



*The Heartbeat of*

April/May/June 2008  
Volume 14 Number 2

# The Remnant

## *Preparing the Ground for Revival*

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## *Leadership Seminar 2008*

**"In the mornings as we arrived, at our breaks, over the meals, and in our prayer groups, the conversations centered around Jesus Christ."**

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**The Remnant**

**Publisher**

Charity Christian Fellowship  
Publication Office  
400 W Main St Ste 1 • Ephrata, PA 17522

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The Heartbeat of The Remnant  
400 W Main St Ste 1  
Ephrata, PA 17522

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717-721-7775.

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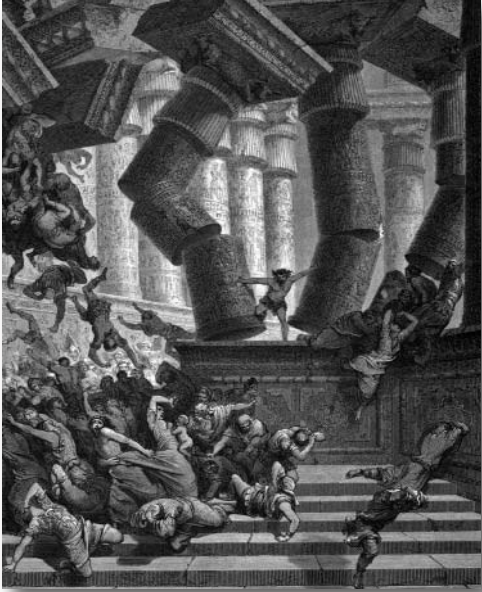
# Preparing The Ground For

# REVIVAL

by J. Edwin Orr

*"See, I have this day set thee over the nations  
and over the kingdoms, to root out,  
and to pull down, and to destroy,  
and to throw down, to build, and to plant."*

*Jer. 1:10*



Of this six-fold commission, four injunctions are destructive and only the latter two are constructive. "To build and to plant" is surely a great work. But it had to be preceded by a rooting-out and a pulling-down, destruction and demolishing. Surely this sounds drastic! Yet it was very necessary, as the historical background shows. The Jewish kingdom had become overgrown with weeds, overbuilt with traditional superstructures. They had to go first. Some iconoclasm was necessary. Some destruction was required.

Let us look in the garden for a parable. We walked round a beautiful garden which occupied a former piece of waste land. The gardener showed us round. "Those are beautiful roses," we said to him. "I planted them," replied the gardener, with justified pride. "What a beautifully-cut hedge," we remarked next. "I trimmed that," he said. "Who is responsible for that lovely Sweet William border?" Again the gardener smiled and claimed the credit. We passed on, thinking to ourselves that this gardener had created a grand testimony to his skill in gardening.

At the garden gate, we found an old fellow watching a smoking heap of refuse. "What have you been doing?" "Working at the garden," he said. "Well, then, what have you to show for your labor?" "Nothing, Sir," he replied. "Then you cannot have been working!" We told him.

"Sir," he asserted. "When we came here, this garden was a piece of waste land, overgrown with weeds, full of stones and sand, swampy in one corner, and pretty hopeless all round." We got interested. "Well sir," he went on, "I broke up the land, and I destroyed the weeds, and dug out the stones, and carted away the sand, and it was my job to drain the swampy corner." We listened with growing appreciation. "I am saying nothing against the other fellow who planted the garden. He did his job well. But where would his planting come in if I hadn't first rooted out and destroyed the weeds?" Both men's labor was necessary, but the rooting out and destruction of weeds preceded the planting of flowers and shrubs.

Let us remember the first work of rooting out the weeds and utterly destroying them. One of the great weaknesses of many forms of ministry today is the attempt to sow good seed among thorns. The thorns generally continue springing up, and the seed is choked thereby, despite the good intention of the human sower. Seed sown in a prepared ground requires only the action of the elements to produce fruit in season. Seed sown by the wayside, or in stony places, or among thorns, will have its prospects of life severely threatened almost immediately. Likewise, changing the mode of illustration, a Christian who is in proper relationship with God is generally hungry for the great truths and affirmations of

the Gospel. A constructive message is then not only desirable, but necessary. Good food, the finest of the cream of the wheat of the Gospel of Christ, is eagerly assimilated by the Christian who lives in harmony with God.

Yet all Christians are not in proper relationship with their Lord. The present obvious dearth of revival is largely due to the fact that the majority of Christians are out of touch with the source of Divine power. Even at conventions, the first work needed is to get things put right in the lives of those attending. To give a sick stomach an overdose of cream is to risk indigestion. Even a sick stomach prefers the taste of cream to the flavor of the bitter medicine. Still the bitter medicine is necessary, and it does not prevent the enjoying and digesting of good food afterwards—rather it creates the actual appetite of good health, which is quite distinct from the false cravings of indigestion.

For instance, the glorious message of the position of every believer in Christ is a comfort to many souls. Yet it cannot bring much blessing to a stubborn Christian living in disobedience and conscious sin. He needs to act on the teaching of repentance and confession and cleansing FIRST, and then he may comfort himself with other truths. I heard once of a church which had the cream of doctrine given within its walls, week in, week out. Judging from the quality of uplifting ministry given there, one would have expected to find the church members on the highest heavenly plane. But in this instance, they had a church quarrel which resulted in the bread and wine being spilled in a scuffle, and the police were called in to restore order. They obviously needed more than cream. Medicine was wanted badly. Positional truth cannot be profitably taught until conditional teaching has had its effect. Cast no pearls before swine. So great is this problem, that when the preacher strikes out against sin among believers and urges purity of life, critics cry “Introspection,” and some insist that he

is trying to divert the eyes of the people away from Christ towards self and shortcomings.

It was my happy experience once, to speak at a great convention well-known in England. It was arranged with the council members that if blessing came through in the degree hoped for, I would be at liberty to continue for double the time. Beginning with destructive ministry, the Lord used His Word to create deep conviction of heart. The place was thronged. Christians were stirred to confession and repentance, and many souls were saved.

By contrast, I was speaking at another convention, not so far away. It was a convention of good standing. I felt led to speak first of the shortcoming of believers and the need of getting right before enjoying the good things of the feast. The next speakers seemed to doubt the

worth of such a method, and their message seemed to be: “You are complete in Christ, so don’t worry about these trifles. God accepts you in the Beloved, and you needn’t mind.” For days there was that cross-current of message. I believed with all my heart in the truth of their message, but I thought that the time was unripe for its application.

With a burdened heart, I prayed for clear guidance regarding continuing my message. The

Lord put a text, a “new” text for me, into my heart, and I preached it. Before I preached it, a speaker dwelt on the glorious promises of God, promises meant for obedient children. Then followed my opportunity. “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Cor. 7:1). It gave the connection at last, but we had no great revival. It drove home many truths to me. Let us comfort one another with the grand truths of our position in Christ. But let us not make excuse by saying that our “completeness” in Him permits us to wink at known sin. □



Let us remember the first work of rooting out the weeds and utterly destroying them. One of the great weaknesses of many forms of ministry today is the attempt to sow good seed among thorns.



# Praying . . . *till we PRAY*

by A. W. Tozer

**D**r. Moody Stuart, a great praying man of a past generation, once drew up a set of rules to guide him in his prayers. Among these rules is this one: "Pray till you pray." The difference between praying till you quit and praying till you pray is illustrated by the American evangelist John Wesley Lee. He often likened a season of prayer to a church service, and insisted that many of us close the meeting before the service is over. He confessed that once he arose too soon from a prayer session and started down the street to take care of some pressing business. He had only gone a short distance when an inner voice reproached him. "Son," the voice seemed to say, "did you not pronounce the benediction before the meeting was ended?" He understood, and at once hurried back to the place of prayer where he tarried till the burden lifted and the blessing came down.

The habit of breaking off our prayers before we have truly prayed is as common as it is unfortunate. Often the last ten minutes may mean more to us than the first half hour, because we must spend a long time getting into the proper mood to pray effectively. We may need to struggle with our thoughts to draw them in from where they have been scattered through the multitude of distractions that result from the task of living in a disordered world.

Here, as elsewhere in spiritual matters, we must be sure to distinguish the ideal from the real. Ideally we should be living moment-by-moment in a state of such perfect union with God that no special preparation is necessary. But actually there are few who can honestly say that this is their experience. Candor will compel most of us to admit that we often experience a struggle before we can escape from the emotional alienation and sense of unreality that sometimes settle over us as a sort of prevailing mood.

Whatever a dreamy idealism may say, we are forced to deal with things down on the level of practical reality. If when we come to prayer our hearts feel dull and unspiritual, we should not try to argue ourselves out of it. Rather, we should admit it frankly and pray our way through. Some Christians smile at the thought of "praying through," but something of the same idea is found in the writings of practically every great praying saint from Daniel to the present day. We cannot afford to stop praying till we have actually prayed.



# A Garment Of Patience

*from the Martyrs Mirror*  
**HANS BRAEL SEVERELY PERSECUTED A. D. 1557**

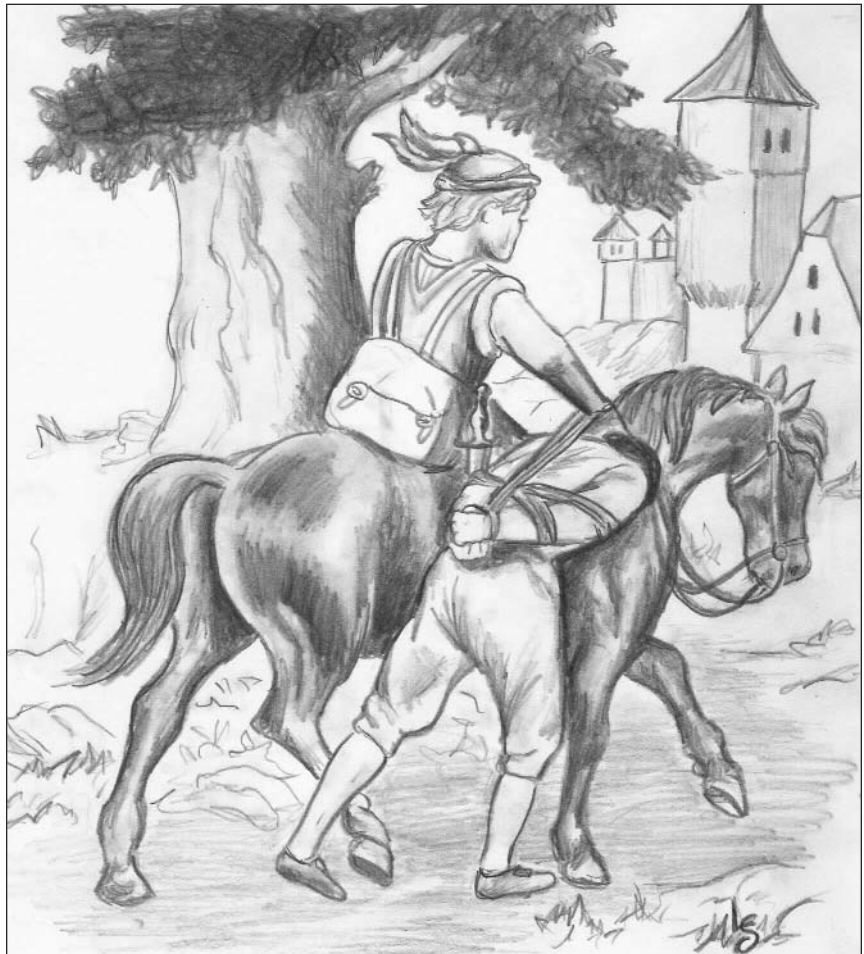
*I find this story inspiring because the man remembered that God sees everything and allows no temptation above what we are able to bear. He knew that no matter how much he suffered here, his tormentors would be punished by God so much more. His boldness in reproofing them to their face for what they were doing to him brought them to face their guilt before God for their actions. ~Clifford Fox*

judge for having bound him so hard. Then they examined him, taking from him whatever they found on his body, and put him into prison.

