

Christ is Victor

JAN/FEB 2004

The Measure of Faith

“Thrice in the year shall all your men children appear before the Lord God, the God of Israel.” Exodus 34:23

God knowing human psychology, gives His people instructions, so that gratitude may grow in them. Many of us suffer because of the lack of gratitude. The measure of your faith is the measure of your gratitude. God wants you to remember the day of your salvation, the manner in which that blessing came upon you, the way He delivered you from sin and the world's companionship and to know that which He gives you now is the highest. You miss something if you don't recognize and thank God for it. Some saints woke up in the night and thanked God. You must take some time to thank God.

The Jews were asked to go to Jerusalem and present themselves thrice a year. It was a long way, with no conveniences of travel. Yet they had to go. What do you think they would do on the way? They would think of what God had done to them as a nation and as individuals. But they missed the Messiah and what God had for them in Him. Their journeys kept the hope of His coming alive. Sometimes they came with their families and made offerings in the temple. God wanted their firstborn to be given to Him. All these had a purpose and those that neglected these things suffered.

Even today God has these instructions for us. We have a great responsibility in following God. I always ask God whether I am fit. How often we can indulge in thoughts and aspirations which are just against Him! The process of Christian growth is your thoughts reaching the level of God's thoughts. Gradually your thoughts

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“He Grew and Waxed Strong in Spirit”

“And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.” Luke 1:80

When we talk of somebody growing, we like to know how tall the person has grown, how muscular he is and so on. But here the Bible speaks of waxing strong in the spirit. I have been seeing very carefully how when people wax strong in their purses or wallets, they become weak in the spirit. The father of faith Abraham was not like that. God blessed him materially but it did not mean that there was any neglect on his part of his spiritual life.

I see a very great danger to us here. When a man is converted, he says, *“How I have wasted so much money on smoking and drinking and other such things. Now God has given me a new heart, I will be careful with my money.”* He is careful not only with his money, but with his time too. He gives one tenth of his income to God, and that brings more blessings. There will not be room enough to receive the blessings. Handling the blessings of God needs a deep training. Seeing our indebtedness to God, we ought to say, *“God has given me so much, I am all the more indebted to God.”*

In the case of John the Baptist, we are not told of any worldly blessings at all. From the earthly stand point, he was a poor man. His food was very simple, so was his clothing. All his youth, till almost thirty years he lived in the desert. He did not seem to have any special earthly privileges, but the Bible says that he *“waxed strong in the spirit.”* Sometimes our prayers do not appear to be answered. We wonder, *“Where is my prayer going?”* When your prayer seems to be stopping at the roof, you must say, *“God has promised, ‘Call on Me and I will answer you and I will show you great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.’ I will not walk by my feelings or even by fast answers to my prayers. I will walk by the promises of God.”* But this calls for great spiritual strength. Otherwise we tend to get discouraged and depressed. But when you

walk by the promises of God, your spirit gets stronger.

When John the Baptist became strong in the spirit, he did not care for the things of this world. He did not say, *“I must live in a city.”* He never grumbled saying, *“I do not have this, I do not have that.”* No, he had a message for every class of people. Now that to me is a wonder. Sometimes I feel I do not have the right message for a certain class of people. Some people are so full of the world, so full of the flesh, with no thought about God. I say, *“I do not seem to have the right message for these people.”* That means my spirit is not really strong. I had a great chance in this Fellowship to grow strong in the spirit. There were men and women of faith around me and the Word of God was given to me again and again. I ought to have been full of God's word for all kinds of people.

John the Baptist had a message even for King Herod. He did not bother about the consequences. That is one of the marks of those that are strong in the spirit. If we are strong in the spirit we will not be afraid of consequences of taking stand for righteousness. When God blesses us materially, we are tempted to buy this and that and be a little more comfortable. Every such accumulation of material things will only make your spirit weaker. I do not know how many people are going to tell the Lord, *“Lord, because of the TV I lost my prayer and thus my spirit became weak.”* Everywhere people have become weak because of these material acquisitions. As far as I am concerned, I am prepared to lose everything. It will not bother me at all. Everywhere people are becoming weak in spirit. Their houses are full of things and new things. But the spirit is weak. What did John the Baptist have of things? Nothing. He had the word of God. Sometimes I feel very sad that many are slipping. By this time there should have been people in our midst who have walked in the streets of heaven and come back to their bodies like Sundar Singh, people who knew the deep things of God. Somehow when respon-

sibilities increase our spiritual strength seems to decrease. When responsibilities increase, our prayer life and thus our spiritual strength should also increase. But unspiritual and soulish people whose Christianity is just their own effort – they are the people who, when responsibilities increase find their spiritual strength and faith decreasing. With soul power we cannot do spiritual work. When a Christian work becomes large, some develop the strength of good habits and good discipline. Their souls become stronger. But they are not necessarily spirit-led people. They can preach good sermons or may enjoy nice messages but they have no real strength in the spirit. What is the use of being like that? John the Baptist grew and waxed strong in the spirit.

