

# Grace and Glory

Declaring unto you the Whole counsel of God

**Definite**

**SIGN POSTS**

**Of The End**

Paul N. Smith

“Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the Name of God forever and ever; for wisdom and might are His; and He changeth the times and the seasons; He removeth kings and setteth up kings; He giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding; He revealeth the deep and secret things . . . (Daniel 2:20-23).

ALL THINGS ARE IN GOD’S HANDS! It’s difficult for us to comprehend this at times. We are reminded throughout the Scriptures that God was either on the scene, or just behind the scenes, engineering every situation. He was present when the Red Sea was rolled back, and He was responsible for manna to mysteriously appear six days a week those forty years. Today, because His Son was made flesh and experienced all our pains, He is in every “sick room,” where there is a trusting heart. He stands nearby at the cemetery when grieving loved ones gather. He sits nearby to comfort everyone hurt by an unkind word, or a spiteful deed. Jesus understands all these things, and intercedes for us. These are personal experiences, but He is interested in all the affairs of mankind, and what is happening within nations and all that man proposes to do. We can be assured that whatever happens today, the Lord is well able to take care of it.

**SPECIAL NOTE:** I did not know if I would be able to write the Sign Posts this month, so I asked Brother Gene Hawkins if he would try to write something. The following article was written by him. I expect to be back to work full time, and will resume writing the “Sign Posts.” Our hope is that Jesus will return soon and there will be no need to write about the signs of the times. Thank you for bearing with us.

## **SIGN POSTS**

By Gene Hawkins

*“His foundation is in the holy mountains. The LORD loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah.”*  
-- (Psalm 87:1-3)

This Psalm along with other Scriptures, declares that Jerusalem belongs to God. According to statements we hear today, such is not the case. National leaders seem to think that they can do whatever they please with this “holy city.”

It can be called the “holy city” because God laid claim to it many years ago. We read in these verses that the very foundation and center of all God’s dealings with the nations, are in this city. Verse 1 declares that He has chosen this city and that glorious things are spoken of her. Jerusalem, or Zion, is called the “city of God,” and men would do well to remember that as well to observe the word, “Selah.” This means to “pause, stop and think on what has been declared.

“IT’S TIME FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PALESTINIAN STATE,” U. S. Secretary of State Condleeza Rice stated recently. She continued to “prod” Israel and the Palestinians to agree to start formal peace talks. Her statement was made at a news conference with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas during a four-day Middle East shuttle diplomacy mission. The United States sees the establishment of a Palestinian state and a two-state solution as absolutely essential for the future, and not only between Israelis and Palestinians, but also for the entire Middle East, and indeed, to American interests.

Secretary Rice is scheduled to meet again with the Palestinians and Israelis, and will meet Jordan’s king, Abdullah II in London, “in a bid to build support for the meeting among skeptical Arab nations.” Jerusalem is not only a center which God has claimed, but a great number of nations are very much interested in her.

There are a multitude of issues to be resolved, and there is nothing to indicate that any of the parties involved have enquired of God, the Real Owner of that disputed city. Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has said that he has never seen the Declaration to be endorsed in Annapolis which President Bush hopes will lead to a final settlement of this long-running conflict. The U. S. favors a more vague “final status issues” such as the borders of a Palestinian state, etc. As might be expected, the Palestinians have said that they will not attend the conference without a document that contains details on these matters, as well as a specific time for their resolution.

Both sides are “digging in’ to obtain their own objectives, but there is some indication that Israel will be ready, once again, to compromise. Secretary Rice declined to reveal her private discussions with Israeli and Palestinian officials, but suggested that neither side would get its way in their demands for the joint statement. Prime Minister Olmert hinted recently that he is ready to share control of Jerusalem, saying, for the first time, that Israel could do without controlling some of the holy city’s outlying Arab neighborhoods. That “holy” city refers to God’s assessment of Jerusalem under the control of Christ, and as a result of His work of Redemption. Israel does not recognize such Redemption, and thus they are once again ready to relinquish land that belongs to God. This will never happen on a permanent basis, for God has boldly declared, “The land shall not be sold forever;; for the land is Mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me” (Leviticus 25:23)

Israel has a long history of making agreements with the nations. We well remember the “Camp David Accords” during the Carter Administration, which involved the dispute over the Sinai Peninsula and the West Bank. Israel made major concessions in removing troops from the Sinai and agreeing to

negotiations to establish an autonomous, self-governing authority in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. In return, this nation has received \$3 billion annually since 1985, in grants and military-aid packages from the U.S. The Clinton White House brokered a land-for-peace deal, and though they have relinquished lands and control, Israel has never enjoyed the safety and contentment for which she so desperately longs. She goes on, making agreements with those nations. When Israel had Lebanon on the ropes, she was persuaded to withdraw her troops, and received absolutely nothing in return, not even the soldiers who were captured to start the conflict.

Mr. Olmert's reference to Jerusalem as the "holy city," seems to indicate that he might be willing to compromise, even with some of Israel's sacred activities also. We know this will happen eventually when the "daily sacrifice" will be taken away for the sake of peace (Daniel 12:11). This will be a significant day for Israel and the world. Daniel tells us exactly what will result: "And from the time that the daily sacrifice be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two-hundred and ninety days." From Daniel 9:27, this is the "abomination of desolation" which will be set up in the midst of those week of years, or 1260 days after the covenant with the anti-Christ is ratified (Matthew 24:15).

This means that the daily sacrifice will be taken away 1290 days earlier, or 30 days before the infamous covenant with the man of sin is complete. It is assumed that taking away the daily sacrifice will be one of the conditions required to ratify the covenant. When this is done, it means the Israel, the nation, has once again rejected the Messiah, and thus judgment from God, the Tribulation, will ensue.

Prime Minister Olmert's statement was "Israel could do without controlling some of the "holy city's outlying Arab neighborhoods." How long will it be until Arab demands will include a goodly part of the city itself, to be the Capital of Palestine? How long will it be before these compromises reach the very heart of Jerusalem – the Temple?