The next day he was brought out, and the lord of the castle examined him himself, and asked him about his faith and baptism, and what he thought of the sacrament. When he made confession of his faith in Christ and the

In 1557, Brother Hans Brael was arrested for the faith and testimony of Jesus Christ. About 3-1/2 miles from the castle he met the judge, who rode past him and greeted him without recognizing who he was. Hans was very thankful and relieved. The clerk, however, rode up to him and asked, "Where are you going and what have you been doing here?" He answered "I have been with my brethren." The clerk asked him if the Baptists were his brethren. "Yes," he replied.

The clerk then seized him, and the judge turned around, dismounted, and took the brother's own girdle from his body and bound him with it. Then he made him walk like a dog alongside of his horse, through mud and mire, for a whole league (3-1/2 miles), until they arrived in the castle. He was so fatigued from walking, and from being bound so hard, that he couldn't stand any longer. He fell down right there in the field, so that even the lord of the castle reproved the



divine truth, they pressed him hard to recant. But when he plainly told them that they shouldn't expect him to renounce the truth he had confessed, they brought him back into prison.

Eight days later, he was brought out again, and the lord with six others examined him; but being unable to accomplish anything, they returned him to prison. After another eight days they brought him into court and examined him before the whole council. The judge called his faith a delusion, and his church a sect. Acts 24:14. But Hans said, "It is neither a sect nor a delusion; but it is the church of God."

The judge shouted, "It may be the devil's church, but how could it be God's church?" and became angry about it. He asked again, "For what reason should it be called the church of God?" But Brother Hans boldly held fast to it, that it was indeed the church of God.

Then the judge said, "Since he knows who has come from the region of Innsbruck, we also want to know where those are who they send out into this country, what their names are, who has fed and harbored them; all this we want to know."

But Hans answered them, "We are not sent out to the harm or detriment of any one. Our mission is this: we seek the salvation of men and exhort them to repentance and reformation. Matt. 10:5; Acts 2:38. The things that you asked for are not articles of faith, and are not necessary for you to know. That's why I do not wish to tell them, or accuse any one."

The judge strongly urged him to spare himself, since his body would be tortured if he refused to name the persons, and to confess who had kept him. Hans asked the judge and the whole council if he could be considered a good person if he betrayed those who had shown him such kindness, by feeding and lodging him. The council members looked at each other, and said that they would

not consider it good, if it were done to them. But the judge became enraged, and asked whether he meant to charge the honorable council with requiring treachery of him. He warned him again to spare himself, or they would deal very severely with him. But since he would not confess to them, they returned him to prison, to see what he would decide to do.

After this they brought him out again, and took him to the rack. There he himself took off his clothes, lay

down before them, and patiently submitted to the torturing ropes. Even the bystanders could not refrain from weeping. The executioner suspended him by the rope and the judge earnestly admonished him to spare himself, and to indicate the persons required. But Hans said he would betray no one, but would endure whatever God permitted them to inflict upon him. Then they tied a large stone to his feet.

The judge became angry when he saw that he could accomplish nothing. He said, "You swear to each other that you will not betray one another." Hans replied, "We do not swear, but we do not betray any one, because it would be wrong." Then the judge said, "You are a scoundrel; I have caught you in a lie." The brother said, "I am no scoundrel, and in what lie have you caught me?" The judge said, "You said that you were no teacher, but we find that you certainly are one." He answered, "I am no teacher; but if I were one, I would not be ashamed of it; for it is an honorable thing before God." I Tim. 3:1.

Then they left him hanging by the rope and went away, but the executioner stayed with him. In the meantime the officers as-

sembled, and he was urged to confess, or they would not stop racking him until they had torn his limbs apart. He replied that he would endure whatever God would allow them to inflict upon him, since they could do no more.

The executioners said, "Aren't you a fool, to think that God looks down to see what we are doing in this



**After this they brought him out again, and took him to the rack. There he himself took off his clothes, lay down before them, and patiently submitted to the torturing ropes. Even the bystanders could not refrain from weeping.**

hole? That would be ridiculous.” Then the council returned and said that the lady of the castle had interceded for him, that they should torture him no longer. So they let it rest and they sent him back to prison.

Then the lord had the priests dispute with and examine Hans for two days in succession, namely Saturday and Sunday, he himself being present. But when they could accomplish nothing by their various arguments, and he stood firm in the truth, the lord at last became exasperated with him. Then he said, “O you stubborn dog, I have tried all possible means and ways with you! I will put you on a sharp pile, and see how you will trust your God in this trial.” But he answered, “I will not suffer because of any wrongdoing, but only for the truth and the faith; and God will overlook no wrong.”

After three days they put him into a deep, dark and filthy tower, where he couldn’t see sun or moon, or daylight. He could not tell if it was day or night, except by the temperature. It was also so moist and damp in the tower that his clothes rotted on his body. He became almost naked, and was without a single garment for a long time, except for a coarse blanket that had been given him, which he wrapped around his body and thus sat in misery and darkness. The shirt on his body had so rotted, that he had not a shred left of it, except the collar, which he hung on the wall.

Once they brought him out to see if he would apostatize, but the light hurt his eyes so much that he was glad when they returned him to the dark tower. There was also such a foul stench from the filth that was in this dark hole, that no one could stay in his presence. When they brought him in, they instantly had to go away from him again. Even the councilors said that they had never smelled such a horrible stench.

Thus he lay in this filthy tower, in which were also many vermin and disgusting reptiles. The tower had not had an occupant for a long time and so the vermin were very numerous, and they caused him much terror until he got used to it. The vermin sometimes also ate his food, so that when they let down his food, he had to eat it all up before he set down the dish; otherwise the vermin so covered it that he could not eat it. When he got a dish of soup, and set it down but once, they ate it up. In short, he couldn’t keep bread or anything else. As soon as the vermin smelled it, they were at it. However, this was his smallest problem, because he was so hungry. They never gave him much, so he could always eat it right away unless he was sick. The vermin sometimes also got in his drink, and drowned in it, until he finally found a large stone, which he put on top of his pitcher.

His biggest hardship, however, was that he could get no news from the church or the brothers. At that time Hans Mein, a servant of the Lord, also had a great desire to hear from him. He sent word to him in the tower, asking if it was still well with him. If his heart held firmly to God and his church, he should send him a token. If he had nothing else, he should send him a little bit of straw, however little it might be. But such was the misery and poverty in which he sat that he could not even find that much in the tower. Then he thought of his rotten collar which he had hung on the wall. He took the collar and sent it from the tower to his brother, as a token that he was still unchanged in his faith in God, and in peace with the church.

When the brother received the collar and realized his misery and poverty, he and his church felt great compassion for him. After weeping sorrowfully, they sent word back to him, that they were very willing to send him clothes or anything else, if he only could get it. But he would not have it, because that if they had discovered it, they would have thrown him on the rack and tortured him again to get the names of others. **So he sent them word that he would let the garment of patience be sufficient for him.**

Thus he lay in this filthy tower all summer, until autumn, when they saw that the frost was approaching. Then they took him out and put him into another prison, which could likewise not have been worse. There he had to sit with one hand and one foot in the stocks for thirty seven weeks, being unable to lie or sit properly, but only to stand. Besides, he had to endure much ridicule from the ungodly. They said, “There lies a holy man; nobody is as wise as he is; there he sits as a light of the world, and as a witness of the people of God and His church,” etc.

Again, since he couldn’t get news from the church, God allowed him to be comforted by the unbelievers. One time a nobleman came to comfort him, telling him to be courageous, and not to be intimidated since he knew that he had the truth on his side, and that his faith was the true one. However, he felt that it was impossible to follow it or to suffer what Hans suffered.

One time it also happened that his soul was kindled in God, and he sent for the clerk who had apprehended him, so that he would come to him in prison. The clerk quickly came to him, sat down, and asked him what he wanted, that he had sent for him.

The brother said, “The sole reason is that I cannot help reminding you of this one fact. As you well know, you are the chief cause of my imprisonment and miserable sufferings, though I have never in all my life done you an injury.”





**“Promise that you will allow yourself to be instructed, and confess that you have erred and you will be set at liberty. The lady of the castle will take upon herself the sin which you commit by it...”  
But Hans replied, “She has enough sins already, let her repent of them.” So he had to lie in prison and sorrow for another winter.**

The clerk sat there frightened and dumb, not saying a word, except that he had to do it.

The brother said: “Yes, the judgment of God impelled you to it because you were so bloodthirsty against the devout. It also fell to your lot to fulfill your judgment by this means. You have incurred a heavy judgment; God will certainly find you for this, require it at your hands, and punish you for your sins.”

The clerk was dumbfounded and could not utter a word. He went away very frightened. About two weeks later he died very suddenly in the night, being healthy and dead within a quarter of an hour. God had smitten him with great fear; so that he cried and moaned terribly, and lamented that he had done wrong and sinned.

So it goes with those who will serve the devil and his followers. He was also severely scolded for this by his master and his mistress, and reaped the devil’s thanks for it from his own. They said to him, so loud that the brother heard it himself, “How did the devil come to possess you that you would not let this man go, though you might easily have done so?” They wished that the devil

rather had carried him off, since he had done this, for which he had to pay so dearly at his end.

In the same night that the clerk died, a great joy came over Hans, so that with praying and thanksgiving he could not praise God sufficiently; for on that night it was revealed to him that he would yet return to the brethren and the church. In the morning a servant came to him, and told him, that the clerk had died very terribly and suddenly during the night. Ps. 73:18. When this happened with the clerk, the lord and his spouse were seized with great terror.

About eight days afterwards, the servant who attended to the farming of the land came into the castle, and came to the brother with the keys, and asked whether he hoped to get out. Hans replied, “I will see what you will do for me.” The servant wanted to open the stocks, but could not find the right key. The brother told him not to do it, since it might get him in trouble. When he could not find the right key,

the servant told him that he could set him free, but probably not at that time.

The lady of the castle also sent a servant to the prison who said, “The gracious lady would have me tell you that she will send for the judge and the priest, if you will say two things. Promise that you will allow yourself to be instructed, and confess that you have erred and you will be set at liberty. She will take upon herself the sin which you commit by it, so that no guilt will fall upon you.”

But Hans replied, “She has enough sins already, let her repent of them. She needs no sins from others.” I Tim. 5:22. So he had to lie in prison and sorrow for another winter.

Then an order came from Innsbruck, from the council, which the lords came to read to him. It contained the following: Since he was so obstinate, and would receive no instruction, he should be sent to sea. He would go there the next morning. There he would find out how evildoers are stripped and scourged. But Hans replied that he would trust in God his Lord, who was on sea as

well as on the land, to help him and give him patience. II Cor. 1:9; Matt. 14:31.

They then let him out of prison to walk around in the castle for two days, so that he could learn to walk again. He was not able to walk because of having been in imprisonment, stocks, fetters and bonds for nearly two years. He had not seen the sun for about a year and a half.

He was then given in the custody of one of the servants, who was to take him to the sea. So he took leave from everyone in the castle and exhorted them to repentance. The lady of the castle sent word to him that he should come to her, which he did. She called him into her study, where he exhorted her also to repentance, and asked her not to molest the pious (who do no hurt, in the exercise of their religion) and not to apprehend any more of them. To this she consented and began to weep, so that the tears flowed down her cheeks, and said, "I will never lay hands on them again in my life." She gave him some money for the journey, and dismissed him.

This servant then took him away with him. The servant was a wicked man; he called the brother a scoundrel on every occasion, or applied some other shameful nickname to him.

After two days, the servant drank so much wine in a tavern, (for those present had so often drunk to his health), that he didn't go to bed to sleep. Instead he stretched himself on the table and instantly fell asleep like a dumb beast and rolled off the table.

Seeing this, the brother opened the door of the room and also the door of the house and locked them again, and went away.

So God helped him to make his escape that night, which took place in the year 1559. So he returned in peace and with joy to the church of the Lord, his brethren. Subsequently he again went up into the country, several times, as the ministry of the divine Word had been committed to him.

From this it may be seen how God helps His own children. We also see how He can give much strength and patience in suffering to those who

cleave to Him with a true heart, through their strong faith, which would otherwise be impossible. II Tim. 4:17; Philip. 4:13; Matt. 17:20.

And it is also seen how He casts out His enemies and adversaries, and knows where to find them. Not only did the clerk die a very dreadful death; but, while Hans Brael yet lay in prison, the lord of the castle died suddenly. The servant who was to take Hans to the sea also died miserably, even before the brother left the country. About two years afterwards the judge died a most miserable death too. □



**From this it may be seen how God helps His own children. We also see how He can give much strength and patience in suffering to those who cleave to Him with a true heart, through their strong faith, which would otherwise be impossible.**





# God Needs Praying Mothers

by Rachel Weaver

**T**hough God is calling

Christians everywhere to pray, this little article is specifically to call Christian mothers to daily, earnest, believing prayer.