The same thing is said of our Lord Jesus Christ in Luke 2:40, *“And the child grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom.”* When a child is growing, we never speak of strength of spirit. He is a good runner, good tennis-player, hockey player, and so on. But when a child or a boy is growing, who talks about his spirit growing? Sometimes when we see a church growing, we think, *“Oh, there are five hundred people! Oh, there are ten thousand people! Oh, it is growing.”* No! It may be dying! What is the use of ten thousand dead people? How many are strong in spirit? That is what matters. Today everywhere people want land. I hate lands. The history of missions will show, wherever there were big lands and great buildings, the ministry broke down quickly. So the strength of buildings and lands are not indications of spiritual strength. How do we talk with God? How closely do we walk with God? How strong is our spirit when we face temptations? How many words can we speak that bring encouragement and blessing to others? These are the things that indicate strength in the spirit.

Today, thousands of people listen to the Word of God. Unless we travail in prayer for these multitudes, we cannot really achieve much for God. Our prayers will affect the nations if we

are a self-effacing people with a heart-cry for revival. Are we strong in the spirit? May God help us in this New Year and guide us in every step of our way!

— Joshua Daniel

Another Year Is Dawning

Hymnist Frances Ridley Havergal took New Year’s Day very seriously, always using it as a time of reflection and often composing a poem to send to friends expressing her feelings about the new day and year. The one she wrote in 1874 has become immortal. She was thirty-six at the time, and she dashed off this poem and had it printed on a specially designed greeting card to be sent to friends. The card was captioned: *“A Happy New Year! Ever such may it be!”* The inside said:

*Another Year is dawning:
Dear Father, let it be,
In working or in waiting,
Another year with Thee;
Another Year of progress,
Another Year of praise,
Another Year of proving
Thy presence all the days.*

The Key to Living the New Life

A little baby has been born. A new life has come. You care for it. You wash it and dress it. You feed it and keep it warm. Day after day you attend to its needs. You know that it cannot take care of itself.

You have been born into the kingdom of God. You opened your heart to Jesus Christ and invited Him in. You received Him as your Saviour, and now you are His. And when He came He gave you eternal life. You now have a life that you never had before. *“I give unto them eternal life.”*

Well now, how are you going to take care of that new life? You are a babe in Christ. What then are the needs of the new life? The

needs of the new life are as same as the needs of a baby.

1. Food

A baby must be fed, and fed daily. So must you. That new life that God has given you requires food. The food for a baby is milk. The food of a spiritual babe is the milk of the Word. *“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby.”*

I was converted in 1906. From that day to this I have read God’s Word every day of my life, three hundred and sixty-five days of the year. I cannot remember a single day when I have neglected the Book of books. The bible has been my meat and my drink all down the years, and the more I study it the more precious it becomes. There is no book like it. When Satan’s attacks have been unusually severe, God’s Word has been my comfort and my stay. Time after time it has been in very deed His Word to me. Trials that might have terminated my ministry have been frustrated by the promises of God’s Word. When sorrow has overwhelmed my soul and tragedy engulfed me, God has spoken to me from the Scriptures. In the midst of my bitterest disappointment, I have heard His voice: *“Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.”* And when my heart was filled with fear, I heard Him say, *“Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him.”* And I found Him true.

2. Fellowship

A baby needs fellowship. It must be able to express itself and make known its needs. When it is hungry or in pain, it cries. And the mother immediately answers. You, too, needs fellowship. And if you are rightly born there will be a cry in your heart. We call that cry prayer. And I would urge you to get alone with God every day of your life and pray. Tell Him all. Hide nothing. Talk to Him

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This Fellowship is an inter-denominational missionary and prayer group working for revival in churches and amongst students in several countries. We invite every layperson to become God’s ally in changing his or her corner of the world. We train people in evangelistic work and to be self-supporting missionaries.

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as you would talk to a friend. When you read the Bible God talks to you, when you pray you talk to Him, and thus you have fellowship. You become acquainted with God exactly as you become acquainted with a friend. You speak and He speaks. And as you talk you get to know each other. Oh then, talk much to God. Pray.

3. Exercise

That little baby needs exercise. It shoves out its little legs and arms in order to exercise them.