According to our Psalm, there are many who think they can lay claim to this treasured city because of their birth there. "I will make mention of Rehab (Egypt) and Babylong to them that know me: behold, Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia; this man was born there. And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her; and the highest Himself shall establish her" (87:4-5). Though many may try to claim Jerusalem because they were "born in her," it is God who declares that He, alone, will establish her. "The LORD shall count, when He writeth up the people, that this man was born there. Selah." It is God alone Who will determine who has the right to claim her, and natural birth alone is by no means the prerequisite. Christ, Himself, who was not born of a woman in Jerusalem, is God's appointed Ruler, fulfilling the Davidic Covenant (II Samuel 7). Only He can lay claim to be the supreme Monarch of this city, and the next verse declares what will happen when this historic "Holy City" is back in the Hands where it belongs. "As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there; all my springs are in Thee" (87:7).

These words describe Jerusalem presenting an atmosphere of glory and joy, the earth's center from which emanate the springs of spiritual blessing for the whole world. One day, men will realize that all their intricate, ingenious, and time-consuming negotiations, based purely on man's wisdom, mean absolutely nothing. God Himself will assume full responsibility for Jerusalem as His own chosen Zion.

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### **Peace when Jesus Comes**

In righteousness the Lord will come,  
Some blessed day and take me home.  
To earth below I'll say, "Farewell."  
With Him forevermore to dwell.

As I pursue the narrow way,  
I look for that eternal day,  
When Christ shall come our King to be  
Oh, what a joy His face to see!

"Peace" cries the world of men today,  
But Christ alone can peace convey.  
And strife and sin shall ever reign,  
Till Christ the Lord shall come again.  
-- Ernest Douhit

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### **"OCCUPY TILL I COME"**

**John Wright Follette**

**"And He called His ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come." (Luke 19:13)**

One beautiful and helpful phase of the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to take the Truth and make it alive to us. It is so possible to give mental assent to the letter of the Word and believe it thoroughly; yet, at the same time, miss a certain inspiration and heart touch which come only by the Spirit's work in quickening and making real the truths which we hold and even teach and preach.

It has been only during the past few years that I have had light on the Word concerning the second coming of the Lord. During that time I have studied and have been thoroughly convinced, from the standpoint of prophecy and current events that we are living in the end days of this dispensation. Occasionally the Spirit has quickened some phase of His coming to me and strengthened my faith and encouraged my heart to press on until He comes. Of

late I have been praying much concerning the attitude I should take in regard to the short time left and the seeming great need, and what God might be expecting of me as my little part to play in preparing my heart for the. Home-going. And so, as light to my spirit, He gave me this little vision. By it He has settled some of the questions I held concerning the future and also work and service. So, trusting it may prove a help and blessing to others who look and long for His appearing, I pass it on.

I have no apology to make because the vision savors of the farm and commonplace daily life. The picture drawn may be of very homely and ordinary setting; but it is as the Spirit gave it, and He knows what ministry to use in making the Truth real. He knows the language of the human heart and the simplest approach to the place where we live. When Jesus taught, I am glad He used the natural everyday experiences; and thorough lessons in which He spoke of birds, flowers, fields, cattle, sheep, and little children, He gave us the most profound and spiritual teaching.

While waiting upon the Lord in a prayer meeting, the Spirit began to settle down over my heart in such silence and rest as I have not sensed in many days. There is such heavenly quietness in the hush He is able to bring over and into the restless heart. As I sat before Him with my spirit wrapped in silence so alive and yet so still, my heart was seeking Him in prayer and worship. The tenor of my prayer was thus: "Dear Lord, Thou art coming; I praise Thee Thou art near ... But in these momentous days, so full of need, what wilt Thou have me to do? What needs most attention? What word hast Thou for me?" Then He gave me so clearly this word, "Occupy till I come." This He spoke three times, and my heart was so happy to hear His Voice and to heed His injunction. Then I continued to ask Him what He meant by "occupy." It was in answer to this that He gave this lesson.

He let me live over in spirit a day of my boyhood. While a child between the ages of six and eleven, it was my privilege to live on a farm. God is so wise and wonderful in ordering our lives and making "all things work together for good." It was during those days that He taught me my first lesson in seeing, hearing, feeling, as I walked and played, worked or studied, in His great "out-of-doors." The nearest city was fifteen miles away, and was only reached by driving a horse over the long country roads. It was my parents' custom to drive to the city every two or three months to do the necessary trading. On such days we, as children, were left at home to keep house and were given certain tasks to do while father and mother were gone. It was just such a day the Lord let me live over again in spirit.

How well I remember the glee and secret joy we had in thinking how delightful it would be to "keep house" and feel free to go about the daily duties. At such times mother gave us permission to go to the woods for flowers, to pop corn, or maybe play in the brook. How strong and courageous we were! To go to the end of the farm was nothing - we were so brave! The morning went quickly and at noon we ate our dinner in joyous spirit. It was a novelty to feel ourselves alone. Maybe my eldest sister would try her hand at a new kind of pie or pudding - it was such excellent time for adventure, experiment, and independence. The

afternoon wore on, and soon it was time to do the evening chores. My part was simple as I was but a child. But it mattered not if we were small or not, we had our duties and were taught to do them. For this training I have been very thankful in the years since. Again I lived over that evening hour. I had to carry in the wood and fill the box behind the kitchen stove. Maybe it would take three or four trips to the woodshed; but I had to fill it even when, to do so, a trip for only two or three sticks was necessary. Then I had to go for the cows and bring them up from the lower pasture.

