souls for the Kingdom of GOD. In 2005, God summoned her Home to Eternal Paradise to rest in the bosom of our Lord and Redeemer! When I remember my beloved friend, among many beautiful things, I am reminded of one author who wrote: “Not the way of ease, earthly honor worldly conformity are the followers of the Master found.” Even in the worst of times, Lynelda exhibited the core elementals of Christianity — patience, kindness, forgiveness, faithfulness, gentleness, inner peace, self-control, and inextinguishable joy. By the wisdom of the indwelling Holy Spirit, she understood that **“Our light and momentary troubles are achieving us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.”** (II Corinthians 4:17).

Lynelda was humble and meek. She touched me in a phenomenal way. She never judged me negatively — not even after the Court handed down to me a death sentence. She loved me sincerely and motherly — unconditionally! I once read, Love stands by. When there is nothing more that we can do for a person we love, than be there while they struggle, that is more than enough!” That's what Lynelda did for me — she stood by me!

Hope For Your Heart

Look To Christ And Live

Charles Spurgeon's Conversion

by Vance Christie

Charles Spurgeon was one of the most prominent preachers and powerful heralds of the Christian Gospel in the history of the Church. The account of Spurgeon's own conversion is both fascinating and instructive.

From the time he was just a child Charles Spurgeon was heavily burdened by an awareness of his own sinfulness. Throughout several boyhood years he was constantly conscious that in both thoughts and actions he was unable to fulfill the requirements of God's holy laws. Though he knew Christ had died for the sins of human beings, he saw no application of that truth to himself. He tried to pray, but the only complete request he could utter was, "God be merciful to me, a sinner!"

Though he had never uttered a blasphemy, all manner of cursing God and man began to fill his mind. Then followed severe temptations to deny the very existence of God as well as efforts to convince himself he was an atheist. When all such futile thinking failed, he told himself that he must feel or do something to merit salvation. He wished he might have his back scourged or that he could undergo some difficult pilgrimage to that end.

In 1849, at age fifteen, he entered a school in the town of Newmarket in Essex County, England, as both a student and a part-time teacher. In Newmarket he attended services at one church after another, hoping he might hear something that would help remove his spiritual burden. He later related that, while he heard pastors preach on a variety of themes, they did not address his basic spiritual question and need. "What I wanted to know was, 'How can I get my sins forgiven?', and they never told me that."

That December an outbreak of fever temporarily closed the Newmarket school, and Spurgeon returned home to Colchester for the Christmas season. One Sunday morning early in January he was making his way to one church when a fierce snow storm led him, instead, to enter the Primitive Methodist Chapel located closer to his home. Only about a dozen people were there that morning, and he took a seat near the back, under the gallery.

The regular minister had not been able to make it due to the storm. So when it was time for the sermon a thin man whom Spurgeon supposed to be a shoemaker or a tailor went up to the pulpit. He announced and read the Scripture text for his impromptu sermon, Isaiah 45:22: "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." The man obviously had little formal education,

and he mispronounced some of his words. But that did not matter to Spurgeon, for upon hearing the Bible verse he thought it contained a glimmer of hope for him.

The lay preacher began to deliver a homespun discourse in his broad Essex dialect: "This is a very simple text indeed. It says, 'Look.' Now lookin' don't take a deal of pain. It ain't liftin' your foot or your finger; it is just 'Look.' Well, a man needn't go to college to learn to look. You may be the biggest fool, and yet you can look. A man needn't be worth a thousand pounds a year to look. Anyone can look; even a child can look.

"But then the text says, 'Look unto Me.' Ay! many on ye are lookin' to yourselves, but it's no use lookin' there. You'll never find any comfort in yourselves. Some say look to God the Father. No, look to Him by-and-by. Jesus Christ says, "Look unto Me." Some on ye say, "We must wait for the Spirit's workin.'" You have no business with that just now. Look to Christ. The text says, 'Look unto Me.'"

Assuming the perspective of Jesus, the preacher continued: "Look unto Me; I am sweatin' great drops of blood. Look unto Me; I am hangin' on the cross. Look unto Me, I am dead and buried. Look unto Me; I rise again. Look unto Me; I ascend to Heaven. Look unto Me; I am sitting at the Father's right hand. O poor sinner, look unto Me! Look unto Me!"