*God said repeatedly, "Ask and you shall receive,"* and He modeled the asking after a child's asking his father for what he needs

and wants. This is an object lesson that all mothers should surely be able to understand. How our hearts yearn after our children.

How we desire to give them what they need and want. We understand a mother's heart, and most of us watch a father's heart as our dear husbands work with our children. Why then do we find it difficult to pray? Why do we worry and fret? Why are we anxious? Why do we take so long to understand our place of prayer?

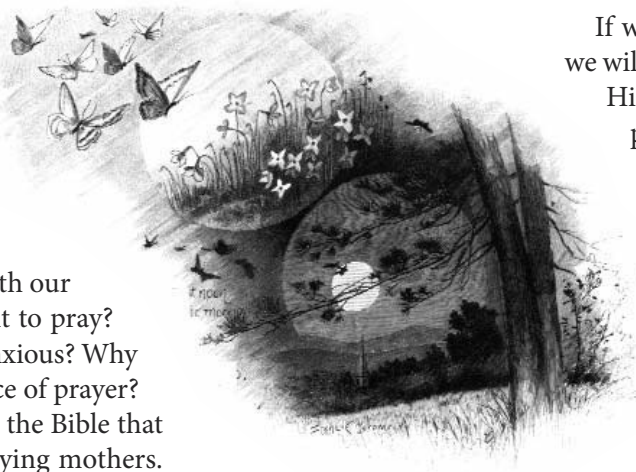
There are so many verses throughout the Bible that teach on prayer, but so few earnestly praying mothers.

The Bible is full of examples of men who met with God and took their needs to Him. Do not wait to pray earnestly until you are in a great difficulty. Learn to pray now. Notice that God delights in our prayers. He wants us to pray. He desires a relationship with us and prayer is a key in developing that relationship.

Psalm 15:8 *"But the prayer of the upright is his delight."* Matthew 21:22 *"And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."* Philippians 4:6 *"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."* Colossians 4:2 *"Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving."*

Jesus is our perfect example of prayer. He prayed much, going alone to meet His Father. It was there that He received strength and wisdom to face each new day, each trial. Mark 1:35 *"And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed."* What a way to begin a day full of service and compassion for God's people! God is calling mothers to this kind of prayer so that we, too, can be of service to Him. How will we answer? So often we limit God by our timid asking.

- We doubt the Word that tells us "Ask, and ye shall have your prayers."
- We turn our thoughts as to a task with will constrained and rare.
- And yet to us these scanty prayers yield gold without alloy.
- Oh God, but he that trusts and dares must have a boundless joy! —submitted



If we believe our God, we will pray! If we believe Him, we will keep on praying! God does not always answer when and how we think He will. But He does answer! And when the answer comes, how it inspires our



hearts and increases our faith in Him. We all have heard about the prayer life of George Mueller. Let me relate an inspiring incident that came to my attention one day last year when my faith and praying was really being stretched. The author says:

“I went to America some years ago with the captain of a steamer, who was a very devoted Christian. When off the coast of Newfoundland he said to me, “The last time I crossed here, five weeks ago, something happened which revolutionized the whole of my Christian life. We had George Mueller of Bristol on board. I had been on the bridge twenty-four hours and never left it. George Mueller came to me, and said, “Captain, I have come to tell you that I must be in Quebec, Saturday afternoon.” “It is impossible,” I said. “Very well, if your ship cannot take me, God will find some other way. I have never broken an engagement for fifty-seven years. Let us go down into the chart-room and pray,” said he. I looked at that man of God, and thought to myself, what lunatic asylum can that man have come from? I never heard of such a thing as this. “Mr. Mueller,” I said, “do you know how dense this fog is?” “No,” he replied, “my eye is not on the density of the fog, but on the living God, who controls every circumstance of my life.”

He knelt down and prayed one of the most simple prayers, and when he had finished I was going to pray; but he put his hand on my shoulder, and told me not to pray. “First, you do not believe He will answer; and second I BELIEVE HE HAS, and there is no need whatever for you to pray about it.”

I looked at him, and he said, “Captain, I have known my Lord for fifty-seven years, and there has never been a single day that I have failed to get audience with the King. Get up, Captain and open the door, and you will find the fog gone.” I got up, and the fog was indeed gone. On Saturday afternoon, George Mueller was in Quebec for his engagement. —selected

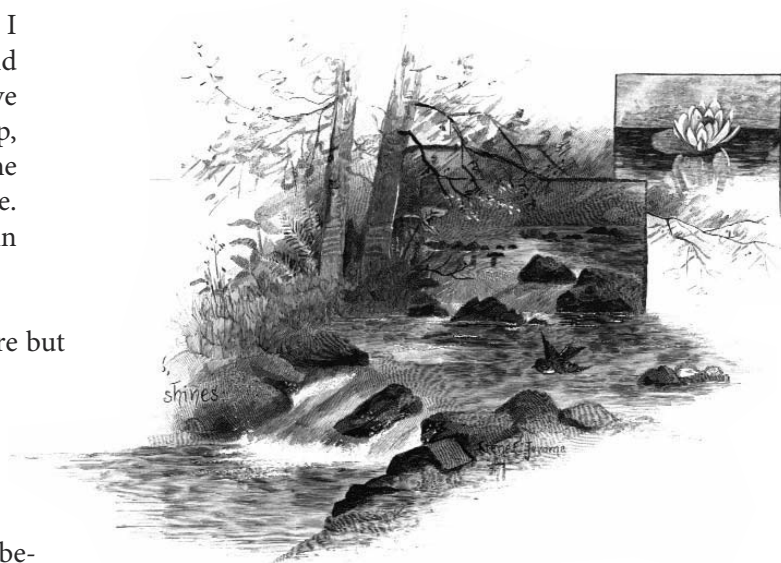
The songwriter so aptly says, “If our love were but more simple, we should take Him at His Word.” Let us say with Paul, “I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.” Acts 27:25.

So many of us, like the ship captain, do not really believe. If we did, we would not sit and fret about our families, and our churches. If we did be-

lieve Him, we would fall on our faces and PRAY! If we could see the answers that He will give to our prayers, we would band together with other believers and pray. We would not complain about our lot, or chat about trivial things, or find fault with other believers, but we would kneel together and PRAY!

The following verses are from the Old Testament but they aptly describe the calling of women to take up prayer in our day. Jeremiah 9:17-21 *“Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Consider ye, and call for the mourning women, that they may come; and send for cunning women, that they may come: And let them make haste, and take up a wailing for us, that our eyes may run down with tears, and our eyelids gush out with waters. For a voice of wailing is heard out of Zion, How are we spoiled! we are greatly confounded, because we have forsaken the land, because our dwellings have cast us out. Yet hear the word of the LORD, O ye women, and let your ear receive the word of his mouth, and teach your daughters wailing, and every one her neighbor lamentation. For death is come up into our windows, and is entered into our palaces, to cut off the children from without, and the young men from the streets.”* These women and their daughters were called to weep for the salvation of their people. We are called to pray earnestly in faith believing for the salvation of souls and the resolution of the difficulties we are facing. We

**So many of us...do not really believe. If we did, we would not sit and fret about our families, and our churches. If we did believe Him, we would fall on our faces and PRAY!**



are so much more privileged than those women in the Old Testament. We can come into the presence of the mighty Father. We can have a relationship with the God of Heaven. He lives in us and works through us. What a mighty God we serve!

Let me share with you an awesome testimony of a tiny bit of what our God will do when we pray. Walk with me through the last six weeks of our lives before our son, Paul, age 17, died instantly in an auto accident, September 1, 2007. Although I had been praying earnestly for him for many months, six weeks before he died I was able to begin to pray with a few mothers who had a prayer burden for their children's spiritual needs. Obeying His call to pray, and believing God's presence to be in our midst, we prayed and God began work. Things for which I had been beseeching God for nine months, began to be answered. Truly our Father in Heaven hears the cry of His children when they come together in faith.

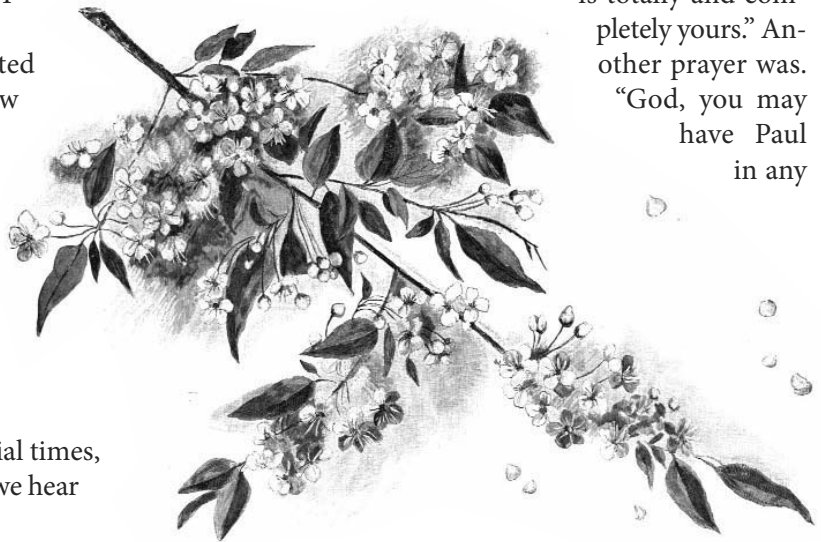
This little testimony covers a year's time but focuses mainly on the six weeks from July 24 – September 1. We prayed and agonized and prayed some more. We surrendered Paul and ALL the details surrounding his lack of surrender to God. After all, God is the One who made the world and gave His Son to save us all. He is the One who calmed the storm and stilled the sea. He can do ANYTHING!! He could change our boy. Still we waited and prayed and sometimes struggled with loneliness and discouragement. As God taught us to trust Him in the middle of our trials, we began to know the peace that only comes through trust, the songs that are given in the night and the grace to live each day. I never understood that grace, until it was poured out. I did not know the extent of His tenderness, until He gave me, a weary, broken-hearted mother, a sweet assurance that He would draw my son to Himself. This assurance was born out of many hours of intercession. Of course I knew that God did not say when, or where, or how, but I learned to trust Him completely even in the dark.

The ensuing months of waiting and praying, and drawing very close to Paul, were a blessing to us, but very, very difficult. Paul's heart was very soft toward the family. This was an answer to prayer. We had many, many special times, but always there were questions. When would we hear

from the surrendered heart of our son? When would he say, "Yes," to the Master? We kept on praying and waiting. Then July came and we saw Paul's heart begin to open. He was just outside "the door" but not walking through it. About that time I began to pray with a few mothers who gather to entreat God for the salvation of their children, and to watch as God began to work.

First of all, Daniel and Timothy Smith, who Paul greatly loved and admired, came to our home on July 20 for three days. We had some really special discussions about Muslims and what they have to go through when they accept the Lord Jesus as their Savior and take their stand for the Lord. We listened to the testimony of a few young Muslims who gave up everything for Jesus Christ. Paul was very, very thoughtful in the next few days. The following weekend our family took a trip to Tennessee for the yearly Weaver family gathering. While we were there, God answered another of my prayers. ("God, please send someone else, besides us, to minister to him that he can open his heart to.") That weekend God put a godly uncle in Paul's path. Paul talked with his uncle for two hours about his heart, and his difficulty in finding his way to sweet fellowship with God. To our great joy his uncle described the talk as "delightful" and Paul said to me, "Mom, it was wonderful." We did not stop praying! Over the next few weeks we watched him slowly unfolding, although he did not give us a definite word on what was happening. We felt a need to quietly pray and wait for God to do His work. One of the prayers I prayed during this time was, "Please, God, do a complete work.

Do not let Paul rest until he is totally and completely yours." Another prayer was, "God, you may have Paul in any



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When would he say, "Yes," to the Master? Over the next few weeks we watched him  
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way you choose. Here is my 'Isaac', only save his soul."