As the long shadows of twilight came creeping in, how my bare feet hurried over the dusty road. I wanted to stop by the old rail fence to see a robin's nest which always pleased me so. I wondered if the lovely eggs had hatched, but the dusk was coming and I had to hurry. Then I must gather the eggs and fasten the coops where the little chickens were, or maybe see that the ducks were all up from brook. As the purple gloom moved in and the barn and sheds were wrapped in veils which only twilight dusk can spin, my heart would feel a strange longing for mother. How we would look toward the hill to see if they were not soon coming. But the chores were to be done; and many times, if it was too shadowy, we would be tempted to neglect the nests too far out of way. Some would be away back on haymow or up in the granary, and took more courage to gather the eggs from those places. So one would go with the other and finally have the chore done. But how many times we would glance up the road to the distant hill to see if mother and father had come.

How strange that all the bravery we had known during the sunny hours of the day had vanished. The desire to venture to the end of the farm had gone; we did not want to venture the end of the garden. The purple melted into still deeper shade; the bushes, fence posts, and trees, all so familiar began to assume grotesque shapes and soon lost their identity in dusky shadows. The little world in which we spent the day was fast fading; and the brave spirit of adventure passed with it. A strange loneliness stole over our hearts and one wish possessed us - that mother would soon come. Sometimes they were late we would have to prepare the evening meal. But somehow the food did not taste just right, and it was so hard to swallow - owing to a lump we developed in the throat and persisted in making itself known every time we glanced toward the hill or thought - "If mother would only come." How little we were then concerned with anything but her coming. No play however interesting, no duty however pressing, could divert our attention from the hill where our longing hearts looked for her return. Even the necessary food, which hitherto had tasted so good and might have been eaten with great pleasure, lost its flavor and we found little appetite for it.

I wish I could tell the joy, the delight, the ecstasy of spirit, when finally we saw them coming over the hill. How we ran then to meet them and exchanged our words of welcome even before they stepped from the carriage. Then as the silent curtains of the night gently shut us in, our little world seemed such a safe place. The night had no terror, the shadows no meaning, for we were secure. Now our hearts could rest - for mother had come. How delightfully simple is the

trust of a little child. How secure and safe he feels when father and mother are near.

Dear friends, this little picture of such commonplace material needs but little light or interpretation. Those of us who are looking toward the distant hill know something of the secret longing which fills the soul. Our little day (this age) is fast ending; the morning of vision and courage is spent. Our forefathers began the day's work years and years ago. As well the noon has come and gone. During those long hours filled with shadow, sun, and song, the work of the Church was established. We are now in the twilight of the age. The long dim shadows stretch their lengths across the fields, and nightfall is at hand. This is not the hour for work which should have been done twenty or even ten years ago. The great task given to the Church for her period has been done (faithfully or otherwise). We are now in chore time.

Those who have lived on a farm know what that means. No farmer undertakes a heavy or lengthy piece of work at chore time. The chores have a very necessary place, but they are short tasks. So ours today is a short quick work, and such as can only be done at such an hour as this. I do not believe God is waiting to do some great and wonderful work which will take twenty years to develop. The hour is late, and now we are to "occupy" until He comes - continue faithful in the duties to which He has called us.

In this little vision He made me see so clearly that it is not success He rewards, not some striking or spectacular effect which arouses the admiration of men. No. The simple task well done as unto Him, faithfully and in a loving consecrated spirit, that is sure to be blessed by His seal and reward. Now that He is near is no sign that we have a right to neglect, shirk, or render to Him careless service. To speak in the language of the vision, even though some nests be far out of reach and our hearts are faint and weary, we must not neglect them. Nor should we feel they are not necessary - that maybe tomorrow will do to gather the eggs from them. Nothing is little in that way to God. He may send you to the end of the earth on a simple errand and at the eleventh hour. He has need of eggs tucked away in most forsaken places. If He is calling you, trust His wisdom and go. To "occupy" is to faithfully trudge back to the wood pile for the last two or three sticks so necessary to fill the box. May the Holy Spirit quicken us to heed His injunctions and give us happy feet to run the short errands.

Oh friends, how much darker do we need the hour to be to put speed into our spirit? We cannot tarry now to look at the innocent bird's nest and count the eggs or watch the mother bird feed her young. Our time is past for the simple and legitimate amusements. The twilight gloom is purpling in the west. The little world about us is showing its true character - it fades and passes away. Where is your vision? Are you watching the distant hill? How strange this loneliness which creeps into our hearts as we look about and long for His coming. The world is fast filling with shadows, and everything about us seems to be moved out of its place. The gathering darkness renders even the things we seem to know, indistinct, uncertain, and doubtful. This is not the noon hour nor is it afternoon - we are past sundown and are now in twilight. That is why the uncertainty and darkness fill our hearts with sickness at the thought of staying here. This is the

homing hour, and Christ is making us homesick for His coming. Are you not yet convinced that the “here and now” is not all of life?

The other day the Lord gave me a poem, in which He showed me through the imagery of the twilight hour how fleeting and transitory the little life and world of material environment. I pass on a part of it telling what the hour means to those of us who long for His coming.

So may we not take courage? Let us keep our vision up, and faithfully and willingly do the tasks He sets before us. The hour is late, the chores are nearly done, the shadows deepen, the lonely heart hungers. As we keep looking toward the distant hill, ere long we shall hear that soul-stirring and longed-for call, “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him.”

*Unseen the little birds in branches dark  
Have found a resting place so cool and still.  
While from the dusky thicket in the glen  
There comes the lonesome call of whippoorwill.*

*The heart is strangely moved by loneliness  
And sickens at the thought of finite things.  
It hungers for the infinite and life,  
Which faith in immortality now brings.*

*The little world wherein I spent the day,  
Will-o'-the-wisp is proving now to be.  
What seemed so firm and strong 'neath noonday sun,  
E'en while I look now melts and fades away.*

*I do not find my heart grieved by the loss,  
To have it back my heart no cry would give.  
A secret joy is found in losing all –  
For this is not the world in which I live.*

*-- John Wright Follette*

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- \* Nothing lies outside the reach of prayer, except that which is out of the will of God.
- \* A Christian is a person who makes you think of Jesus.
- \* Faith and fear do not mix.
- \* He who cannot pray when the sun shines, does not know how to pray when the clouds cover the sky.
- \* If your knees knock, kneel on them.
- \* Pray for a good harvest, but keep on hoeing.