After he had spoken for about ten minutes, the layman apparently reached the end of his tether. Then, fixing his eyes on Spurgeon, he startled him by saying, "Young man, you look very miserable. And you will always be miserable—miserable in life and miserable in death—if you don't obey my text. But if you obey now, this moment, you will be saved." Then raising his hands, he literally shouted: "Young man, look to Jesus Christ. Look! Look! Look! You have nothing to do but look and live!"

Far from taking offense at being singled out, Spurgeon at once saw the way of salvation. He hardly noticed anything the lay exhorter said after that, so taken was he with that one thought: "I had been waiting to do fifty things, but when I heard that word—'Look!'—what a charming word it seemed to me. ... There and then the cloud was gone, the darkness had rolled away, and that moment I saw the sun. And I could have risen that instant, and sung with the most enthusiastic of them, of the precious blood of Christ, and the simple faith which looks alone to Him. Oh, that somebody had told me this before, 'Trust Christ, and you shall be saved.'"

When Spurgeon arrived back home early that afternoon, his family immediately noticed the dramatic change that had come over him. His despair was gone, and he was overflowing with joy. "Something wonderful

has happened to you!” they exclaimed. And he was only too eager to tell them all about it. “Oh! there was joy in the household that day,” he afterward reported, “when all heard that the eldest son had found the Savior and knew himself to be forgiven.”

vancechristie.com

A Finisher Finishes

A business manager who was responsible for hiring and firing personnel said, “I am more interested in what a person has finished than in what he has started. I want a finisher.”

Our Nation is full of persons who start well but fail to finish! This has produced a spirit of quitting that is spreading in our Country. It fills the ranks of the young and old; it exists in every job market; the unemployment lines are filled with its practitioners; school-drop-outs stand on almost every corner; church programs are short lived; marriages and homes break up; and half-finished houses, paintings, music, lessons, books and a host of other things testify to the no-finisher spirit in our midst.

It may come as surprise to some persons to learn that being a finisher is a biblical principle. Thousands of years ago the wise man said, **“Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof”** Ecclesiastes 7:8.

Jesus said, **“No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God”** Luke 9:62.

From the isle of Patmos, John wrote, **“Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life”** Revelation 2:10.

The Apostle Paul told the Ephesians to take on the whole armor, **“and having done all, to stand”** Ephesians 6:13.

The Galatians were challenged on this point when Paul asked, **“Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?”** Galatians 5:7.

JESUS not only told His disciples to finish what they had started, He set the example in HIS own life! HE finished the work the Father sent Him to do (John 17:4); on the Cross HE said **“It is Finished”** John 19:30.

Toward the end of his life the apostle Paul said, **“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.”** (II Timothy 4:7)

Christ and His Word place within the heart of man the desire to be a finisher!

J. J. Turner, Pulpit Helps

The Blessed Way of Life

“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.” (Psalm 1:1)

TWO characteristics must be found in every one whom the LORD calls blessed. First, the negative. He must not walk in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful. He must flee all evil!

Second, the positive. He must have his delight in the Law of the LORD! It must be the desire of his heart to live according to the will of God, as he finds it recorded in God’s Word. The BIBLE, with its exhortation and comfort, its instruction and power, its Law and Gospel, is the delight of the blessed. His greatest satisfaction is to please GOD by his life.

These will be rich and good for everyone who will live according to these rules: Flee from all evil and have your delight in the Law of the LORD. Such a person is called “blessed.”

“And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither.” (Psalm 1:3).

The ungodly are likened to chaff — which is light and worthless and driven away by the wind (v. 4). The God-fearing is like a tree planted in rich soil by running waters. Its leaves do not wither, and fruit comes in its season. Such is the man whose delight in the Law of the Lord. God’s Word is the soil wherein we must be planted, like the tree, and from which we must draw strength.

It is a sad sight to see people who are spiritually withered. Their life in God sickens. There is no strength or health or life in them. And there is no fruit to be seen. God deliver us from withering! Live this year by the River of God! Draw strength from the Word every day and you shall be like a tree whose leaves do not wither and whose fruit appears in its season.

Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper (Psalm 1:3).