Then on August 24th in the evening Myron and I had a very special time of talking and praying and laying down everything. With surrendered hearts we prayed together for God's will and His way, committing Paul to God again, in an even deeper way than ever before. When we were finished praying, I felt so excited! I said, "I feel like something awesome is about to happen!" Myron agreed and we waited in anticipation to see how the answer would come.

The next morning our phone rang and it was our married daughter, Lisa Strubhar. She and Darren were planning to leave on a trip for Wyoming to visit Darren's folks. Could they take Paul along? They would leave tomorrow, which was a Sunday evening. (Darren had seriously cut his hand and was off work for two weeks while the tendon healed.) We understood that they would be gone for 10 days. It was not a good time for Roger to have him go. The grass was as green as in May and he needed Paul to help with the lawn customers, but he bowed his heart to our desire and made arrangements to try to limp along without him. They left on Sunday night and began their happy journey, the dream of Paul's, to go west, to see the mountains, the trees, the wildlife and to go camping! The plan in Darren's heart was to touch Paul for the Master and to have extended time to share with his heart. We heard from our boy a few times, though I never actually got to talk to him myself. I prayed so much that he would surrender there, surrounded by the wonderful creation and be able to say, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" We had been telling him all along that that must be his response to His Father, just as Saul's was on the Damascus road when the Lord spoke to him.

On Sunday of the next week, Roger realized that we had had a miscommunication and Paul would not be



**Early Saturday morning, at 3:00am,  
my cell phone rang at my bedside.  
I picked the phone up, and I knew in my  
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"Mom-m-m. We were in an awful accident  
and Paul is drowning in his own blood.  
Pray!"**

Wednesday I lost my desperate prayer burden. I was upset with myself and wondered why. Was it that he had surrendered? Was I getting lazy in praying? Still, I prayed, but not with the desperation that I had had before. Joyce called Paul on Wednesday or Thursday, and wonder of wonders, she had good phone reception. He did not have time to talk long, but he said, "I have so much that I want to say but it will take too long. When I get home I will tell you everything!" He sounded so happy that Joyce was blessed and excited.

Then Friday night our daddy had a sweet worship time with us all. He took us again, to see the Father-heart of God in reconciliation and in seeking His wayward sheep. We talked about God's heart for Paul and had a sweet time of praying for Paul, and resting in our Shepherd's care. I went to bed very comforted and encouraged.

Early Saturday morning, at 3:00am, my cell phone rang at my bedside. I picked the phone up, and I knew in my heart that it was about Paul. How?? I cannot tell – but God had instantly prepared me for that call. Darren's panicky voice came over the air. "Mom-m-m. We were in an awful accident and Paul is drowning in his own blood. Pray!" I sent him back to Lisa knowing she needed him desperately, and we sent a hotline and prayed earnestly, but I felt that the struggle was over.

home until at least 4 days later than he expected. This posed a difficulty since it was Labor Day weekend and some of his clients had extra work that they wanted done for that weekend. He called and asked if someone could take Paul to the airport to fly home on Wednesday. This made difficulties for the families in Wyoming. They felt like Paul needed to stay, as some of the major activities had not been accomplished yet. Finally, Roger called back and released Paul to finish the trip. We did not know that we would never see him again!

The second week dawned and about



I was distressed with myself, wondering why I felt such peace when I was sure Paul was dead. Maybe, could it be, that he was not hurt as badly as it seemed. But somehow I sensed that he was gone, and there was no need to pray anymore. Fifteen minutes later I called their phone and they answered in the hospital emergency room but they had no further word on Paul. Finally at about 3:30 we got the call that Paul was indeed dead. I comforted Lisa and then they took them away for tests and CAT scans. About 5:00am Lisa called again. Their tests had come back clear. Their unborn baby was OK. Thank you God! Lisa and Darren were bruised and battered but no serious injuries. Thank you God!

The ministry and a few friends came to be with us while we waited to hear how Paul was, and we broke the sad news of his death to them. They stayed awhile to be with us in this difficult time. Really, none of us talked much but we did do some singing. I guess singing is one way our family deals with our problems. We've had a lot of practice in the last few years and it has almost become a habit of ours in times of trouble.

When Darren called next at 5:00PM, the sheriff was with them. He told them that it was a miracle that they were still alive. When we saw the pictures we knew that he was right. It appears that when Paul fell asleep the vehicle hit the end of the guardrail and flipped end over end.

Then they hit the huge exit sign and took it out. That made the car begin to roll. This was when Darren and Lisa woke up! The sheriff thinks that they rolled at least three to four times. Paul was thrown out and lay about 60 feet from where the car landed. (The death certificate says Paul died of "neck and head injuries.") The luggage and camping gear were scattered everywhere. All this time my sad heart had only a great peace. I prayed, "Lord, I trust you. If I never have any handles on which to hold I will still trust You." We could hardly wait until Monday night when the tired young people would come home on the plane. We wanted to talk with them so badly. We wanted to hear all about what had happened on the trip. We wanted to know every detail. But we could not connect with them – bad coverage. So again

we waited! Lessons, more difficult lessons in trust! Monday night at 7:00 PM they drove in, and oh, the tears and the hugs, and the questions that were on all of our hearts. We sat around the table and began to talk.

What a wonderful God we serve! As we talked, little things came out from the past two weeks. God gave us such an overwhelming rest that our boy had come close to Him up there on the mountains. We will never really know what all happened between Paul and God. But just as we had hoped and prayed, on the trip he had opened up so much more. Friends told us that he was like the

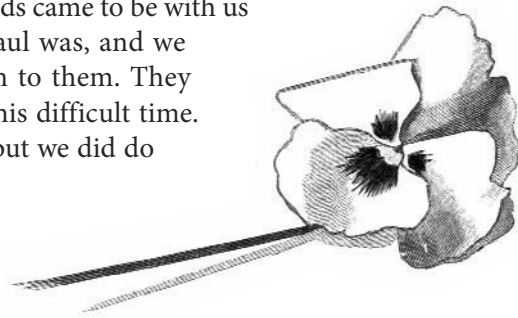
boy they had known three years ago.

So often, on the top of one of those huge mountain ranges, at night, one feels himself drawn toward the Master. Paul was such a lover of nature! They told us that he did not sleep in his little tent, but out under the huge starry sky, all alone, with timber wolves howling in the background. They told us that he joined wholeheartedly in the singing around the campfire, and had some really good discussions with them about his heart and where he was.

As they began to travel toward home, late the evening of August 31, Paul brought up an account of a young person whom he had just heard about, who was killed instantly in an automobile accident. "It seems like her life was cut too

short," he said, "But it makes me think about Wayne Keeny's devotions the other Sunday at Living Hope." "Who wants to go to Heaven?" Wayne asked. Everyone raised their hands. "How soon?" he asked. Paul continued, "We tend to think I'd like to do this or that yet. But we would never feel that way if we really knew who God is and what Heaven really is like." "Maybe some of us love our lives too much," replied Lisa. "Maybe then we will lose them," was his thoughtful response. What a conversation for the Lord to give us, as some of his last words! When we understand the Father-heart of God, then we can rest content in knowing that He is wise and just, and He knows all things.

My mother heart welled up and overflowed as Lisa said that she fell asleep listening to Paul singing along,



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alone, with the CD. He was singing songs like “What a Friend we Have in Jesus”, and “No Tears in Heaven”. Paul was singing! How that thought ministered to me since he did not participate much in our family singing times in the past year, and how our family loves to sing together. He had especially avoided the songs that spoke of his relationship to God since he was struggling so much with that. Then his brother shared with us that through the last number of months, when they would talk, he would ask him how his heart was. His answer had always been, “It’s not OK, but I am trying to get it right.” Only a few days before Paul died, he asked him the same question. This time Paul answered, “My heart is clear!” Oh the rejoicing!

As we all sat there around the table, that Monday night, just two days after Paul died, sharing all these things, Joyce began the song, “What A Friend We Have in Jesus”. I wish you could have been there. That song was a song of hope for us, a song of trust! Looking around at the faces of my dear family I saw a depth of trust there that I had never seen before. I saw tear-stained faces—full of peace. It was amazing! Then we sang “Master the Tempest is Raging”. The singing was awesome. It flooded my soul with hope! I felt transported to the gates of heaven. How can one’s heart contain all that! We kept on singing and the peace of God just filled the room. What a preparation for the next few busy days of visitation and burial! Over fifteen hundred people came to give us words of comfort and to bless us with their presence. We felt so loved by God and His people. We felt so carried. In the days and weeks since, we have received at least 400 cards and lots of love and prayer. Never underestimate what you do for a family when you carry them to the throne room of God in their time of sorrow and trials and send them a card. We can feel it. We are blessed by it. What a mighty God to share that love with us!

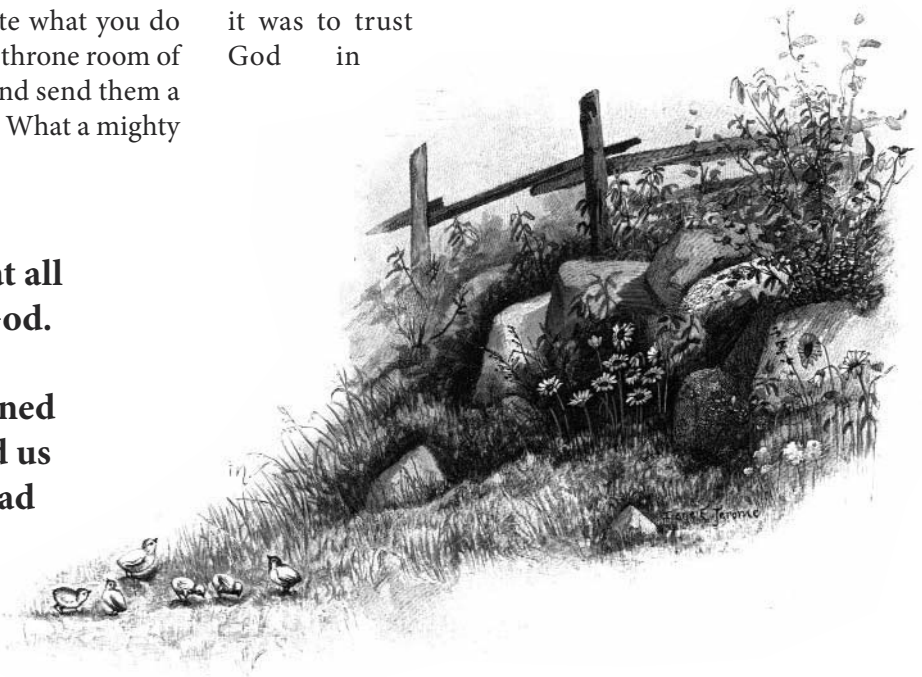
**We will never really know what all happened between Paul and God. But just as we had hoped and prayed, on the trip he had opened up so much more. Friends told us that he was like the boy they had known three years ago.**

Now Paul is gone and we will not see him again here. We do not know what Paul did with God out there on the mountain. There are many unanswered questions. But God has given our family a sweet hope for which we are thankful. We do not know God’s reasons, but neither are we agonizing. We are trusting. We miss our boy, but we have a sweet rest in our hearts. How can I explain the sweet peace that God has given to us? I think the verse from Philippians 4:7 explains it best. *“And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”*

I can only thank God for His love, His tenderness and His compassion to us all. He is a good God. I did not expect Him to answer my prayers in this way. But as I look back over the last difficult year and see Him working in Paul’s life, drawing him away from temptation, bonding him to the family and opening Paul’s heart up to himself, I know that God’s ways are not our ways and His timetable is not ours.

Never hesitate to pray because of how God will answer. If you could get a glimpse of the abundant grace that God has given to us in and through Paul’s passing, you would understand the saying, “The will of God will never lead you where His grace cannot keep you.” You would not fear any answer He would choose to give you. You would better understand the song, “When peace like a river attendeth my way, When sorrows like sea billows roll, Whatever my lot Thou hast taught me to say, ‘It is well, it is well with my soul.’” (That song was written by a godly man who lost his wife and two daughters when their boat sank into the ocean. He understood what it was to trust

God in



every circumstance and be at rest in His heart with God's choice for him.)