## HIS WORKMANSHIP

**“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” -- Ephesians 2:10**

As we meditate upon the marvel of this Scripture, we conclude that we are God's responsibility. God has put Himself on record that He is the WORKER, for no one else is able for the task. The material which He uses, He Himself must provide. We “were dead in trespasses and sins,” but He “hath quickened us together with Christ ... and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” - Eph. 2:5,6. Therefore, the material is the new creation of which we have been made partakers by our faith in the fact of the death and resurrection of Christ. By grace we have been saved, and now God has a chance to work in us by His own mighty power. He can add to the likeness of His Son in each one of the saints who will let Him work. His workmanship we are; and the more yielded we are in His hands, the more opportunity He is given to display His skill and amazing power.

He desires that we become perfect by His working. It is amazing that He has made provision for such a consummation, and He is working toward that end. He has an image, Christ, that He is perfecting in us; and He will not be defeated by our weakness or inability. He is the WORKMAN. All, therefore, that we are called upon to do is LET HIM WORK. He will fashion us according to His will. He is able and willing; therefore, there is hope for us, and assurance that we will be according to the Divine plan and specification. Someone might enquire, “Why does God desire to work on such material as humanity that had once failed Him? What is His motive? It is that He will have the masterpiece of His creation from the weakest sort of material. In God Himself is the motive. The plan and purpose originated in Him. God has chosen the weakest of His intelligent creation to be His greatest triumph. We will be an exhibition of His grace throughout all eternity. He will put on display His masterpiece, of which humanity is the material and in the heart of God is the motive.

God's METHOD is next before us. How does He work? What procedure does He follow? He uses the Word and the Spirit of God in His work on us, and there is no other way. We retard the development by our feeble efforts to help God. He needs helplessness on our part by way of perfecting His part. Every circumstance, problem, situation, difficulty, and inability in our lives is made the occasion of the working out of His great design in us. The masterpiece of His working makes headway through all the attendant providences that environ us. He is ever working in us as we yield to His power and providences. It is by the Spirit that “we make to die the doings of the flesh.” We open our hearts to Him, counting on Him to work in us according to the will of God. The greatest work is done in us as He is allowed to mold and rub in the oil. It is after that carving has cut us down to half our size and the pattern of the image begins to show in our lives. Oh, how faithful He is - cutting, shaping, molding, and making us into the design He has purposed for us. It is truly wonderful how beautifully He works with such material, which work will continue until we stand complete and perfect like the Pattern - Christ.

What is it all for? Here is the answer, "That in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" - Eph. 2:7. The wondering universe will gaze upon the marvels of His workmanship throughout all ages and be astonished at His grace. He is going to show us off, point to us as His MASTERPIECE, "to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God" - Eph. 3:10. The angels desire to look into these things. They will marvel forever at the glorified Church - the image to a great extent of the glorified Christ, the Head and Pattern.

This word "workmanship" is also translated "poem." It implies design and more - skill and craftsmanship. We often receive from friends verses which they desire we should print, but they are not poems. There is no order, no design; there are some beautiful expressions, but they are not put together according to the rules of poetry. But we, the saints, are God's poem. The design will all be worked in each in perfection, for the Master Craftsman is doing the work. He suits the method to the design and to the material, and He knows how to arrange His poem to the best advantage in every part of it. His masterpiece will not have one flaw. It will all be in harmony to the uttermost degree - a poem of perfection.

## DO YOU KNOW YOUR BIBLE?

An elderly preacher entered a Sunday School class while the lesson was in progress, and asked the question, "Who broke down the walls of Jericho?"

A boy answered, "Not me, sir!"

The preacher asked the teacher, "Is this the usual behavior in this class?"

The teacher replied, "This boy is honest and I believe him. I really don't think he did it."

The preacher sought out a deacon and explained what had happened. The deacon said, "I've known both the boy and the teacher for years, and neither of them would do such a thing."

By this time, the preacher was heartsick and reported it to the Committee on Christian Education. They said, "We see no point in being disturbed. Let's pay the bill for the damaged walls and charge it to upkeep."

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## GOD'S DESIRE

The universe belongs to Him;  
He made it with His hand –  
Worlds, galaxies to man unknown.

And every grain of sand.  
Contain Him? All of space would fail!  
In heaven, He dwells apart –  
Yet passionately He pleads to be

Locked in a human heart.

\* \* \* \* \*

- \* Faith and fear just do not mix.
- \* A Christian is a person who makes you think of Jesus.
- \* If your knees knock, kneel on them.
- \* Pray for a good harvest, but keep on hoeing.
- \* The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing.

## Editor's REFLECTIONS:

**“For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part (imperfect) shall be done away.” -- I Cor. 13:9-10**

We know very little of the reality of spiritual truths! Our minds and our tongues are unable to express or explain that which we do know. If we could know and understand even one of the mysteries of the glories of Heaven, our minds might explode, and we surely could not explain what we saw. While we are still encased in our human shell, motivated by natural powers, we are only babes in spiritual understanding.

We may possess all the Gifts of the Spirit, but we can only know what has been revealed to us. The Apostle Paul had an experience of seeing things in Heaven which he could not describe nor explain (II Corinthians 12). He did not have the mental capacity to understand the vision, nor did he have the language to describe what he saw. This would be true of the most spiritual of saints today. We may think we know quite a bit, and yet, we can't comprehend eternal realities without a revelation of the Holy Spirit.

There is much emphasis given today to the gifts of the Spirit, and of course, they have their place in the growth and edification of the Church, but Paul shows us a greater blessing - the Divine Love of Christ. This is Christ's love for the Church, but we can experience how much He loves us, individually. This love becomes a preeminent love, much more a blessing than all the gifts. His love becomes more real as we grow in His grace. We experience His love, first, as Savior and Redeemer, to that of a Shepherd, taking care of us daily, and then to the greatest relationship of all, that of a Bridegroom. Gifts are wonderful to have, but they cannot compare with the blessing of the intimate love between Christ and His Bride.