You, too, need exercise if you are to grow strong. And so you must bear witness to Christ, for that is the way you exercise. Tell others. Do personal work. Confess Christ publicly. Witness. If you don't, you will backslide. If you do, you will become strong. Get busy and do something for Christ. You will if you appreciate what He has done for you, you will not hesitate to say so.

You should at least be as proud of your Lord and Saviour as you are of your king and country. You would not be ashamed to show your colours on the battlefield. As a matter of fact, you would be eager to unfurl your country's flag and march under it. Then why should you hesitate to lift up the banner of King Jesus? For thus you can let the world know which side you are on. Do you want Him to be ashamed of you in that Great Day, ashamed before His Father and the angels? Then you must not be ashamed of Him now. God says, *"With the mouth confession is made unto salvation."*

Nothing can strengthen the believer like open confession. If you want to grow spiritually confess Christ publicly. Satan doesn't mind silent Christians, but he objects most strenuously to those who openly declare their allegiance to Christ. Yet the very act of confession renders powerless his attacks.

You can talk about the one you love. At least, most people can. And if you really and truly love the Lord Jesus Christ you will want to talk about Him.

And testimony, my friend, is the best antidote there is to worldly companionship. You will never have to give them up, those worldly friends of yours, never. Just tell them

about Jesus. Ask them to kneel down while you pray with them. Hand them a gospel tract, and invite them to an evangelistic service. Try it. Do you know what will happen? They will drop you like a hot coal. You will not longer be wanted. And then you will find new friends and associates, Christians, who will love what you love, and want what you want. And their friendship will be yours through all Eternity. Even death cannot sever such a relationship.

Oh, then, let us be true to God. Let us testify of Christ. Let us confess Him publicly before men, and the joy and approbation of the Lord will be our reward.

— Selected

Eagle's Wings

In Isaiah 40, we are told that by waiting on the Lord, we will mount on wings like eagles. Eagles are majestic birds with remarkable vision. Scientists believe their vision may be eight times sharper than that of humans. They have powerful feet with talons that can grip like a vise. Their beaks are butcher-like, designed to cut and crush and tear their food.

But most of all, eagles are built for flying. They have incredible speed, able to fly at sixty and eighty and one hundred miles an hour. Their wingspan extends to nearly eight feet.

But eagles do not fly like sparrows or robins. Most birds fly through the air by flapping their wings, but eagles cannot flap very long. They're built for soaring, and thus they can go much further on little energy.

God created our planet with invisible columns of hot air called thermals rising up here and there from the surface of the earth. Eagles find these thermals, fly into the invisible currents, stretch out their wings, and are lifted higher and higher into the sky as though ascending on an elevator.

They may rise as high as fourteen thousand feet, so high in the heavens they cannot be seen with the naked eye from earth.

When they reach those heights, they emerge from the updraft, wings still spread, and they soar this way and that way, downwards and sideways, traveling for miles with very little exertion of strength.

Isaiah seems to be telling us that God is invisible, but like the invisible uplifting thermal currents of this planet, he is present for his people. When we search him out, claim his promises and trust in him, spreading out the wings of faith, we are caught up to a higher plane. We mount up with wings like eagles. We can run and not grow weary. We can walk and not faint.

The strength we need for holy, effective, victorious living comes not from frantically flapping our wings like sparrows in distress, but from trusting in God and resting in Jesus Christ.

— Selected

The Bandits and the Bible

The peddler walked along wearily. It was sunset. He had peddled his goods all day in the Sicilian town that now lay ten miles behind him and still he had a long way to go for a night's lodging.

The sound of a galloping horse reached him. Turning, he saw the rider, a fierce-looking man with a black beard, wearing a wide hat and a big black cloak.

As the man reined in the horse suddenly the peddler said in Italian, *"Good Evening, Sir."* Knowing it best to be polite to men who looked as fierce as this one.

The horseman leaped to the ground.

"What have you in that bag?"

"Books, sir."

"At last I have found you! You sell these books to corrupt the morals of simple folk. I will first burn your books and then shoot you. Put your bag down and go and gather

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REALITY CHECK!

"FOR VERILY I SAY UNTO YOU, TILL HEAVEN AND EARTH PASS, ONE JOT OR ONE TITTLE SHALL IN NO WISE PASS FROM THE LAW, TILL ALL BE FILLED."