God used our experience with Paul in the past year to call us to prayer, to teach us to agonize in prayer and to hold on in prayer, believing God in faith, even when believing was difficult. Then in Paul's death He taught us that "*He giveth more grace.*" (James. 4:6) We understand in a new way, how big, and powerful and able our God is to do ANYTHING! He can move any mountains. He can calm any sea and He can keep our hearts fixed firm on Him. He is past understanding—so kind and compassionate to us. He watched His Son die. He understands our grief and our sorrows. □

*Our son Roger's fiancée penned the following words for us immediately after Paul died, and they are so fitting.*

## *Past Understanding*

Father, I do not comprehend, I cannot understand  
The how's, the wherefore's, and the why's;  
But on my lips the question dies  
Stilled by the knowledge of Your perfect Love,  
Your matchless Wisdom, Your Omnipotence.  
I cannot understand? But never mind—You do,  
I gladly trust into Your hand all life's unanswered questions.  
May I go on, wholly content to know  
That what I cannot see is in Your care—and leave it there.

*Rebecca Hansen*

# Life in Earnest

*by Charles Spurgeon*

Either Christianity is the grossest deception that was ever palmed upon mankind, or else it is one which deserves the whole life and force and strength of every man who has been blessed by it!

Some Christians live as though truth were a lie, and as though the doctrines revealed of God were but a delusion and pretense!

In the light of eternity, all things except for serving God, are mere child's play, mere theatricals, mere masquerading. They are but the performance of a carnival, the jests of a comedy, the laughter of a pantomime. It is only 'serving God' that is doing immortal work; it is only living for Christ that is living at all!







# Not Under Bondage

## Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage

(Part 4)

by Dean Taylor

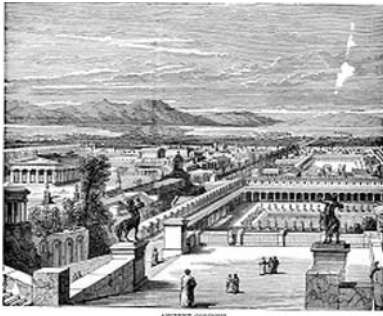
A few days ago I was at work when a nurse handed me a newspaper and pointed to a small article asking me what I thought about it. The article was about a radio station in West Virginia that boasted that it was “giving away a free divorce.” The article from the Associated Press read:

*A Charleston radio station is observing Valentine’s Day with a reminder that Cupid sometimes misses his mark. WKLC-FM, better known as Rock 105, is giving away a free divorce. Valentine’s Day isn’t all hearts and flowers, says WKLC Program Director Jay Nunley. There is a darker side, he said, “where maybe you despise your spouse and resent the entire day.” Through 4 p.m. on Thursday, Valentine’s Day, applications for the free divorce will be accepted on the classic rock station’s website, and the winning name will be drawn at 5 p.m. Nunley cautions that this is a real divorce and people shouldn’t enter if they aren’t serious. Also, people expecting a long, drawn-out legal battle should hire a lawyer because the Rock 105 contest is for a relatively uncomplicated divorce. Charleston attorney Rusty Webb will handle the actual filing. “Sure, we can give away concert tickets, and we do,” said Nunley. “That’s going to make you happy for a little while. This is the chance to make someone happy for the rest of their life.”*

That last line really got me, “This is the chance to make someone happy for the rest of their life.” The sad fact is that in most cases, this is the furthest thing from the truth. Not even considering eternity for a moment—the damage, misery, suffering and child-neglect that has resulted from the epidemic proportion of divorce in the last century is nearly incalculable.

### Jesus Has A Better Way

Sometimes the way of Christ seems hard, unapproachable, or even out of touch. We try to better ourselves and our society with new ways, new ideas and new solutions to our problems. Often it takes a lifetime, or sometimes even generations to realize that serious mistakes have been made. Even though His way is often very challenging, Jesus told us that He supplies the ability to perform anything He is asking us to do. He said, “My yoke is easy and my burden is light.” Surprisingly, in the end we always find there is joy in His way. Jesus said, “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 11:16:33).



**Jesus' teachings are not popular today, and unfortunately, numerous different interpretations abound, turning the words of Christ into nonsense. Interestingly, the further you go back in history, the more literal you find the Church on the subject of divorce and many other controversial teachings.**

In the last three articles on marriage and divorce we primarily focused on the teachings of Jesus. We saw that in these teachings, like many other teachings of the New Testament, Jesus made radical changes in the way things were done under the Old Covenant. Many things concerning marriage were affected. In the Old Testament, polygamy was allowed and divorce was permitted. Divorce and remarriage often went on in rapid numeration, with very few restraining circumstances, particularly for the man. A man could commit adultery only by taking another man's wife; and unfaithfulness to his own wife was only considered fornication.

But then Jesus came, and in the Sermon on the Mount, right there alongside anger, war, lust, law suits, public prayers, storing up treasures, etc., Jesus made radical changes in the way we understand divorce and remarriage. When the teaching of Jesus was looked at in total, it became evident that the essence of His teaching was that marriage, by definition, is actually a miracle from God, whereby two people are made into one indissoluble union. His teaching can be summarized in His words, "*Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh*" (Matt. 19:6).

Summarizing Jesus' teaching, we saw that:

- Divorcing a wife and marrying another is adultery (Mark 10:11-12).
- Marrying someone who has been divorced is adultery (Luke 16:18).
- Divorcing a spouse for any reason except for fornication is to be guilty of causing your spouse to commit adultery (Matt. 5:32, 19:9).

We took special note of this last point. The teaching of *causing* your spouse to commit adultery is often quickly passed over in our reading of this passage. This teaching should put a special check on our hearts when we begin to contemplate divorce—these are indeed challenging words. We saw in the last issue however, that Jesus did give one exception to the guilt of causing your spouse's future adultery, and that was if they were an adulterer already. Albeit, even in the case of adultery,

where separation was permitted, remarriage still was not granted. This would have meant to live the rest of your life single. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we saw that even with such difficult teachings as these, we were not to accomplish them in the flesh but to trust God, who has promised the needed grace to accomplish what He has called us to.

Jesus' teachings are not popular today, and unfortunately, numerous different interpretations abound, turning the words of Christ into nonsense. Modern interpreters disagree on how to interpret the words of Christ. Over the centuries, Jesus' teachings have grown increasingly figurative. Interestingly, the further you go back in history, the more literal you find the Church on the subject of divorce and many other controversial teachings.

### **What Did The Apostle Paul Think?**

The writings of Paul give us the priceless opportunity of having an infallible interpreter of the words of Jesus. It takes the burden of interpreting these passages away from us and puts it onto Paul. The seventh chapter of first Corinthians is vitally important in the understanding of the teaching of Jesus on divorce and remarriage, because many topics discussed there provide actual real-life examples of the teachings of Jesus. The points most contested by modern interpreters are dealt with directly in his writings.

The book of first Corinthians is actually a letter that Paul wrote to the Corinthian church in reply to many questions that they were asking him. We don't have that original Corinthian letter, but throughout the book, little clues and phrases such as, "*now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me,*" supply us with a glimpse of what the Corinthians were asking him. Chapter 7 is particularly helpful because it deals with several contemporary concerns such as:

- The permanence of the marriage bond.
- A summary of Jesus' teaching on divorce, and what is permissible after divorce.

- How we should consider our marriage bonds made before conversion.
- Serious considerations dealing with young people in courtship or betrothal situations.
- Finally, Paul caps off the chapter with his final dictum on divorce and remarriage to avoid any misunderstanding.

## The Context

Coming into Chapter 7, Paul has just finished a difficult and heated rebuke to the men of the church for going to prostitutes.



From the context, flowing into Chapter 7, it would appear that Paul may also be correcting overly-strict chastity standards by the Corinthian wives, implying that this may partly be a cause for the failure of their husbands. Whatever the case, it is safe to say that they were dealing with some very difficult, real-life situations there in Corinth. Paul was taking Christianity to the formerly pagan, idol-worshipping, unlearned, and often illiterate Gentiles.

**In other words, Paul's understanding of Jesus' teaching, simply put, is that a person should not divorce their spouse. This is about as straightforward as you can get.**

This was clearly a clash of two worlds and a clash of two ways of life. But Paul had faith that the ways of Christ had answers for their lives.

One of the most important things to do when reading first Corinthians is to pay special attention to Paul's textual markers. All throughout the book, Paul uses phrases like, "now concerning," "I say therefore," "and unto," "but to the rest speak I." Each of these phrases is given to present a new thought, or to address a separate point of the Corinthian letter.

## Paul's Summary Of The Teaching Of Jesus On Divorce And Remarriage

After addressing the question of marital abstinence and Paul's preference for the single life, Paul introduces

Jesus' teaching on divorce and remarriage, underlining its importance by exhorting them that this is not merely a suggestion but rather a command, "And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband." This passage is important because he is saying here that this is the teaching of Jesus. In other words, Paul's understanding of Jesus' teaching, simply put, is that a person should not divorce their spouse. Consistent with the Gospel accounts, Paul does not soften the message for the Gentiles, nor does he try to explain it away. This is about as straightforward as you can get.

However, the question remains: what do you do if the divorce happens beyond your control? Or even following in line with the teachings of Jesus, what do you do if a separation occurs because of fornication? Paul taught that Jesus did not leave us to wonder. He finished this command of Christ saying: "But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife." Very simply put, Paul is telling the Corinthian church that Jesus taught:

- Divorce is not allowed.
- If a divorce or separation should occur, only two options are open to us: reconciliation or remain single.

## Marriage To An Unbeliever

After quoting these teachings from Jesus to the married, Paul begins to discuss the curious problem of unequally yoked marriages. What do you do when you're a Christian but your spouse is an unbeliever? What if you got into this marriage even before you were a Christian? Should you take into account Paul's teaching about not mixing with the world, and separate from your ungodly spouse? Paul starts the discussion by telling them that he does not have a specific teaching from Jesus dealing with this topic. That should not diminish these teachings for us, but it does again underline the point that what he was saying above in verses 8-11 was explicitly from his understanding of the teachings of Christ.

Concerning these unequally yoked marriages Paul said:

*"But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell*



with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.

Paul lets them know that their relationship with God actually shields them from spiritual defilement. Furthermore, Paul says that if their spouse is willing to stay with them, then they should not leave them or send them away. Interestingly, he encourages them that their faith provides a spiritual cleansing or sanctifying protection over their children, even when an unbeliever is living in the house. He concludes by saying that if the unbelieving spouse is willing, then they should do everything they can to make the marriage work and stay together.

### **But What If They Are Not Pleased To Dwell With You And They Demand That They Are Going To Divorce Or Leave?**

This was a difficult situation for the Corinthians because Jesus said that divorce, even without remarriage, was wrong. Remember that Jesus taught that to separate from a spouse for anything other than adultery was to actually cause your spouse's future adultery. "*Whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery*" (Matthew 5:32). What were these new Corinthian believers to do if their unbelieving spouses left them or demanded a divorce?

In this case Paul tells them that they do not need to fret and fight with them to keep them at home. He releases them to let their unbelieving spouse go. "*But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace. For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?*" (Vs. 15-16).

### **Modern Views Of "Not Under Bondage"**

Some have taken Paul's words "*not under bondage*" or especially the NIV translation, "*is not bound in such circumstances*," to imply that because the spouse left home or rather "deserted," that the marriage bond is now *broken* and the person is free to marry again.

However, the overall context of this chapter does not support this view. Considering what Paul said a few verses before this, and even a few verses after these

verses, where Paul is specifically addressing the permanence of the marriage bond, the view that the divorcee is free to remarry is particularly misleading. It would seem extremely unlikely that in verse 11, when the context might possibly even be dealing with fornication, as Paul says, "*but and if she depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband:*" that he would now give the complete opposite counsel on the matter and say that you don't have to remain unmarried, and you don't need to worry about reconciliation! The clear language of what to do after divorce was already clearly established, "*remain unmarried or be reconciled.*" Why stretch this passage to say something that it simply does not say?