Divine Love is the “most excellent way,” and will enable us to become full overcomers. It is enough to know that the Lord loves us everlastingly, and therefore His purposes for us will be fulfilled. Christ's love, expressed and revealed to us, will be enough to fill our vision and give us a heavenly hope. We are growing day by day, but we will never fully understand spiritual truths completely until we are glorified with Christ. Paul states, “For now we see through a glass darkly (as in a riddle), but then face to face; now I know in part (or, imperfectly), but then shall I know even as also I am known” (I Corinthians 13:12). The contrast between the earthy and heavenly realms will be stupendous, and of course, out of this world! Glory! Hallelujah! Let's seek a more personal and intimate relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ.

Whatever we experience in our Christian lives today on earth, will draw us closer to the Lord. Trials are the greatest motivations to seek the Lord for a closer walk and fellowship. A husband and wife draw closer together through the experiences they have during their years of walking and living together. Let us put Christ first in our lives, and turn all that we are and all that we possess, over to Him. We will never be sorry.

(October 2007)

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### **THANK YOU FOR YOUR PRAYERS!!**

The Lord was merciful to me in my recent illness. The folks around here didn't believe that I would still be alive, but God is not through with me yet. A lot of my strength has returned, but I have a ways to go. Praise the Lord for His power, and thank you all for your cards and letters! What an encouragement! You're the best in the world! I believe I'll make it for translation!

-- Paul Smith

## **Comfort**

**Grace L. Ferris**

**“Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.” Isa. 40:1 “Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed,” - Heb. 12:12-13.**

People as a whole are suffering today - people who don't know the Lord and people who do belong to Him. Hearts, even though they sometimes put on a happy face, are crying out for love, comfort and peace. Unsaved hearts are in turmoil - feeling a void. That void, that empty place, is made only for God to occupy. No matter where they turn for help, they'll never be satisfied until they open their heart's door to Jesus. - Then they will find comfort.

Our ministry as sons and daughters of God who have experienced that divine comfort, is to reach out and touch those lost and hurting lives in the power of the Holy Spirit, touch them with His love flowing out to them through our words of cheer and comfort in His name. We are eager to share the joy in our hearts so that they, too, may be able to know Him abiding in their hearts. We are instruments of His peace and comfort, not only to the lost and hurting but also to the hurting children of God. Psalms 34:17-19- “... Many are the afflictions of the righteous...” The reason for that is found in Eph. 6:10-18. Why Eph. 6:10-18? We are to watch in love so that we may comfort one another, - II Cor. 1:10. Our spiritual father, Abraham, suffered when he offered up Isaac, his only son, in obedience to God, but he was rewarded and comforted by our God of consolation. We too, obey Him, even knowing sometimes that it will cause us pain. We cast ourselves wholly on His mercy, trusting completely, knowing that He knows what He is doing in our lives. He brings us out in victory and because He is the God of all comfort, as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. He won't leave us at loose ends, He won't lead us into a situation and then desert us, though at times the enemy would try to make us think so. Christ is with us every step of the way, whether we feel like it or not. He reaches out to us in love and comfort through every moment of the trial.

And this is exactly what he wants us to do. He takes us through distresses and then comforts us, so that we are able to empathize with our brothers and sisters and yes, even with those who don't know his love, and let His comfort flow through us to them, in the power of the Spirit.

He takes us through sufferings, not only to form Christ into maturity within us, not only that we may become acquainted with him, but also that we can be of comfort to others who are suffering. It is for the sake of others that he leads us this way. It's a selfless, sacrificing way, where we forget about our own needs and wants in our concern for others. We simply cast ourselves wholly upon Christ - knowing He will care for us completely as we let Him minister through our vessel, - through our hands, our feet, our lips anointed by the Holy Spirit.

Yes, we have the sentence of death in ourselves (our old Adamic nature died in Christ on the cross) - we cannot trust in ourselves, we cannot trust in the old man who provisionally is dead. But, we trust in God who raised us from the dead, in Christ when he arose as the new Adam, the head of the new creation race. We are seated with Him in the heavenlies, far above all principalities and power. Nothing or no one can defeat us in Christ - what a comforting truth! Just to know that no man can pluck us out of His hand is a comfort! Just to know that He abideth faithful within us, even when we may not feel like He's there, is comforting! We live by faith not by our feelings. No power in the universe can defeat the life of Christ implanted within us! What a comfort that truth brings! Satan and all His hoards will not be able to keep us from going up to meet Jesus when He calls us to be with Him, whether awake or asleep in Christ. - I Thess. 4:13-18.

## **“NO THANKS”**

**“Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy Name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.” (Psalm 103:1-5)**

Isn't it strange that very often we forget to thank God for our blessings until it suddenly dawns on us that Thanksgiving Day is here, and that it is a day when we are supposed to give thanks for all of life's bounties.

Too often the real purpose of the day is obscured by the frenzy of getting the groceries in, the turkey cooked, the dressing made, the table set, the house cleaned, et cetera, ad infinitum!

A real comprehension of the truths which cluster about Thanksgiving can come only by a service of praise, at church, or a quiet time spent alone with God and His Word.

It seems much easier to be conscious of problems and cares which are about to overwhelm us, than it is to “Count your many blessings, name them one by one, and it will surprise you what the Lord has done.” But when we take

inventory of all our blessings our problems and burdens seem to fade into insignificance.

“Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

-- Ephesians 5:20.

\* \* \* \* \*

When morning gilds the skies,  
My heart awaking cries,  
May Jesus Christ be praised;  
Alike at work and prayer.  
May Jesus Christ be praised.