This glorious promise does not apply to everybody and everything without exception! The LORD will not bless evil counsels, or further what is against HIS will. Nor will HE give success to His children’s plans when they would in reality harm them.

The words are spoken of those who have their delight in the Law of the Lord (v.2), and who have made the will of God rule in life. Of them it is said: “Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.” What a glorious promise!

A wonderful blessing rests upon the child of God! The Lord promises to give success to his work, his plans, and his purposes. God is with him. Therefore, it is well with him. **“Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.”**

Streams of Gladness, by Fredrik Wisloff

Grow in Grace

“Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” — 2 Peter iii, 18

“GROW in grace” – not in one grace only, but in *all* grace. Grow in that root-grace, *faith*. Believe the promises more firmly than you have done. Let faith increase in fullness, constancy, simplicity. Grow also in *love*. Ask that your love may become extended, more intense, more practical, influencing every thought, word, and deed. Grow likewise in *humility*. Seek to lie very low, and know more of your own nothingness. As you grow *downward* in humility, seek also to grow *upward*—having nearer approaches to God in prayer and more intimate fellowship with Jesus. May God the Holy Spirit enable you to “*grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior.*”

He who grows not in the knowledge of Jesus, refuses to be blessed. To know Him is “life eternal,” and to advance in the knowledge of Him is to increase in happiness. He who does not long to know more of Christ, knows nothing of Him yet. Whoever hath sipped this wine will thirst for more, for although Christ doth satisfy, yet it is such a satisfaction, that the appetite is not cloyed, but whetted. If you know the love of Jesus – as the hart panteth for the water-brooks, so will you pant after deeper draughts of His love. If you do not desire to know Him better, then you love Him not, for Love always cries, “Nearer, nearer.” Absence from Christ is hell; but the presence of Jesus is heaven. Rest not then content without an increasing acquaintance with Jesus. Seek to know more of Him in His divine nature, in His human relationship, in His finished work, in His death, in His resurrection, in His present glorious intercession, and in His future royal advent. Abide hard by the Cross, and search the mystery of His wounds. An increase of love to Jesus, and a more perfect apprehension of His love to us, is one of the best tests of growth in grace.

No Root

“These have no root.” – Luke viii. 13

MY soul, examine thyself this morning by the light of this text. Thou hast received the word with joy; thy feelings have been stirred and a lively impression has been made; but, remember that to receive the word in the ear is one thing, and to receive Jesus into thy very soul is quite another; superficial feeling is often joined to inward hardness of heart, and a lively impression of the word is not always a lasting one. In the parable, the seed in one case fell upon ground having a rocky bot-

tom, covered over with a thin layer of earth; when the seed began to take root, its downward growth was hindered by the hard stone, and therefore it spent its strength in pushing its green shoot aloft as high as it could, but having no inward moisture derived from root nourishment, it withered away. Is this my case? Have I been making a fair show in the flesh without having a corresponding inner life? Good growth takes place upwards and downwards at the same time. Am I rooted in sincere fidelity and love to Jesus?

If my heart remains unsoftened and unfertilized by grace, the good seed may germinate for a season, but it must ultimately wither, for it cannot flourish on a rocky, unbroken, unsanctified heart. Let me dread a godliness as rapid in growth and as wanting in endurance as Jonah’s gourd; let me count the cost of being a follower of Jesus, above all let me feel the energy of His Holy Spirit, and then I shall possess an abiding and enduring seed in my soul. If my mind remains as obdurate as it was by nature, the sun of trial will scorch, and my hard heart will help to cast the heat the more terribly upon the ill-covered seed, and my religion will soon die, and my despair will be terrible; therefore, O heavenly Sower, plough me first, and then cast the truth into me, and let me yield Thee a bounteous harvest.

Both articles taken from *Morning and Evening Devotions* by Charles Spurgeon, © 1991 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.