### **What About The Greek Word For *Bond*? Is This The Same Word In Greek As The *Marriage Bond*?**

Many modern interpreters have also made an argument based on Paul's wording for "marriage bond," suggesting that it is linked

with Paul's words, "*not under bondage*," or again as the NIV reads, "*is not bound in such circumstances*." They suggest that the words are similar in origin and share some kind of root word similarities. With this thought they once again conclude that the marriage bond is broken and the person is free to remarry. This is also an unfortunate teaching. While it is true that these words are close in English, and may even share some kind of Greek "root family" similarities, the *actual* words used in the Greek are very different. John Piper makes these observations about the use of these Greek words:



**Remember that Jesus taught that to separate from a spouse for anything other than adultery was to actually cause your spouse's future adultery.**

The word used for "*bound*" (*douloo*) in verse 15 is not the same word used in verse 39 where Paul says, "*A wife is bound (deo) to her husband as long as he lives.*" Paul consistently uses *deo* when

**It is not the (sin of) divorce which makes remarriage impossible for the Christian; it is the (original) marriage. Only death dissolves the marriage bond, and therefore only death sets a person free to remarry.**

speaking of the legal aspect of being bound to one marriage partner (Romans 7:2; 1 Corinthians 7:39), or to one's betrothed (1 Corinthians 7:27). But when he refers to a deserted spouse not being bound in 1 Corinthians 7:15, he chooses a different word (*douloo*) which we would expect him to do if he were not giving a deserted spouse the same freedom to remarry that he gives to a spouse whose partner has died (verse 39). The last phrase of verse 15 ("God has called us to peace") supports verse 15 best if Paul is saying that a deserted partner is not "bound to make war" on the deserting unbeliever to get him or her to stay. It seems to me that the peace God has called us to is the peace of marital harmony. Therefore, if the unbelieving partner insists on departing, then the believing partner is not bound to live in perpetual conflict with the unbelieving spouse, but is free and innocent in letting him or her go.

John Piper concludes this controversial passage: "1 Corinthians 7:15 does not mean that when a Christian is deserted by an unbelieving spouse he or she is free to remarry. It means that the Christian is not bound to fight in order to preserve togetherness. Separation is permissible if the unbelieving partner insists on it."

### **What If All This Happens Before Conversion?**

This discussion about unequally yoked marriages brings up a serious question about the marriage bond it-

self. The argument is often made today that Jesus and Paul might have taught against divorce and remarriage but all of that counts only if it happened *after* what is considered to be a true conversion. They say "If all of this happened *before* my conversion, then I conclude that it no longer applies to me." These people feel that since the *sin* happened before their conversion then it can be forgiven like any other sin. Andrew Cronos directly addresses this common misconception by pointing to the very essence of the marriage bond:

It is frequently stated in Christian circles today that the teaching of the New Testament on the subject of divorce and remarriage only applies to those who become Christians before or during their first marriage....This argument, which one meets very frequently among contemporary Christians, makes a number of very serious mistakes. Most important of all, it assumes that it is the sin (of divorce) which prevents remarriage. If this sin can be removed, by forgiveness, then no barrier to remarriage remains. This view is so obviously flawed that it is amazing how tenacious it is. If sin is really the barrier, what does the time of conversion to Christ have to do with it? Surely sin committed after conversion can be fully forgiven and removed? ...Jesus does not base his prohibition of remarriage on the sin of divorce. He bases it on the fact that remarriage would be legalized adultery. In other words, He bases it on the fact that the marriage bond continues to exist despite the divorce. It is not the (sin of) divorce which makes remarriage impossible for the Christian; it is the (original) marriage. Only death dissolves the marriage bond, and therefore only death sets a person free to remarry" (Divorce & Remarriage, pg. 246-247).

### **To The Unmarried And Betrothed**

In verse 25 Paul is clearly beginning a new section, making the statement, "Now concerning virgins." As mentioned before in dealing with unequally yoked marriages, Paul tells them that he has no direct commandment from Jesus on this issue, "Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful." In this section, from verses 26-38, Paul is addressing what betrothal couples should do during the difficult times that they were experiencing. Paul had just made the argu-

ment that everyone should remain in the state in which they were called. He also lifted up the single life, even rivaling that of married life as respects devotion to God. Now, concerning “*the present distress*,” the natural question that had arisen in Corinth was what to do with couples that had established betrothals and arranged marriages already. In these verses Paul again lifts up the single life, but he makes it clear that these couples are not sinning if they go ahead and get married. This entire section reads very naturally as a discussion addressing these courting couples.

## Modern Confusion

Some have ignored the indications that this is the beginning of a new section (*Now concerning virgins*) and have tried to turn the words, “*Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned*”, into a license to remarry. They again attempt to tie this passage back to the previous verses dealing with the “deserted”. They insist that Paul is still addressing the issue of the deserted spouse from the preceding section and thereby conclude that Paul is making yet another argument for remarriage. Some support this argument by saying that the word “*wife*” in this passage demands that this section refers to a married person. While this point might be substantiated in English language, it must be taken into consideration that the word “*wife*” in the Greek is simply the word “*woman*” and does not make a distinction. Furthermore, when considering the totality of the passage, pressing the word beyond this becomes a big stretch.

These are all unfortunate interpretations of this passage. A natural reading of the passage, coupled with Paul’s subject marker “*now concerning virgins*,” makes this whole argument pretty unlikely. With this in mind, verses 26-38 read very naturally from start to finish concerning the marriage of people involved in a betrothal or prearranged marriage. Do not forget, instructions as to what to do if a married person divorces had already been specifically and explicitly addressed back in verses 10-16. To say now that the divorcee is free to remarry would completely contradict all the instruction given back in the previous passage.

## The Betrothed Couple

A small, but significant point worthy of mention here, is the wording “*and if a virgin marry*” from verse 28. Andrew Cornes brings out that in the Greek, Paul uses the definite article “*he parthenos*” which is prop-

erly translated “*the virgin*,” not “*a virgin*”. As the Young’s Literal Translation reads, “*But and if thou mayest marry, thou didst not sin; and if the virgin may marry, she did not sin.*” The way it is worded currently almost implies two completely separate subjects. This doesn’t necessarily change the section all that much, but the proper wording would make the flow even more clear. The discussion is clearly about the betrothed couple, not two different subjects.

## Paul’s Final Word On The Marriage Bond

Concluding this whole section Paul, or rather the Holy Spirit through Paul, wanted to make sure that no one misunderstood this chapter. Once again he proclaimed his final dictum concerning the marriage bond and remarriage in very simple, clear and concise words: “*The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.*”

Interestingly, a very similar statement was made to the Romans when the topic being discussed had nothing to do with divorce and remarriage at all. In Romans, it came instead from a discussion about the Law. There, Paul said:

*Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be*



**Admittedly, mopping up the mistakes of hundreds of years of deep-seated precedent and preconceived ideas is a challenge for any serious-minded church today. However, we cannot just turn our back on them, malign them, or wish they would just go away.**





*dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man (Romans 7:1-3).*

Paul made some pretty strong statements here. He once again spoke in unmistakable clarity that the marriage bond was for life, and that only death made a person free to remarry. It would be hard to wiggle out of this statement and start looking for loopholes and exceptions. However, as clear as his words are, the Romans passage is usually quickly dismissed because the context under discussion here in Romans 7 is the use of the Law, not divorce and remarriage. For the most part, I would agree with this reasoning and dismiss the statement as well. However, the fact that Paul repeats almost the exact same thought over in I Corinthians makes it difficult for me to completely dismiss the Romans passage altogether. Whatever the case, there can be no doubt that in I Corinthians 7:39 Paul is specifically dealing with remarriage, and there he *distinctly* states that the marriage bond is for life and that only the death of a spouse makes a person free to remarry.

## Conclusion

At the beginning of his discussion on marriage and divorce, Paul summarized the teaching of Jesus:

*“And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.” (1 Cor. 7:10-11)*

Now at the end of the chapter Paul summarizes all his teaching as:

*“The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.” (1 Cor. 7:39)*

Paul begins and ends his discussion on marriage and divorce very succinctly:

- The marriage bond is for life; therefore any divorce in the eyes of man is merely a separation.
- Therefore, if a divorce occurs only two options are open to us: reconciliation or remain single.

As I have tried to stress in each article, I realize that these teachings are hard. Divorce is not just a doctrine or an argument; it affects real people with real lives, in real painful situations. Nevertheless, the Church is called to minister in every painful situation. Admittedly, mopping up the mistakes of hundreds of years of deep-seated precedent and preconceived ideas is a challenge for any serious-minded church today. However, we cannot just turn our back on them, malign them, or wish they would just go away. We must start with the words of Scripture, without compromise, and pray for direction. *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16)*. At times this all may seem like majoring on a minor point of Scripture. I hope this is not the case. However, let’s not forget Jesus’ initial words to us at the beginning of The Sermon on the Mount, *“Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:19)*. Holding on to every word of God’s truth, we can count on God’s promises to bless, provide and guide our way. □

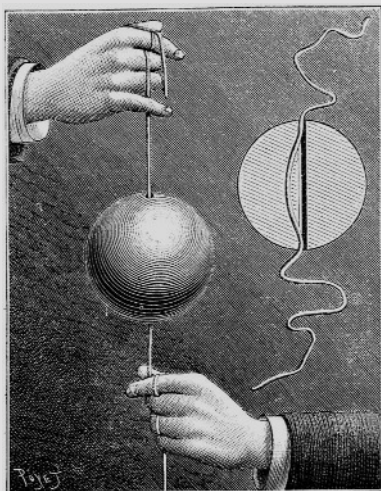
*[The next issue we will be looking at divorce and remarriage in the early Church.]*

If this is your first issue and you would like a copy of the previous 3 parts in this series on “Marriage, Divorce & Remarriage”, call Charity Ministries at 800-227-7902 or go to [www.charityministries.org/theremnant](http://www.charityministries.org/theremnant) and click on “Archives” on the left.



# Optional Illusions

by Dave Esh



The title of this article is a play on words. A common term is optical illusion, which is defined as “a visual experience in which there is some kind of false perception of what is actually there”. It could be the sleight of hand when someone pulls rabbits out of a hat, or seeing a mirage of a lake in the middle of a desert. An illusion is simply something that deceives.

It is the tendency of fallen man to believe whatever most closely fits his agenda. Choosing to believe a lie, or refusing to accept truth is not unusual. Overrating possibilities or believing the illogical is quite common. Evolution is just one of many examples. Creation scientist Duane Gish likes to say, “It is unbelievable what an unbeliever has to believe in order to be an unbeliever.”

All too often, professing Christians are not far behind. Deceiving themselves, they choose to believe that which clearly contradicts the Word of God. The worst kinds of deception are often founded on partial truths. The following verses clearly show the pattern, or steps that are taken, when choosing to believe a lie. Exalting ourselves, questioning God, etc., has changed little since the fall in the Garden of Eden.

78.5% of Americans claim to be Christians. The vast majority have chosen to believe some or all of the lies listed in this article. Paul describes them in this verse:

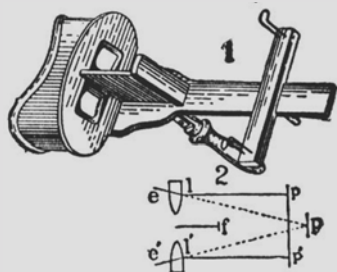
*Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. ( Rom 1:22-25)*

## ILLUSION #1

### Works Salvation

Let’s first look at an illusion that is taught by many religions and even many sects of Christianity. This is the claim that we are saved by our works. The view is that God has scales that He uses to measure our performance in life. If our good works outweigh our failures, it somehow entitles us to eternity with Christ.

This is a lie that is perpetrated by the enemy of our souls, and often brings us to despair. Our human frailties and failures will hinder us from meeting our



**It is very clear that salvation is an act of grace by a merciful God. The only payment that satisfied a just and holy God was the blood of the perfect sacrifice of the Lord Jesus. Works are the expected response to a true act of grace in our life.**

own expectations, let alone the requirements of a just and holy God.

The infinite holiness of God and His required perfection make it obvious that it is impossible to earn our salvation. Isa 64:6 tells us that “*we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away...*”

In several places in the New Testament, we are warned that an attitude of a “*works salvation*” is an attack on the cross of Christ.

*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. (Eph 2:8-9)*

*Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. (Gal 2:16)*

God makes it very clear that He will not share His glory with fallen man. And why should we expect Him to do so? Do we really believe that we can add anything to the cross?

*But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. (Gal 6:14)*

*To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; (Eph 1:6-7)*

There are many verses that make it absolutely clear that salvation is not for sale. It is far too valuable and totally unattainable for us. Any claim to earning it, even in

part, disqualifies us from receiving it. It is very clear that salvation is an act of Grace by a merciful God. The only payment that satisfied a just and holy God was the blood of the perfect sacrifice of the Lord Jesus. “*It is finished*” meant “Paid in full.”