--(Edward Caswell

## **MUSIC IN PERSPECTIVE**

Gene Hawkins

***“It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting.....Sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth. It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools.” Eccl. 7:2-5***

Solomon contrasts the sharp differences that exist between the ways of God and those of the world, as these verses show. These facts make no sense to one following wisdom, for it seems that men are consumed with the premise that we should “eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die.” Laughter, mirth and singing are indeed the order of our day, as men often measure success and accomplishment by their emotional state of happiness. We have long realized that the world has been obsessed with such an attitude, however the Church has adopted the ways of the world to achieve this same goal. There are many ways in which the Church as a whole has compromised and bowed to the standards of men rather than the requirements of God’s Word, to achieve what they perceive as success and fulfillment. The Church has adopted the moral standards of society rather than those standards set by God’s Word. One statistic states that whatever the world embraces, the Church will accept about seven years later. Many have adopted the ways of the world in “marketing the gospel” as they mimic man’s wisdom in trying to raise large sums of money and draw huge crowds.

Though this compromise is seen in multiple ways, we are focusing only on the one found in verse 5. “It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools.” The rebuke of the wise refers to those who would proclaim the Truth of God’s Word. However in our day, music has literally REPLACED the exposition of SCRIPTURE. There are many, even in various

sectarian denominations over the past few years, who have warned against the contemporary music which has invaded the Church, and has become popularly known as “Christian Rock”. There is nothing Christian about rock music! Jesus said it this way: “Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit.” Matt. 12:33. The roots of rock music ARE NOT those of a good tree. Those who originated it knew exactly what they were doing as they intentionally wrote music to appeal to the soulful nature of men. The music that came out of the 60’s played a major part in the “sexual revolution” that swept across this country and around the world.

It was out of this chaos that God began to speak to hearts in the “hippy generation” and thus the Jesus Movement was born. There was an entire generation that experienced the genuine grace of God and were born again as they were delivered from the bondage of drugs and other vices. Many of them were also filled with the power of The Holy Ghost, and some adopted the new identity of “Jesus Freaks.” They were very comfortable with this designation for it was in absolute harmony with their already adopted “anti-establishment, non-conformist” mentality and they wore this new separatist title with great pride. Many of us were thrilled to hear of those who had been delivered from the mire wherein they were held and hoped to meet some of them. Because they were filled with The Holy Ghost, there was great hope of introducing them to more of the depths of God’s Word. Though we did establish contact with a few of them who embrace the depths of Divine Grace, the movement as a whole wanted nothing but mirth, and light hearted songs, along with the supernatural gifts of The Spirit. The tragedy is that. For the most part, they could not leave the music that had captivated them, as this generation proclaimed, “the music was ours.” It seemed that they had found their identity in the music, and thus thought that if they would add Christian lyrics to rock music, all would be well. The new music became known as “Christian Rock” and that is a contradiction in terms for, as stated above, a corrupt tree can in no wise bring forth good fruit. The rock beat however became just as captivating in the Church as it had been in the world and many Church leaders recognized its effectiveness among the youth.

Several years ago, I was changing planes in a very busy airport. As I hurried through the terminal, I saw a large screen T.V. the sound was muted, but there was a large congregation of young people and from the sexual gyrations that were clearly manifest, I assumed it was some kind of dance contest as they were all moving in the same rhythmic motion. It seemed to be something right out of Woodstock. I was shocked when a caption appeared across the screen announcing that these were scenes from a recent crusade held by one of our prominent Charismatic Evangelists.

On another occasion, I was invited to attend a conference where a man I greatly admired would be speaking. He had had tremendous success of going to college campuses and persuading these young people to make a covenant with God to abstain from sexual activity until marriage. I had hoped to gain some insight into how he was able to get such response from them. I was greatly disappointed that he did not even touch on that subject at all, but rather spent the

entire time defending rock music and specifically a certain band, with whom he had traveled, that had been severely criticized for their “worldly dress.” He stated that they used “rock music” in their concerts to control the crowds. They knew what music to play to stir them into a frenzy and they knew how to “bring them down” so they could preach the gospel to them. God never intended that men exercise such control over others. The Church is filled with those today who love to control and manipulate others and they are doing it in a multitude of ways, music being one of them. However, God is the Only One Who is to have such control and we see Him manifesting it repeatedly throughout Scripture through the preaching of His Word. Ezra held the people at attention for about six hours and all he did was preach God’s word. Neh. 8:3. their response to The Word was mourning and weeping, (vs. 9) even as stated above, “it is better to go to the house of mourning.....”. Nehemiah 9 records the same order. For one fourth part of the day they read the law, the next fourth part they confessed and worshipped. Vs 3.

The Day of Pentecost relates the same story as Peter held the crowd enthralled with the preaching of God’s Word. The promise is that “my word shall not return unto me void.....”, and it was Peter’s message that brought forth the response; “men and brethren what shall we do?” Acts 2:37.

Preaching of The Word is the only responsibility in this matter that God has given to us, and only He is responsible for the results. The story is now reported that several years ago Evangelist Billy Graham took his crusade to Russia and there obtained much the same result as he had in other places around the world when audiences streamed out of the stands and made their way down to the platform where he was standing, to receive Christ. The Russian press severely criticized him declaring that it was the closing song that had generated such response. The evangelist made a very bold move. Though the music “Just as I am” could in no wise be categorized as rock music, he declared that there would be no closing song at altar call. The next headline was something along the line of, “the silence was deafening”, for there was a greater response that night than there had been previously. That is because it is God’s Word that touches the hearts of men. That is what God designed it to do and if men but preach The Word, God will handle the rest.