Snow

“*He Giveth snow like wool: he scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes. He casteth forth ice like morsels.*”

(Psalm 147:16-17)

People speak about the “gods of the weather,” as though there were some special gods who had to do with the weather. But there is only one “god of the weather,” and that is the Lord God in heaven. “He giveth snow, he scattereth frost, he casteth forth ice.” Sunshine, rain, snow, hoarfrost, storm, and quiet, all come from Him. Therefore, there must be some reason for it all. If the weather does not please us, we should not complain. As it is with the weather, so it should be with everything else we meet in our daily life. Whether it is of great or of small importance, welcome or unwelcome, it all comes from God, and He has a purpose in everything. We must not complain, but accept it all as something which is sent us from on high.

Streams of Gladness by Fredrik Wisloff, Augsburg Publishing House, © 1958, Permission Granted

The Lost Soul's Request!

Tell them that their poor brother is in flames—tormenting flames, inextinguishable flames!

“I beg you, father Abraham, send Lazarus to my father’s house, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment!” (Luke 16:27, 28)

Observe the object of the rich man’s solicitude, his “five brothers.” They were perhaps younger than himself, though it is probable that he was comparatively young.

They were still in the bright land of hope, and he was in the dismal region of despair!

They were still under the kind reign of mercy, and he was under the iron rod of justice!

He feared for them, for he knew in what state he had left them!

He feared for them, lest they should persevere in sin, and at length come to the same place of torment! He most ardently desired their salvation, and that they might escape the sure wrath that is coming. He despaired of their salvation by ordinary means, and therefore he petitioned that Lazarus may be sent, that he might testify to them.

Look at this lost soul in Hell, he remembers his brethren and begs:

“Send Lazarus to my brothers! Lazarus is no longer a poor, ulcerated beggar—he will make a fit and suitable preacher! They know that he is dead. They will be greatly affected by his appearance among them, and by the change that has taken place in him. O, send Lazarus, and let him bear testimony to the reality of this place of torment, to the certainty of all impenitent sinners coming here, however rich or distinguished they were on earth. Let Lazarus testify as to the nature of this place of torment, and tell them that their poor brother is in flames—tormenting flames, inextinguishable flames! Tell them that I am denied one solitary drop of water, or anything which will in any way alleviate my dreadful sufferings! Let him assure them . . .

that Hell is real,
that the punishment is most intense,
that the sufferers are immortal,
that annihilation is a fiction, and
that deliverance from this fearful agony is impossible!

Let, O let him tell them, that once here, they are here forever! Forever! Forever!

And, O let him warn them of the folly, the madness, of neglecting the soul and its salvation. Let him testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment! It is possible. It is probable. It is certain, if they live and die in sin as I did!”

That poor wretch dreaded their coming there, for if anything could add to his torments, it would be to see his own brothers under the same condemnation, in the same horrid place of punishment! He also dreaded it, as most probably by his own example, and by his influence, he had hardened them in sin, and encouraged them in their ungodly course. It would therefore be an aggravation of his woe, and cause the flame that tormented him to blaze more fiercely, to see their eternal sufferings as his own fault.

It must be dreadful, to be the cause or the occasion of another’s soul being lost forever, and to have the sufferings of that soul constantly before our eyes!

O what a terrible thing, the exercise of a strong memory in Hell must be!

Reader! How is it with you? Inquire, inquire diligently, I beseech you! Is there any, even the most remote probability of your being sent into that place of torment? Think . . .

of being tormented in flames of fire,
of being tormented without the least alleviation,
and of being so tormented forever and ever!

Think of going directly from the bright land of hope—to the dismal regions of despair!

Think of going from a land of light, of Bibles, of the means of grace—to suffer the vengeance of eternal fire!

Is not the thought dreadful?

If Hell was to be the doom of your greatest enemy, would you not try to prevent it? What if it should be the doom of your brothers, your sisters, your husband, your wife, your father, your mother? Can you admit the possibility, without being determined to leave no means unused, which would be likely to prevent so fearful a calamity?

But what if Hell should be the destiny of your own soul? What if it should? It will be your certain doom, if you die unconverted. Perhaps there are some now in Hell, once related to you, who are now concerned for you. Are you as much concerned for yourself?

Christian! Have you not some dear ones on the road to Hell, for whom you should be especially concerned?

James Smith, 1860 from GraceGems.org

“If sinners be damned, at least let them leap to hell over our dead bodies. And if they perish, let them perish with our arms wrapped around their knees. If hell must be filled, let it be filled with the teeth of our exertions. And let no one go un-warned or un-prayed for.”