## **ILLUSION #2**

### Works Don't Matter

This lie tells us that because salvation is only by grace through faith, the way we live does not affect our standing with Christ. We are told that obedience is mechanical and only because we love God. It has no bearing on our salvation or relationship with Him. We are often told that if we are saved we will *want* to serve Him. It is automatic. The insinuation is that we have no obligation to do so. Obedience is strictly voluntary.

Although we have seen in the above verses that salvation is a gift, totally unmerited, there are many others that we must contend with to complete our picture. In doing so, we must do it with the full knowledge that God will not contradict Himself. Therefore, while acknowledging that salvation is a free gift of God the following few verses would indicate that works are still very important.

*For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. (Matt 16:27)*

*And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. (Rev 20:12)*

*And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. (Rev 22:12)*



*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. (Matt 7:21)*

Works are the expected response to a true act of grace in our life. To say that works are unrelated to salvation requires tremendous gymnastics with God's Word. What do we do with the following teachings of our Lord if our works are meaningless?

*Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. ...Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. (Matt 25:34-46)*

The above verses show us that compassion on the poor is rewarded in eternity. It is significant to note that recipients of this reward do not realize or claim to be deserving of anything.

On the other hand, Jesus also explains that sins of omission are subject to harsh and final judgment.

*Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.*

Scripture tells us in 1 Cor 6:9 that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. "Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind."

We can see then, that our works flowing from a true act of grace and a living faith actually play a very important part in our relationship with God.

## ILLUSION #3

### "Sinner's Prayer" Salvation

This illusion says that salvation is a once and done thing. This is the belief that if we repented and trusted in Christ for our salvation, even as a child, it is impossible for us to lose our place with him in eternity. This doctrine violates many clear Bible teachings. Misused verses include the following:

*For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom 8:38-39)*

We are told we must never doubt our salvation after conversion. A new convert was told that even if he went into a bank, robbed it and then shot the teller on his way out, he would remain saved! His question begs an answer: "What then am I saved from?" It seems, according to some, the worst possible sin is to question our salvation. But is it not wisdom to examine ourselves? God tells us that it is.

*Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? (2 Cor 13:5)*

It is clear that we can count on God to remain faithful. Our confidence in Him should be absolute. If we are His servants and remain in Him, He will never abandon us.

*All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. (John 6:37)*

However, our confidence in ourselves should be much more limited. The fact that God is faithful and will never leave us does not mean that we have no more responsibility in our relationship with Him. We are not robots. He will give us power to overcome spiritual enemies but does not force us to use that power. We still have choices and a

free will. He will not leave us, but that does not mean that we cannot leave Him. *“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”* (1 Cor 10:12)

The Apostle Paul said that he was pressing on his whole life so that he would not be a castaway. *“But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”* (1 Cor 9:27) If the apostle Paul was concerned about being a castaway, how much more should we?

**Other verses to consider:**

*“But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.”* (Matt 24:13) Does this verse mean that if we do not endure unto the end, we will not be saved? If not, why is it in the Bible? The Apostle Paul warned us *“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;”* (1 Tim 4:1) How can one depart from the faith unless he was first in the faith? Peter testifying before the Sanhedrin said, *“And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.”* (Acts 5:32)

Peter said the Holy Ghost is only given to them that obey. To believe that God has some kind of obligation to save those who have no part in Him is deception at its worst. We are instructed to *“give diligence to make our calling and election sure”*. The promise is that if we do these things, we shall never fall. Again, doesn't this imply that if we are not diligent than our calling and election is in question?

**What, Then, is Truth?**

Believing God and accepting the Bible at face value is not that difficult for those who love truth. There is really no inconsistency in the above passages. In the first part, there is no question that we cannot save ourselves. But we must also realize that God is under no obligation to extend His grace [unmerited favor] upon anyone un-

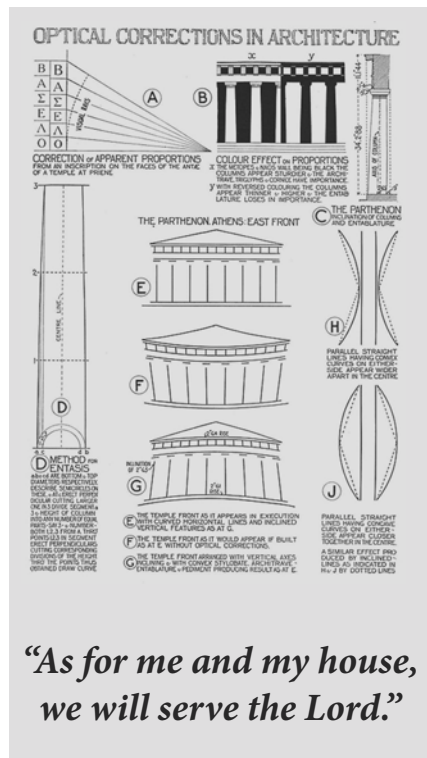
less He chooses to do so. Furthermore, there is no question that His promises are conditional. Salvation is a gift, but that does not mean that it is unconditionally available to everyone who lays claim to it.

God reserves the right to give His gifts to those he chooses. It is clear that He chooses to impart the totally undeserved gift of salvation on those who have faith in Him. Recipients are required to serve Him and to trust and obey.

God does not expect or demand sinless perfection. In I John 2:1 we have this blessed verse *“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous”*. God is faithful. He continues to pour out His love and grace on His undeserving and unprofitable servants. Oh! Isn't it awesome! The amazing grace of God.

But, the unrepentant, rebellious, and unregenerate should not presume on this grace. To think that because a man once voiced a sinner's prayer in temporary repentance, that he now has limited the options of God, is arrogant and a very dangerous presumption. James 1:21-22 says, *“Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”* Toward the end of the Bible the book of Revelation proclaims *“Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.”* (Rev 22:14)

We do believe in eternal security, but we also believe that God's eternal security is conditional. We know we can trust God. I John 1:9 tells us, *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”* God is faithful and He is full of mercy. If we remain in Him we can fully trust Him for our eternal well-being. The Bible is clear. The promises and warnings contained therein are not ambiguous. We do not need doctorates in theology to understand its truths. We need only to choose this day whom we will serve. Let's stand with Joshua as he pledges, *“As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”* □



***“As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”***



## RISE UP, O MEN OF GOD!

### Leadership Seminar 2008

*Brotherhood and Fatherhood, all for the Lord Jesus*

*Personal report and testimony by Glendon Fox*

**W**e planned and prayed and prepared for Leadership Seminar this year with lots of expectation. We converted our office into a bedroom to house our guests, and made the necessary preparations at work and at home to have the week off. But most of all we prepared our hearts to meet with God. I think the part that I was looking forward to the most was the opportunity to set aside all the distractions of our busy schedules and (most of) our responsibilities, and devote a whole week to spend in the presence of God. My prayer was to receive a fresh vision and direction from God. I knew that I was not experiencing in my daily life even half of the beautiful things God has promised to the believer in His Word. I made a commitment before the week began that I would not hold anything back from God that He asked of me. It did give me a little apprehension to say this, but I knew that this is the only way that God can do anything to change us.

The week began with all of us meeting together Sunday morning for worship. David Cooper illustrated to us our ability to have a heart-to-heart relationship with God. It is our privilege to learn to know the very seat of God's emotions and desires. No other religion views

their god in this way. Most other religions see God as distant and removed from His people, with no real concern



**I MADE A COMMITMENT BEFORE THE WEEK BEGAN THAT I WOULD NOT HOLD ANYTHING BACK FROM GOD THAT HE ASKED OF ME. IT DID GIVE ME A LITTLE APPREHENSION TO SAY THIS, BUT I KNEW THAT THIS IS THE ONLY WAY THAT GOD CAN DO ANYTHING TO CHANGE US.**



or love for each individual. Yet most Christians go through their entire lives never putting forth the effort to find out who God really is.

This message somewhat set the tone for my week, as God gave me a great desire to get to know Christ in a real way, not just look like a good Christian. And I could tell that there were many more men who had the same vision. In the mornings as we arrived, at our breaks, over the meals, and in our prayer groups, the conversations centered around Jesus Christ. In fact, I went the whole week without once hearing anything about the Super Bowl, and at the end of the week I still did not know who had won, nor did I care.

I think my favorite part of the whole week was the time we spent in our prayer groups. Every afternoon we divided into groups of approximately nine men each for prayer and sharing. It is so amazing how after five days of praying together for an hour and a half each day, I felt a closer bond to those men than to some friends whom I have known for years. We also had the thrill of watching a young man in our prayer group turn his life around. When I met him Monday, he was confused. He was sure he was a Christian, yet he did not have peace and was very distraught over all the sin he had allowed to come into his life. On Wednesday, with a glowing face, he told me that he found what it meant to be truly born again. Hallelujah! Jesus Christ is still changing lives!

That evening during the service the preacher mentioned that the apostles always baptized someone immediately when they believed in Christ. He went on to say that if you don't want to be baptized or think it has to be this perfect little ceremony at just the right time and place, he wonders if you are truly born again. That night this young man found the man who had led him to Christ and the one who preached that evening and asked to be baptized. After discussing it with him and praying together he still was convinced that this is what God wanted him to do. So Wednesday night, at 11:30 PM, he was baptized in the cold water of Cocalico Creek, officially giving up his position in the US Army to become a soldier in the army of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In this prayer group I also discovered the power of confession of sin. The one night God convicted me that I needed to confess a particular sin that I had been hiding. Although I was very humiliated, I shared this with my prayer group. I was so amazed at what happened next. No one condemned me, but rather they all encouraged me. And then it was like a wall had crumbled, and we all shared hurts and failures that we had in our lives, and there were issues that had been buried for years that were brought up and dealt with. If it were not

for the blood of Jesus Christ, where could we go to have our sins forgiven?!

Several men commented on the spirit of brokenness that was felt throughout the week. Every evening it seemed the altars were full, and even during the day or in the middle of sermons it was not uncommon for men to come forward weeping and making things right with God. Sometimes it is disturbing when people admit who they really are and what they have done; and you wonder how these things could have possibly happened. But it is so exciting to know that as we repent of our sins, God is always willing not only to forgive but also to break the power of sin over us.

Denny Kenaston preached the first sessions each day on the subject of "The Incomparable Christ; A Study in Christ-Centered Theology." This awesome subject is inexhaustible. Bro. Denny said that with a subject like this he knows he cannot go wrong. Is it not awesome that all of history points to Christ and all future will also point to Christ? Jesus Christ is the reason I am writing this and the reason you are reading this. One thing I had never thought of before was how God took men like Mao Tse Tung who were determined to destroy all religion and used them to create an emptiness in people's lives so that today Christ is being glorified in China. Christ must be the central motive for everything we do. Christ not only is our God and Creator, but He is also our perfect example of humility, love, patience, submission, etc. Christ expected us to follow His example as a missionary, and He promised, "Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men".

If we are not fishers of men, can we be followers of Jesus? I was challenged to keep Christ my focus, even in the practical or little things. If Jesus Christ does not change your life, then you are not serving the Jesus of the Bible.

Mose Stoltzfus preached on "The Value of the Church in the Believer's Life." This session was full of practical applications and biblical principles for the local church. I would recommend that each Remnant or conservative church get a set and listen to it. Mose was very practical in describing Christ's plan for His church. In a land of individualism, pride, and affluence, the church is under attack like never before. Many of us have come out of churches where apostasy was rampant. As a result we can react from these situations and hold everyone suspect who disagrees with us. We were shown how we can thwart God's plans and cheat ourselves and our families when we do not find a fellowship of believers that we can be a part of.

Jesus Christ has said that His fan is in His hand and He will thoroughly purge His floor (speaking of the

method used in His time to separate wheat kernels from the plant). Throughout church history, Christ has allowed either persecution or false doctrines to come into the church to weed out the false ones and prepare for Himself a pure church. May God give us the wisdom to

warm-up for the teen years. I pray that many more fathers would catch the vision of this man. This has been so heartbreaking to watch the laziness men have in their relationships with their families. Too many Christian men put much effort into their careers or ministry, but then they “hope” that their children will turn out all right without putting forth the effort it takes to make it happen.