There is a sharp division in the Church today due to music. Division in the Church has been a fact of life from its beginning. Protestantism emerged from Catholicism because of doctrine. After that, there have been countless denominations that have come forth because of differences in doctrine. Some of us pastors have been told that if we would only “give up” some of our “pet doctrines”, we could all live in harmony and become unified, and it seems that some have been willing to follow that order, for doctrine in our day does not seem to be the principle issue. Music has become the most controversial and divisive issue. All one need do to prove that is to drive down the street and take note of the billboards advertising a “contemporary service” at one time and “traditional service” at another, and this division occurs WITHIN THE SAME CHURCH. Those pastors can do as they wish, but I have wanted to ask some of them: “how does this contribute to the unity of the body?” I have wondered whether or not

both congregations hear the same sermon. How much of God's Word is actually preached? Not having attended such services I do not know what goes on, but in talking to some that have, I have learned that as much as 60 to 90 minutes is spent in standing and singing. Some have reported singing "7-11 choruses (7 words repeated 11 times). This is in keeping with the repetitive pattern in rock music that makes it both hypnotic and addictive. It also forms the perfect background for the admonition in verse 5 of our text: "It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools." Once again, the evidence indicates that such "singing" has replaced the convicting preaching of God's Word, and men must realize that **MUSIC WILL NEVER PRODUCE SPIRITUAL GROWTH**. Some of our day equate "an emotional high" with spiritual growth, but such is not the case. Sometimes, just the opposite is true. For example, David was actually in the "house of mourning" in Psalm 22. his deep misery is clearly manifest as he cried out "my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The rest of the psalm likewise speaks of great misery and depression, yet spiritually speaking, David was perhaps closer to the Lord at this time than any time previous for he was writing direct prophecy.

Only God's Word has been designed to produce spiritual growth. Peter said it thus: "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." II Peter 3:18. Paul likewise declares "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ....." Eph. 4:15. His last admonition to the Ephesian elders, which represents instruction for this entire church age, as: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God...." Acts 20:28. He said in vs 32 "I commend you to God and to the word of His grace which is able to build you up....." Music cannot produce these results.

Music is an important part of our lives. God created both it and us. Job spoke of God who giveth songs in the night. Singing often tells of great victory. Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises at midnight, reflecting the victorious spirit they had even in the midst of great adversity. However, such singing has a definite order with The Word of God. Col. 3:16 outlines that order. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." The Word must find a home in our hearts first. After that we can teach, admonish, AND sing primarily "to the Lord." Such order is seen in Exodus 15 after Israel was obedient to God's Word in crossing the Red Sea. Deborah had a glorious song of victory as the same pattern is followed in Judges 4 & 5. Hannah's paean of praise also followed the faith of just believing what God had said and it came after she had obediently presented young Samuel to The Lord and left him with Eli the priest.

Several years ago a young man chided a certain preacher because "he did not understand that emotional people need their music." He then quoted from I Samuel 16, where David was asked to play on his harp before a very depressed Saul. The record shows that music can produce the desired emotional results, but I would not ask the question: as spiritual as David proved

to be, did his “music” ever produce one whit of spirituality in Saul? Judging from Saul’s end, I would think not.

The pattern here in Colossians must be established in our own lives, as we become both the song and the singer. The Word of Christ must “swell in you richly”, meaning that any work in our lives begins with The Word of God. That pattern is seen from the beginning of creation as we read “and God said.....” The word “dwell” means to “inhabit, to dwell in, to occupy, reside”. It means constancy and not just getting a choice verse or thought in order to compose a song. “In all wisdom....” Is simply another way of expressing that Christ is to be practically revealed in our lives, for He is Wisdom. Thus, it is our own lives that become a song of praise for His glory.

Paul expresses this same glorious scenario in Eph. 5:18,19. “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess: but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord:.....”. these words follow his exhortation to awake to the light. The rest of this book contains a four-fold definition of what it means to be “filled with the spirit,” the first of which is singing, but note once again that the same pattern prevails. Men must have the light of God’s Word to sing such spiritual songs. The word melody here means “to twitch, twang, play on a stringed instrument.” It is our own hearts on which this melody is to be played and thus we become His instrument in song, a direct result of the work His Word will do in our experience. It is also to be “unto the Lord,” not just a performance before men for the purpose of emotional satisfaction.

Revelation 5:9 gives us the grand finale of following this pattern. “And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou was slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;....” Many have wondered what this “new song” could be, but we are told in this verse that it is the song of redemption for “thou hast redeemed us to God.....” Our own lives become the subject of this song and it is testimony of what He has done through the glorious plan of redemption that was devised before the world began. The four living ones and twenty four elders are put on display to manifest the absolute fullness of what God brought to pas in living color because of Jesus work on the cross of Calvary.

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### **BOUNTIFULL BLESSING**

Two little fish and five loaves of bread,  
“Give me your basket,” the Lord Jesus said.  
How many thousands of people were fed,  
A little boy’s basket of fish and bread.

“Give me your basket,” the lord said to me;  
“Your basket of life, and then you will see  
What we will do, what more you can be  
When you give me your basket of life”

“Come unto me,” I heard Jesus say,  
“Give me your life; do not delay.  
You’ll feel my love; I’ll hear when you pray,  
Give me your basket today.”

I gave Him my basket; He came to stay.  
Things of this world have all faded away.  
Money can’t buy this peace. So, I pray,  
Give Him your basket today.

-- Amy Jump

## WHO AM I?

I was born in 1725, and died in 1807. The only Godly influence in my life, as far back as I can remember, was my mother, whom I had for only seven years. When she left my life through death, I was virtually an orphan.

My father remarried, sent me to a strict military school where the severity of discipline almost broke my back. I couldn't stand it any longer, and I left in rebellion at the age of ten. One year later, deciding that I would never enter formal education, I became a seaman apprentice, hoping somehow to step into my father's trade and learn, at least, the ability to skillfully navigate a ship.

By and by, I slowly gave myself over to the devil. I determined that I would sip to my fill without restraint. I did that until my days in the military, where again discipline worked hard against me, but I further rebelled. My spirit would not break and I became more and more a rebel. I finally deserted the army only to be captured like a common criminal and beaten publicly several times. After enduring the punishment, I again fled. I thought about suicide on my way to Africa, deciding that country was the place farthest from anyone who knew me. Again I made a pact to live for the devil.

