

Christ is Victor

MARCH/APRIL 2011

“Life Saved By a Tract”

A minister from Exeter stated, that not far from the place where he lived, and quite in the country, there were two young ladies residing, and both were pious. It so happened that a poor American sailor, having taken up the employment of a peddler, passed that way, called at the house of these young ladies, and taking his box of small wares from his shoulders, requested one of them to purchase some tracts. She replied, that there was a certain tract which she was anxious to find, and that she would look over his parcel, and if it contained the one referred to, she would take it.

She did so, and finding the tract she wanted, paid the man, and ordered the servants to provide him some refreshments, and went in haste to the door to receive a friend who had come from a distance to visit her. The poor man, in the mean time, gathered up his scattered wares, proceeded a considerable distance on his way, and having reached a very retired spot, sat down by the side of the road, and taking his jack-knife from his pocket, began to appease his hunger with the food so kindly provided for him.

It so happened that in the course of the day a most horrible murder and robbery had been committed near this spot, and officers had been dispatched to seek out the criminal and bring him back to justice. A party of them approached this

... “TRACT” CON’T ON PAGE 4

Christ is Victor
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“Living a Righteous Life”

“Hear this, I pray you, ye heads of the house of Jacob, and princes of the house of Israel, that abhor judgment, and pervert all equity.” (Micah 3:9)

Selfishness and sin have grown to such a pitch in the heart of men that righteousness and a correct distinction between right and wrong is greatly disliked and hated by most people. But the God of the Bible, the Living God is just and true and is the God of judgment. Thus in His sight and before His holy Word, actions and thoughts, motives and secret ambitions, men of high degree and men of low estate are all weighed, searched, categorized, seen and judged for what they are.

Talking in practical terms, when a father or a mother dies leaving some property or money, the natural inclination of the sons is for each to get the best portion possible. The financial stress in the large family of one or the inadequate salary of another of the brothers, does not always carry weight or gain in the sympathy of the other brothers or sisters. “That is his own fault. He should have studied harder when Daddy gave him the opportunity and he would have landed in a better job,” they say. Hard words with no sympathy at all for their own brother!

Now the Living God says, “*Can't you be just and fair? Can't you give him the finer part of the land which will yield him a little more harvest? Should you be filled with so much ill will when it comes to property or money?*” But men hate judgment.

With all our boasted education and culture, I have found men in many parts of the world to be so biased, prejudiced, insular with national and parochial obsessions and it is hardly possible for them to be objective and fair-minded. Whether

it is a property division in a family or politics at an international level, it is just the same. Self interest and selfishness and a total lack of objectivity cloud all judgment.

Nowadays, promoting justice and upholding the just cause impartially, seems no longer to be the objective of law courts in many parts of the world. Governments so pressurize judges to promote their pet interests and social programs, that an individual today is denied his rights. The hardworking man has every reason to feel victimized and the just man to feel hated and not wanted. All this tilts the balance strongly against fair-mindedness, truth and justice.

The Living God is by no means coerced or frightened by all the unjust, immoral ways of men. Everyone of us will have to give an account of all the deeds done in this body before Him. Unrighteousness can never be painted white in His sight. Lies and untruthfulness will never be winked at before the High Tribunal of God. They will only damn your soul and condemn you to hell fire.

Most people do not know that judgment is inherent in righteousness. That is, there is always alongside of it, judgment. It is as simple as this: when the day dawns everything that needs to be hidden away or everything that dare not be seen is put under covers. The light of day is too much for the robber to rob in, for the murderer to murder, or the gang of terrorists to sit in open deliberation of their next move. They run away before the day breaks. They know that their own actions are wrong and therefore cannot stand the light of day. So light and judgment go together.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Sun of Righteousness. When He comes into your life sin must run away. Every

... “LIFE” CON’T ON PAGE 4

“George Whitefield: Pioneer of Open-Air Preaching”

George Whitefield was born at Bell Inn, Gloucester, where his parents were the keepers. At school his chief interest was drama and he was apparently a born actor; he took part in a number of school plays and was sometimes invited to make speeches before the town fathers. He left school at the age of fifteen to help his mother run the inn, but three years later was persuaded to enter Pembroke College, Oxford, where as a servitor he gained free tuition by serving his fellow students.