Charles Spurgeon



For Whom the Bell Tolls

“For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ’s at His coming. Then comes the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death.” (I Corinthians 15:21-26)

The picture above depicts a husband and wife out working in the fields. In the distance you can see the church. The church bells toll for someone who has died. The couple cease from their labors, bow their heads and pray in memory of the deceased. There is a reverence about the things of God depicted here that is very rare today, even in times of death. For most people, death is the LAST thing that they want to talk about or think about because it is viewed as the greatest enemy that you have. Death is an enemy of mankind (v. 26) – Because it has a two-fold effect:

Death is an enemy On This Side of the Grave

All of your labors in this life are done. There is no more time to do the things you enjoyed – no more time to laugh with friends and enjoy life’s goodness. There is no more time to be reconciled with anyone with whom you were at odds with. There is no more time to say the things you always wanted said, yet never did.

Everything you’ve worked for in your life is now gone and left behind. You never see a hearse pulling a U-Haul. Everything you’ve planned and hoped for in this life is now gone. All your family, friends and acquaintances are gone from you. No more will you be able to enjoy even the least of life’s pleasures.

No more will you be able to find fulfillment and accomplishment through life’s victories. There will be no more chance to reconcile with anyone you are at odds with – Grudges and hardships are now final. The only thing that you will leave behind is your legacy – The example you lived by and what you put into other people. The second sting of death is what it does:

Death is an Enemy On the Other Side of the Grave

Death is an enemy because now your eternal destiny is sealed. There will be no more Grace offered upon you for salvation. There will be no more opportunities for you to come to Jesus, repent of your sins and be born-again so you can be saved. There are no more second chances for salvation after death. If you hear of someone calling on Jesus and being saved while they are already in hell – it is nothing but just pure fantasy, because the judgments of God are either eternal life or eternal punishment. *“And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”* (Matthew 25:46) If you could change this, then that judgment was not eternal. There is no going from hell to heaven because there is a great gulf fixed between them. (See Lk. 16:26) There are no second chances to get right with God. Your eternal destiny is forever settled once you close your eyes in death.

Death reminds us of our sin. *“The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the Law.”* (I Corinthians 15:56) The reason we die is because we are sinners. We hear *“The Wages of Sin is Death”* (Rom. 6:23) and don’t think that much about it until death shows us that the Law of God is still binding upon all people everywhere. Death is a very stark reminder to us that there is a judgment of God upon the Sin of Mankind. We might think that the 10 Commandments are old fashioned and out of date for today’s society, but God still says they’re not.

When will you die? How old will you make it to be? The truth is we don’t know when we are going to die. You would also be amazed how many young people also die. None of us is guaranteed tomorrow. And Death seems so final. We refer to people who have died as though they are *“Deceased”* – they are no longer living. We also say that they have *“passed away”* – They are no longer with us.

Death is a very sad time as shown in the picture above. Because death is an enemy – It is described as having a sting – You feel its effects. Death is also powerful – Who can conquer it? You feel utterly helpless – What can you do? You feel utterly defeated. Where is the Hope for those facing death? Is there anything that can be done about this dreaded enemy? Science has tried to develop ways of extending people’s lives – Yet

death is still the end – Immortality has not been obtained by mankind.

Jesus Has Defeated the Enemy of Death

“The last enemy that will be abolished is death.” (I Cor. 15:26) The primary mission that Jesus came to do was to pay the penalty that sin brings to mankind. He did this by dying for every sin of every person of all time. He died a true death and rose again bodily from the dead on the third day. He has fully satisfied the demands that God has assigned to death. *“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.”* (I Corinthians 15:3-4)

He now lives to bring us the righteousness that we need to make it to God. *“He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”* (II Corinthians 5:21)

The question is whether you have repented and forsaken your sins and by faith come to Jesus as your own personal Savior and Lord of your life? This is the only way that you will conquer death. — Pastor Jim Haga

“I Believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true Man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord; Who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, bought me and freed me from all sins, from death and from the power of the devil ...”

Martin Luther, *The Small Catechism*, Explanation to the Second Article of the Apostles’ Creed

Life and Death

“For whosoever would save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it.” (Matthew 16:25).