During this time, I met a Portuguese slave trader and lived in his home. His wife, who was full of hostility, took a lot of it out on me. She beat me, and I was forced to eat like a dog on the floor. If I refused, I would be whipped with a lash. I fled penniless, having only the clothes on my back and found my way to the shoreline of Africa where I built a fire, where I attracted a ship that was passing. The skipper stopped because he thought I had gold, or ivory, or slaves to sell, and was surprised to learn I was a skilled navigator. It was a slave ship, and I virtually lived on it for a long period of time.

I went through all sorts of narrow escapes, with death only a hairbreadth away on many occasions. One time I opened some crates of rum and got all the

crew drunk. The skipper, incensed with my actions, beat me and threw me into the hole. I lived on stale bread and sour vegetables for a long time. He brought me above again to beat me again, and I fell overboard. Because I couldn't swim, he harpooned me to get me back on the ship. I lived with that scar in my side, large enough to put my fist into, until my death.

On board I was inflamed with fever and enraged with the humiliation. A storm arose and again I wound up in the hold of the ship, down among the pumps. To help keep the ship afloat, I worked along with the slaves. It was there, bruised and confused, bleeding, diseased, I was the epitome of the degenerate man. I remembered the words of my mother. So, I cried out to God, the only way I knew, calling upon His grace and His mercy to deliver me, and called upon His Son to save me. The only glimmer of light I had was in a crack in the ship floor above me, and I looked up into it and screamed for help. God heard me.

Thirty-one years passed. I married a childhood sweetheart. I entered the ministry. In every place I served, rooms had to be added to the building to handle the crowds that came to hear the Gospel and the story of God's grace in my life.

My tombstone above my head reads: "Born 1725, died 1807. A clerk, once an infidel and libertine, a servant of slaves in Africa, was by the rich mercy of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, preserved, restored, pardoned, and appointed to preach the faith he once long labored to destroy."

Before my death, I decided to put life's story in verse. That verse has become a hymn. My name? John Newton. The hymn? "Amazing Grace."

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### **BLESSED ASSURANCE**

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!  
Oh, what a foretaste of Glory Divine!  
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,  
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.

Perfect submission, perfect delight,  
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;  
Angels descending, bring from above  
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

Perfect submission, all is at rest,  
I in my Savior am happy and blest;  
Watching and waiting, looking above,  
Filled with His mercy, lost in His love.

## **THE OTHER SIDE**

*This isn't death, it's glory!  
It isn't dark, it's light;  
It isn't stumbling, groping,  
Or even faith - it's sight.*

*This isn't grief, it's having  
My last tear wiped away.  
It's sunrise, it's the morning  
Of my eternal day!*

*It isn't even praying,  
It's speaking face to face,  
It's listening, and it's glimpsing  
The wonders of His grace.*

*This is the end of pleading  
For strength to bear my pain;  
Not even pain's dark memory  
Will ever live again.*

*How did I bear the earth life  
Before I came up higher,  
Before my soul was granted  
Its every deep desire,*

*Before I knew this rapture  
Of meeting face to face  
The One who sought me, saved me,  
And kept me by His grace!*

*Martha Snell Nicholson*

**“Having made peace through  
the blood of His cross...”**

**Colossians 1:20**

# THE FOLDED LINEN BURIAL CLOTH

## Why Did Jesus fold the linen burial cloth after His resurrection?

The Gospel of John (20:7) tells us that the napkin which was placed over the face of Jesus, was not just thrown aside like the grave clothes, but was neatly folded, and was placed at the head of that stony bier. "The first day of the week (Sunday) cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto sepulcher, and seeth stone taken away from the sepulcher . . . then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulcher, and seeth the linen clothes lie. And the napkin, that was about His head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself."

IS THAT IMPORTANT? ABSOLUTELY! IS IT REALLY SIGNIFICANT? YES! In order to understand the significance of the folded napkin, we must understand a Hebrew tradition of that day. The folded napkin is related to the Master and Servant. Every Jewish boy knew this tradition. When the servant set the dinner table for the master, he made sure that it was exactly the way the master wanted it. After the table was set perfectly, the servant would wait, just out of sight, until the master had finished eating, and the servant would not dare touch that table until the master was finished.

When the master was done eating, he would rise from the table, wipe his fingers, his mouth, clean his beard, and would then wad up his napkin and toss it onto the table. The servant would then know to clear the table; for the wadded napkin meant, "I'm done." But if the master got up from the table, folded his napkin and laid it beside his place, the servant would not dare touch the table, because he knew that the folded napkin meant, "I'm not finished yet." The folded napkin meant, "I'm coming back."

He is coming back!

## DON'T MEASURE HIS LOVE BY YOUR CIRCUMSTANCE

**"Lord, If Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know ... whatsoever Thou wilt ask God, God will give it thee." (John 11:21-22)**

Christian Reader, here lies the true secret of the whole matter. Let nothing shake your confidence in the unalterable love of the Lord. Come what may -- let the furnace be ever so hot -- let the waters be ever so rough -- let the pressure be ever so great -- still hold fast your confidence in the perfect love and sympathy of the One who has proved His love by going down into the dust of death -- down under the dark and heavy billows and waves of the wrath of God -- in order to save your soul from everlasting burning. Be not afraid to trust Him fully, to commit yourself without a shadow of reserve or misgiving to Him. Do not measure His love by your circumstances. If you do, you must, of necessity, reach

a false conclusion. Judge not according to outward appearance. Never reason out from that blessed center. Never interpret His love by your circumstances, but always interpret your circumstances by His love. Let the beams of His everlasting favor shine upon your darkest surroundings, and then you will be able to answer every infidel thought, no matter whence it comes.

-- C. H. Mackintosh

\* \* \* \* \*

- Remembering God's goodness puts a song in your heart.
- Little things become great things when they are done to please God.
- Instead of being preoccupied with your problems, start praising the Lord.
- Our greatest wealth is not measured in terms of riches but relationships.