For some while Whitefield had begun to feel a hunger for God and became aware that He had some intention for his life. To prepare himself, he fasted regularly and prayed, and often attended public worship twice a day. At Oxford he planned to enter the Church of England ministry and associated with a number of others, known as “Methodists”, who had similar intentions.

The Wesleys had started a religious society, nicknamed the Holy Club, to promote the pursuit of personal religion, and Whitefield readily joined in the activities. Realizing more and more that his heart was far from God, however, he resolved only to read books that led him “*directly into*

an experimental knowledge of Jesus Christ.” But it was not until three years later, during Lent 1735, that “*God was pleased... to remove the heavy load and enable me to lay hold of His Son by a living faith.*”

Whitefield was twenty-one when he was converted, and when his intention of entering the ministry was made known to Bishop Benson of Gloucester, arrangements were made for him to be ordained before the statutory age. The Sunday following, in 1736, he preached his first sermon at the church where he had been baptized. His evangelical fervor was apparent; some mocked but many were impressed. Afterwards there was a complaint to the Bishop that his sermon had driven fifteen people “mad” (i.e. they had been converted). The bishop’s response was that he hoped that madness would not be forgotten before next Sunday!

Invitations to preach soon began to reach the young minister, and in both London and Bristol he spoke in churches and at many of the new religious societies that had been formed. But, while his message of the new birth and justification by faith “*made their way like lightning into the hearts of the hearers’ conscience,*” others began to oppose him and refuse the use of their pulpits.

The following year Whitefield sailed for the colony of Georgia to support the Wesleys in their missionary outreach, but by the time he reached Savannah they had returned home. His stay was brief, only long enough

to become aware of the need for an orphanage, and he returned to England to raise money for the building.

Open - Air

On a preaching tour in the West Country early in 1739, he discovered that many pulpits were still closed to him. At Bath and then at Bristol his request for use of a pulpit was turned down, and it was this refusal that led him to break with tradition and preach in the open-air. In Wales evangelists had already used the method with success, so one Saturday afternoon he determined to speak to the miners of Kingswood on their own ground.

Standing on a hillside, Whitefield preached to some two hundred miners and their families whom, he felt, were “*as sheep having no shepherd.*” He was thrilled with the experience and wrote in his diary, “*I believe I never was more acceptable to my Master than when I was standing to teach those hearers in the open fields.*”

Anxious to return to America, Whitefield approached the Wesleys and invited them to take over his work in Bristol during his absence. John Wesley, amazed at the large open-air meetings, agreed even though the two preachers began to realize they had deep theological differences. When Whitefield reached the colonies late in 1739, his reputation as a preacher had gone before him. In New England great crowds gathered to hear the twenty-five year old evangelist, and for over a month he spoke to as many as eight thousand people every day. Although

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This Fellowship is a non-denominational missionary movement 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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opposed by a number of Anglican ministers, his tour was immensely successful and many were converted.

His gift of oratory was greatly admired and he had obviously not lost his youthful skill of acting. Benjamin Franklin, the famous publisher, inventor and writer, spoke enthusiastically of his preaching ability and declared, *“It was wonderful to see the change soon made in the manner of our inhabitants.”* Franklin himself once came under the influence of Whitefield’s persuasive powers when, following an appeal for his orphanage, the writer—contrary to all his vowed intentions—put all the silver and gold from his pocket into the collection.