LIFE and death are, beyond all comparison, the greatest mysteries of life.

I do not know which is the most enigmatic. Here in our passage for today, we have the two mysteries woven together: through death to life.

When Jesus spoke of the mystery of the new life, a teacher of Israel, the noble and pious Nicodemus, was startled.

But when Jesus said that the new birth was possible only through death, through the bloody death of the Messiah, then even His foremost disciple became startled and

prayed God to deliver Him from such vain thoughts.

But when Jesus said that all who would share His life must die with Him, His followers forsook Him, one after the other. Only the twelve remained. And not even they understood what He meant.

He who would lose his life shall find it.

This has been Christianity’s stumbling-block in all countries and in all ages. Unto the Jews a stumbling-block and unto the Greeks foolishness.

To think that a pious Israelite must die and be born again in order to enter the kingdom of God into which he had been circumcised and toward which all his faithfulness in observing the law had been directed! To think that a pious youth must die and receive new life in order to become a Christian!

Here many who would be Christians become startled also. They think that we drive young people away from Christ by such statements.

However, the words of Jesus stand, now as they have always stood: Whosoever would save his life shall lose it. However, He also says: “Blessed is he, whosoever shall find no occasion of stumbling in me!”

It is God who puts to death. But I can withdraw myself. I have the power to save my own life, Jesus says. But by so doing I hurl myself into eternal death.

Taken from *God’s Word for Today* by O. Hallesby.
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Dark Times

There can be no doubt that we are living through a very dark time in history! Everywhere we look, we see sin on a rampage, celebrated, corruption tolerated, and truth disdained. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are definitely called to be ‘light and salt’ and ‘faithful’ in a sin-darkened world, to be Faithful in the midst of such darkness. We are called to be soldiers of the cross in this sin blinded world! We are to heed God’s Holy Word as God’s very light to us. (Psalm 18:28)

Are We Experiencing This In Real Time Today?

“When it goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth: and when the wicked perish, there is shouting. By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted: but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked.”
(Proverbs 11:10-11)

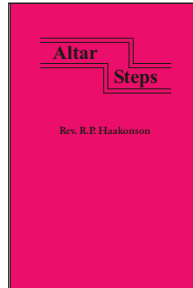
Marv Jacobson

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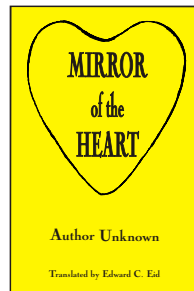
Altar Steps

This daily devotional was written by Pastor R.P. Haakonson and was published in 1947. It is suitable for families with children. It has illustrations from daily life, and a strong salvation emphasis. Suggested offering: \$8.00.



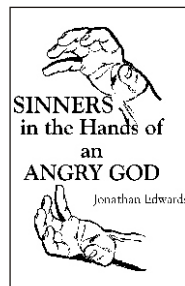
Mirror of the Heart

This book was published in 1900 by an unknown author. It contains some very earnest meditations and fervent prayers. It also contains ten very graphic pictures of the human heart. Inside the heart, the devil is visualized and also seven animals representing some of the most prevalent sins found in the heart of the impenitent sinner. These pictures show how these animals as sins are driven out of the heart when the sinner is converted to God, but how they can re-enter the heart if a person falls away from grace. One picture visualizes the fearful death of the ungodly, and another shows the blessed death of the righteous. Suggested Offering: \$3.00.



Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God

Jonathan Edwards preached this remarkable sermon at Enfield, Conn. on July 8, 1741. It was at night while he was reading it to a large congregation, that the lights became dim and he read with difficulty, and the influence was so great on the congregation that strong men and women cried and screamed for mercy and even grabbed their seats for fear they would slide into hell that very moment. Suggested Offering: \$1.00.



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A Never Ending Stream

Like a never-ending stream, the river of atonement runs from one end of the Bible to the other with increasing width and depth. Every page of sacred writing seems to be stained with the Royal Scarlet of Jesus Blood. Just as the Bible breathes with inspiration and pulsates with life divine, it floods with atoning blood. The sacrificial death of Jesus Christ and His work of redemption is without any shadow of doubt the central theme of the Word of God.

Dr. Tom Malone