I was convicted of my own failures as a parent, but also encouraged as he illustrated some of the beautiful things that we can give our children. While many of us spent years undoing the damage sin has done in our lives, our children will never have to face some of those battles. And the battles they are facing as they grow from children into men can be won much more easily if the father stands beside his son and fights the battle with him. Don't give up!

Throughout the session Rick Leibee compared child training to the battle of Iwo Jima. This was a decisive battle over a little island in the Pacific Ocean during WWII. He said that the battle of Iwo Jima was won one inch at a time, and if they would have given up 50 yards from the top they would have still lost.

The whole week was a tremendous blessing to our family. The one evening, as we joined in singing with people from all across the continent and as far away as South Africa, I had to think that this might be the closest we will get to heaven here on earth. There we will also be joining in with so many

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be able to surrender our good ideas, but resist false teachings. This will and can happen only when we are totally surrendered to Christ.

As a young father, I took special interest in Rick Leibee's teachings on "Fathers and Sons: A Holy Journey". I know how difficult it can be training young children, and Bro. Rick said the first 12 years are only a

others, singing praises to our Redeemer with all our hearts. My prayer for each family and church represented at Leadership Seminar is that it would not be just an exciting week, but a life-changing experience that would bring revival to this country and throughout the world and last throughout eternity. □

# Technology Dictates Morality

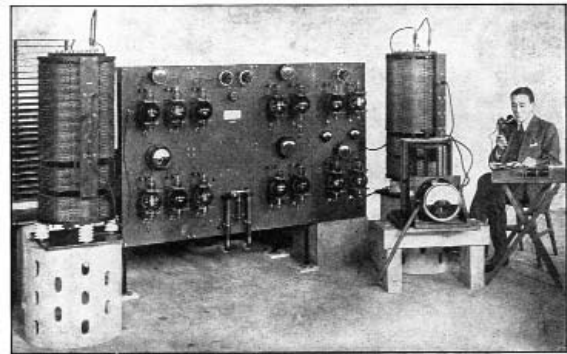
by Chester Weaver



Technology dictates morality—really? Isn't technology morally neutral? How can it dictate morality? Is not the reverse the truth: morality dictates technology? What is the truth here? Western society has been trained to worship technology. Technology has proven humanly beneficial in so many ways. It has relieved suffering in incredible ways. Technological advances in medicine save lives and speed recovery for those afflicted. Moving from point A to point B is so much faster and easier today than it was just one hundred years ago. Cars, trucks, and airplanes have made so much difference. Computers have made recordkeeping a cinch and thus have freed manpower to be creative in the workplace. Children no longer even need a typing teacher; a computer program does the teaching.

In fact, if we have a problem one of the first things we think about is how a computer could solve this problem for us. Why suffer if it's not necessary? We have learned to think in terms of technology. This kind of thinking is not all bad but it is not all good either. What do I mean? Recently when the iPhone was released, people stood in long lines for the privilege to get one immediately upon release. The iPhone had packed a cell phone, an iPod, and a PDA into one fun-to-use unit. The cell phone had solved a communication problem earlier, the iPod had solved an entertainment problem, and the PDA had solved an organizational and memory problem. Now, wonder of wonders, the iPhone

put all three together



into one fun-to-use unit. Suddenly the previous cell phone, the iPod, and the PDA were outdated—one unit is better than three separate units. Any thinking person can see the instant advantage.

And so it goes. Technology proceeds with one improvement after another. And there is no end in sight. Mankind steps back in awe and says, "What hath man wrought? I must have one!" The technology worshipers prepare themselves for the next line to stand in. Where is God in all this? Is God in the iPhone? Is God in the computer? Is God in the automobile? Is technology a gift from God? Maybe. Maybe not. With all its problem solving has technology improved marriages? What is the evidence? Has a sense of community, of needing and being needed, deepened? Has relationship with God deepened and broadened? Are families of better quality? Has character development kept pace with technology?

Are people in general becoming wiser about the issues of life because of Internet access? With all the fun



**Where is God in all this? Is technology a gift from God? Have relationships with God deepened and broadened? Are families of better quality? Has character development kept pace with technology?**



generated with computer games are children more satisfied and content today than they were before the advent of computer games? As suffering decreases does morality increase? In other words, has technology moved man closer to God and others than he was previously? When each new gadget appears, the older folks stand back a bit while the younger generation rushes in. The older folks marvel while the younger “catch on” and run with it. The older folks marvel again. They plead with the young to teach them how to use it. Delighted with the request, the young gladly teach.

And so it goes. Eventually the older folks acquiesce in a quiet acceptance. “Everyone” is immersed in technology. “Everyone” is buying it. Nobody suffers. Keeping pace with all the technological advancements is the steady pace of consumerism. “Everybody” needs the technology. Who does not have a car today? Who lacks a computer? Who does not have a cell phone? And when the new version appears, we need to upgrade. And when we have all these, we look around for whatever else we might need. No lack there because the advertisements continually remind us of what we need. And so we spend our money on good food (thank God for good food!) while our middles increase in size. We buy more “toys” so that we can have more fun (God wants us to enjoy ourselves!) and our Bibles get used less and less. We need so much stuff that soon we need a storage barn to keep it dry. (Good stewardship!) And the landfills! They increase in size every day.

And so where has the money gone? Into souls? Into service? Into sacrifice? Or into technology? Where have our lives gone? Into mammon (wealth) or into people? Into materialism or into Jesus? Into myself or into you? Each little idol snatches a bit from its owner. A bit of time, a bit of money, a bit of attention, a bit of worship. And when all those bits are lumped together, what is left to the owner? A starved and puny soul. If a man gains the whole world and loses his own soul, what does he really have when it is all said and done?

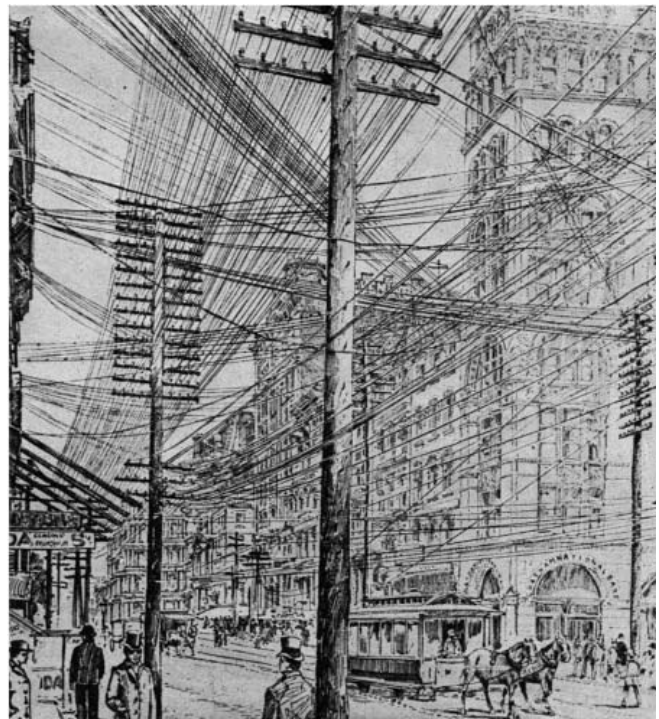
**Here is a test.** If I had adequate food, clothing, and shelter for a year and during that year I spent no money on myself (no consumerism and no technology) but instead I poured my energies into people, how would I fare? I would be miserable by the end of the year if I was a consumer. I would be bored stiff if unfolding technology was my life. But if I was into enduring values, I would be happier at the end of the year than at the beginning. Things do not satisfy. Technology does not satisfy. Consumerism does not satisfy. God does satisfy the inner longings of the heart. Our lives are fulfilled when they are engaged with God and with people.

**Another test:** If Jesus Christ was literally at location A, would I get in line to visit with Him? That would depend on the worship object of my heart. And if I did see Him, what would He say to me? “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto Me.” Am I in line now waiting to serve Jesus in the form of “the needy?” (I am exposing the worship object of my heart today.)

A few remaining questions to ponder: Where would we be in national morality today if our suffering had kept pace with our technology? What happens to moral character that is yielded to suffering? What does suffering teach that technology cannot teach? What would happen to me if I refused some “legitimate” technology in the interest of my own moral well-being? What informed Jesus when He was here, suffering or technology? What informs us? Does technology dictate morality? You bet it does!

The unconscious choices people make as they pursue technology are evidence of the subtle but strong enticement technology has upon the innate lusts of people. □

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or into Jesus?**



"A rough country and short grub," was the terse description of Illinois in early times by a pioneer circuit rider preacher of Pope County. With courage equal to the hardships encountered, the circuit rider preacher told of riding on horseback for fourteen miles, conducting two services and then helping his host to beat the meal for the dinner bread. Later in the day, he traveled on several miles through a cypress swamp and preached again in the evening. For the year's work, he received in cash \$62.50.



While preaching a sermon one day, John Wesley was dismayed to find that several members of his congregation had fallen asleep.

"Fire! Fire!" he suddenly cried, whereupon the guilty parishioners jumped up with alarm.

"Where?" they demanded, glancing around.

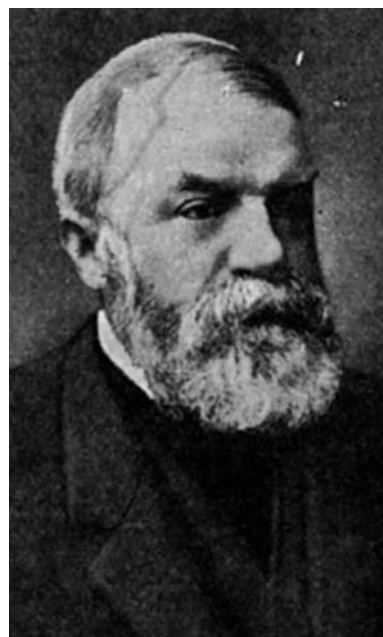
"In hell," Wesley replied, "for those who sleep under the preaching of the Word!"



While D.L. Moody was attending a convention in Indianapolis on mass evangelism, he asked his song leader Ira Sankey to meet him at 6 o'clock one evening at a certain street corner. When Sankey arrived, Mr. Moody asked him to stand on a box and sing.

Once a crowd had gathered, Moody spoke briefly and then invited the people to follow him to the nearby convention hall. Soon the auditorium was filled with spiritually hungry people, and the great evangelist preached the gospel to them.

Then the convention delegates began to arrive. Moody stopped preaching and said, "Now we must close, as the brethren of the convention wish to come and discuss the topic, 'How to reach the masses.'"



## 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2008 Financial Report

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<b>01/01/08 Beginning Balance</b>	<b>\$15,172.34</b>
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### Receipts

Tape Ministry Donations	\$50,059.81
Remnant Subscription Donations	\$7,622.00
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>\$57,681.81</b>

### Disbursements

UPS & Postage	\$6,922.46
Tapes, Albums, CD's & Labels	\$11,210.28
Equipment & Software Purchases	\$4,952.02
Equipment Maint & Repairs	\$776.23
Mailing & Office Supplies	\$2,009.08
Rent	\$3,000.00
Telephone	\$861.82
Website Development & Maintenance	\$498.29
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Miscellaneous	\$772.48
Payroll Expense	\$20,000.01
Books & Catalogs	\$616.63
Remnant Publishing & Mailing	\$6,256.93
<b>Total Disbursements</b>	<b>\$57,876.23</b>

<b>03/31/08 Ending Balance</b>	<b>\$14,977.92</b>
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<b>Difference</b>	<b>-\$194.42</b>
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# Until the Daybreak

*The night is dark, yet stars are studded  
Jewel-like on the midnight sky,  
Puffs of filmy clouds have scudded  
From the breezes' evening sigh;  
On the wind a gentle calling  
Of a wooing nighttime bird;  
Dew, still falling, sweetly falling,  
Reflects the moon like silver blurred.*

*Ah, night is dark! And yet its grandeur  
Soft and gentle, sweet, sublime,  
Moonlight gleams in silent splendor,  
Slowly fall the sands of time;  
The Lord can soften midnight's starkness—  
Until the daybreak, sunrise clear,  
He is with us in the darkness,  
And through our trials... God is near.*

*Claudia Esh  
June 23, 2007*

*The Heartbeat of*

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**Charity Christian Fellowship**

PUBLICATION OFFICE

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