The height of the Awakening came in the years 1740-41 when both Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards were ministering in the colonies; thousands were converted and many new churches established as the revival spread South from New England to Virginia. One minister wrote, *“Our lectures flourish, our Sabbaths are joyous, our churches increase and our ministers have new life and spirit in their work...”*

Over the succeeding years Whitefield visited Scotland on fourteen occasions, the first in 1741. His second visit, the following year, proved quite remarkable, for revival had broken out at Cambuslang, near Glasgow, and he was able to share in the work of the Awakening. The climax of his visit was two communion services held in the open-air, one of which attracted 20,000 people.

A man of immense vigor and zeal, Whitefield maintained a tough schedule of travel and preaching tours, which eventually wore him out. He died during the night of 15th October 1770 at Newburyport, New England, where he was buried.

For thirty-five years as an itinerant preacher in Britain and America, Whitefield changed the conventions of religious preaching and opened the way for mass evangelism.

-Selected from *70 Great Christians* by Geoffrey Hanks.

“Be Thou Perfect”

“And the Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre:” (Read Genesis 18:1-33)

Evidently three men were walking by in front of the tent of Abraham. When Abraham saw them, he ran to meet them. Abraham was watching. He was not spiritually sleeping. He was cautioned about three months ago. *“And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.” (Genesis 17:1)* God had great purposes for Abraham but they could not be fulfilled, unless he met Him constantly. He was lifted higher with each meeting with God.

God may demand greater self-denial. Self prevents the best in you from being multiplied by God to live the life of a thousand, in usefulness. Every time God meets us, the self-dying increases. Now God was walking before Abraham’s house. In those days when men were more innocent, they could see angels. When revival broke out in Kakinada (a town in Andhra Pradesh), people saw Christ in their homes. If the atmosphere is suitable and pure, God can meet us. After the resurrection, people saw the saints in Jerusalem. God came to see Abraham nine months before he became a father.

God wanted to see if Abraham had taken His warning given three months ago. Abraham had taken the warning and was improving. Abraham must have been meditating at that time. He was not worried about the servants and property. Otherwise he could not have seen God. In the time of our meditation, God wants to meet us and speak to us. But you are too much taken up with the world and the gains of the world. Abraham ran and met God and besought him to come into his house and dine. He called a young man and asked him to prepare a fatted calf. That was the honor given to distinguished guests in those days. The angels talked to him about God’s promise given to him. What have you done with the promises God has given you? Have you lost them? If you love God, you will love His promises also.

If you give time for your morning watch grudgingly and serve the Lord half-heartedly, how can God bless you? God was on His way to destroy two great cities. But before that, Abraham began to plead with God. Let our fellowship with

God be such that God will share His most intimate problems with us. It was not a pleasure for God to destroy those cities. If there was any hope of improvement, He would never have done it. There was no one to tell them and it was full of sin. There was only one self-righteous man in it.

Is God a destroying agent? No. Evil destroys itself. It is so ordered of God. Would you wish it otherwise? Wickedness destroys itself. I know my classmates who yielded to sin. They are already dead. They destroyed themselves. Sin destroys itself. But it should not destroy you and me. We belong to God. He says, *“You are my witness.” “Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen; that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he:...” (Isaiah 43:10)*

The work of salvation—saving men—is given to you and to me. *“Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee.” (Acts 10:32)* The angel came to Cornelius, but did not give the gospel. The angel said, *“Send for Simon Peter and he will help you.”* This work of saving men is not even given to angels. But it is given to us.

- Late Mr. N. Daniel

REALITY CHECK!

“THE EARTH IS THE LORD’S, AND THE FULLNESS THEREOF; THE WORLD, AND THEY THAT DWELL THEREIN.”

PSALMS 24:1

wicked motive and every deceitful desire, every unclean impulse, every homosexual deed or sexual perversion must be put away. It is impossible to harbor sin in your heart anymore.

More and more people act on the belief that unrighteousness, lies, bribes and wickedness pay. For a short season, in His great long-suffering the Living God gives you a long rope. But it is impossible that a family or a group of people will prosper long who practice wickedness, propagate lies and act without principle. They are doomed to fall and disaster is bound to overtake them.