MATTHEW 5:18

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... "FAITH" FROM PAGE 1

leave you and God's thoughts become more established in you. The responsibility of being a Christian in this heathen society is great. We must realize our unfitness and ask God to make us worthy. In college did you show that you were a Christian? When your thoughts are subordinated to Christ, then it is a great triumph. The soul begins to trust in God with naked faith. For some time man trusts in God through voices, visions and miracles, but one must reach the level to trust in God with naked faith. Madam Guyon says visions are gifts of the soul of a lower value, and one who depends on them ultimately doesn't become perfect. The Word of God must work in us and bring out of us such faith that clings to Him. As you begin to value God's Word and obey it, the devil will begin to tremble. The powers of darkness will fear and be on their guard. You march on and on until you find your life full of success. Not ten but a thousand are won for Christ.

God asks the Israelites to come three times a year. It would be expensive, it would take time. God said, 'The firstborn is mine.' All this gives us more confidence in God. Your spiritual faculties can be developed greatly. Your thoughts can become prophetic, your words can be prophetic. The people who contact you must feel you are a live wire. The prophets were like that. Why do we gather on Saturdays for prayer? That our faith may grow. In course of time you will certainly be different from others. All your life, your one object should be to glorify Christ and bring souls to Him. You will reach a height of faith from which you will not fall.

Our faith will run through correct channels and flow deeper and wider until it inundates society. In John Wesley's group they prayed, watched and obeyed. When they went from place to place, they spiritually inundated each place. One day, God will use us like that. To keep the house of God worthy of His name is not easy. This belongs to the Saviour. 'No one will desire the land.' (Verse 24) It is a great promise. The sooner you get into God's will and your will is destroyed, you will see the fullness of the blessing. God and you will rejoice. Your joy of salvation will be full. It is not the paddle that will take you forward, but the very current will carry you. When you see the rudder you will see you are marching into greater success and victory. Today, we have a profit-motivated religion. So the heathen don't have respect for our religion. The Lord is with you. God says, I have given you my commandment. Don't allow your children to make a covenant with the heathen. Don't make promises to others unless it is permitted by God. If you have promised, break it and confess it to God. Not I, but Christ shall have the right of way with me.

Moses went into God's presence, and came back with a face shining. He was a human being like you, but how different! Who gave him this honour? God! Our very walk, look and manner of life should be a testimony. This is the great privilege of being a Christian. Oh, the years that are wasted! Young man, this opportunity is given to you now. Grow in grace. Rejoice in the Lord. God says, "You are my people and I have revealed heaven's truths, eternal truths, to you." Remember when you read the Bible, you get eternal truths. The moment you get into that current of truth nobody can shake you. God will take you to depths of love and grace which the world has not yet seen.

— N. Daniel

... "BANDITS" FROM PAGE 3

sticks for a fire." He shook the peddler, realizing that he was facing a brigand, did as he was told. By the time the fire was lighted, night had come.

"Sir, before you burn my books and shoot, allow me to read from them." "That's fair." Said the brigand, sitting down by the fire.

The peddler selected a passage from Luke's Gospel. "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves."

That was a bold move, but the bandit listened while the story of the Good Samaritan was read to him. "I like that story," said the brigand. "We won't burn that book."

Drawing out Matthew's Gospel, the peddler read from the Sermon on the Mount.

"There is nothing bad about that book: we won't burn that one!"

This time the peddler opened a New Testament and read about Christian love from Paul's letter to Corinth.

"What beauty and truth! We must keep that book. Read another."

As the peddler read one book after another, it was added to the pile that was not to be burned.

"I have no more, sir."

"Nonsense! Where are the evil books?"

"I have none, sir."

Mystified, the bandit galloped off.

Toiling on to the next village inn, the peddler gave thanks to God for another escape!

In the market place the next morning, the peddler approached a group of men standing round a donkey.

May I read to you about the Lord Jesus Christ?"

"With pleasure," was the reply.

Then the colporteur read how Jesus sent

two disciples to fetch a donkey.

"How much is that book?" cried one of them.

"One half-penny," said the peddler.

"Beware! The books are evil..." A loud voice created a tumult and soon the square was filled with a maddened throng.

"Stone the heretic!"

"Death to the blasphemer!"

When things looked at their worst, a horseman rode madly into the square- a fierce-looking man with a black beard.

"Leave the man alone," he cried.

Everyone knew the bandit and feared.

"But sir," cried one voice, "he sells evil books. He deserves to be punished."

The bandit sat quietly on his horse and told the story of the night before.

"The books are good," he finished.

Years passed and one day the colporteur received a letter from America. Surprised, he opened and read it. His astonishment increased as he read. It was from the brigand! He wrote how his life had been changed since that night long ago, when the colporteur had read the words of God to him by the light of the fire. The wrongly called "evil books" had brought him salvation.

— Selected

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