Many people ignore the simple principle that they will reap what they sow. You cannot sow wild oats and reap a bumper harvest of the finest wheat.

Loving the people, praying for the people and lifting heavy burdens off the people is the role of a priest. But should a priest or a preacher be given to much eating or spendthrift ways, he will soon be looking for more and more money. In fact what has a preacher to do with money? The more money you have, the more worries you have. How can any preacher function merely because he is paid? A priest and a prophet are the representatives of God. Money or cash is not the medium through which they operate or establish their work. It is by prayer and the power that you have with God that your credentials are established.

What if you have a million in the bank? Is that going to make your prayer more effectual? On the contrary, you are likely to plummet into a life of materialism and worldliness. The priests who teach for hire are a curse to any people. The purse is the last thing which should figure in the thinking of a true Christian preacher. These are hard days, no doubt. But the Lord who takes care of the sparrow will not forget you. From my boyhood days I have seen my parents walk and preach without any regard to money, and after operating fifty years myself in this manner, I know that this is the only way by which a Christian worker who wants to be true to God can operate.

Alas! What a day of decline and disaster we are living in today, when "*priests teach for hire and the prophets prophesy for money!*" Dear reader, you can start spiritual revolution around you by returning the bribes that you have taken, and by cleansing your conscience in obedience to God's Word. The Lord Jesus Christ will endue you with His peace, righteousness and power, and the workers of unrighteousness around you will tremble and fear.

When the Spirit of God works in you, you have a very clear and strong sense of what is right and wrong. Instead of hating the Spirit of judgment, we welcome and embrace it, for without it we would stumble and fall.

- Joshua Daniel

poor sailor, and finding him employed with the jack-knife (the very instrument with which the murder was supposed to have been perpetrated), they seized him at once and put him in prison, where he remained three months awaiting his trial.

During the whole period of his confinement he was employed in reading the Bible and religious books to his fellow-prisoners, and was so exemplary in his whole conduct as to attract the attention of the jailer, who kindly interested himself for him, listened to his tale of woe, and believed him innocent.

When the trial came on, the case was of such an interesting nature that it drew together a vast concourse of people, and after the examination had been passed, and the judge had called for the verdict of guilty or not guilty, a voice was heard to issue from the crowd, "*Not guilty!*"

Every eye was directed to the spot from whence the sound proceeded, and immediately a young lady advanced, with a paper in her hand, and appeared before the judge. Her feelings at first overcame her, and she fainted, but recovering herself, and being encouraged to proceed, if she had anything to say in defense of the prisoner at the bar, she stated to the judge the circumstances of having the tract of the poor man, presenting it at the same time, bearing the date of the day and hour when it was purchased.

She stated further, that just as the man was about to leave her, a sister whom she had not seen for many years arrived from a distance, and as she was anxious for a particular reason, to remember the day and hour of her arrival, she made a memorandum of it upon this tract, which she happened to have in her hand.

While she was making this statement to the judge, the poor prisoner bent forward with earnestness to discover what gentle voice was pleading in his behalf, for he had thought himself friendless and alone in the world, and was comforted that anyone should take a part in his sorrows, even though it could not avail to the saving of his life. But it did avail, for the hour of the murder having been ascertained, and being the same as that recorded upon the tract, it was evident the prisoner must have been in a different place at the time it was committed. He was accordingly discharged, and in a moment was upon his knees, pouring forth the grateful feelings of his heart to his kind benefactress. "*And this,*" said the reverend gentleman, holding up a tract, "*is the very tract which saved that man's life.*"

- Selected

2011 Easter Retreat

Date: April 22 - 24th

Community Christ Church
46200 West Ten Mile Road
Novi, Michigan 48374
Phone: (248) 486-6326

For more information,
visit <http://lefi.org>

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