

Christ is Victor

JUL/AUG 2006

“The Greatest Trial”

In George Mueller’s Life

George Mueller (1805-1898) was a man of prayer and strong faith who depended wholly on God through all the storms and trials of life. Here is an account of ‘the greatest trial’ in his life from his own pen.

“In July, 1853, it pleased the Lord to try my faith in a way in which before it had not been tried. My beloved daughter and only child, and a believer since the commencement of the 1846, was taken ill on June 20th.

“This illness, at first a low fever, turned to typhus. On July 3rd there seemed no hope of her recovery. Now was the trial of faith. But faith triumphed. My beloved wife and I were enabled to give her up into the hands of the Lord. He sustained us both exceedingly. But I will only speak about myself. Though my only and beloved child was brought near the grave, yet was my soul in perfect peace, satisfied with the will of my Heavenly Father, being assured that He would only do that for her and her parents, which in the end would be the best. She continued very ill till about July 20th, when restoration began.

“On August 18th she was so far restored that she could be removed to Clevedon for change of air, though exceedingly weak. It was then 59 days since she was first taken ill. Parents know what an only child, a beloved child is, and what to believing parents an only child, a believing child must be. Well, the Father in Heaven said, as it were, by this His dispensation,

... “TRIAL” CON’T ON PAGE 4

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“The Secret of Revival”

“I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplications.” (Zechariah 12:10)

A mere futuristic and prophetic interpretation of some Scriptures has a great appeal to lazy, sleepy-eyed Christians, who want to continue in their professorial arm-chairs. If there is a Scripture that challenges them, they try hard to give it such a connotation or denotation as leaves them outside the scope of its challenge. First as a Christian and secondly as a preacher of the Gospel, I turn to the Scriptures to apply them to my own heart, to measure and straighten out my experience therewith and then to apply them to my hearers.

There is nothing which is more sadly lacking amongst Christians today than ‘the spirit of grace and supplications.’ Conspicuous amongst Christians today, however, is the spirit of gadding around. We have made a virtue of our flights, our tours and our globe-trotting. An account from the pen of a modern preacher reads like a travelogue and not even the remotest resemblance to the Acts of the Apostles or the missionary journeys of St. Paul.

While labouring and preaching amongst the Christians of Europe, Britain, the United States and Australia, I observed with sorrow that the vast majority have no notion at all of real individual prayer and waiting on God. It is an incontrovertible fact that the whole quality of your Christian experience and life depends on your personal prayer life. The idea has been more recently advanced that what really matters is the spiritual life of the whole body or assembly. This notion, I fear, is a clever subversion of Satan. The quality, depth and reality of the life of the ‘body’ essentially depends on the prayer-life and holiness of the individuals, that compose that body or church. An ‘Achan’ in the camp

can turn the jubilation and joy of Jericho’s victory into the bewildering, mournful and stunning defeat of Ai (Joshua 7:1-26).

When prayer life is at a discount amongst any company of Christians, there will be absent the finer points of Christian life, viz. spiritual unity, oneness in thought, spirit of discernment, guidance, adequacy to meet and counter every move of Satan, such as we see in Jesus and St. Paul. Some of the above graces that stem from a real touch and communion with God in prayer, are almost totally absent from many orthodox groups of Christians, who are held in high esteem and even enjoy much prestige for their piety. Appalling spiritual shallowness is the harvest that we are currently reaping for our prayerlessness!

Think of our evangelistic efforts today, how massive they have grown! Our organization was never better than it is today. Our gadgets and invaluable ‘helps’—without which we claim we are so helpless—load us down like Saul’s armour. Poor David felt so stiff and smothered in King Saul’s armour that had he ventured out vain-gloriously thus accoutred, the familiar Goliath story would have had another ending! Woe to the Christian who despises the smooth stones of the brook! Get your sling in order. Let the spirit of supplications possess you! Then you can laugh at any modern Goliath.

Our trust must be in our prayer-answering God, and not in our methods and techniques. Our Master did not drill his disciples in some special techniques that consumed all their time in planning the campaign, publicizing and running around fast and canvassing hard for support. This is our way—the modern way! You will not, however, find this way in the New Testament. This is not God’s way. Christ’s way was to teach His disciples prayer and insist that they should just ‘wait in prayer in Jerusalem’ until they were endued with power from on High. Most of the battle was

won in that upper chamber of prayer.

Do not mistake me, I am not advocating slipshod and ill-organised endeavours. But let our efforts be galvanized and strengthened with the spirit of supplications. In the revivals that broke out under Finney's labours, there was manifest a tremendous spirit of prayer. Both the preacher and the people were possessed by this spirit of prayer. Whenever and wherever Christians met, they prayed and they prevailed in prayer. The revival spread like wild fire. There was a minimum of organization, as we know it today. Yet the results were enduring.

Over in the West I noted with deep disappointment that several when challenged on the lines of prayer and revival were more anxious to discuss revival than to pray through. But wherever they obeyed the voice of God and got on their knees, revival broke out forthwith. This revival awakening is continuing and spreading, although it is a long time since the original revival meetings concluded.

Let us quit playing with God. Let us get alone with God and pray. I am appalled that God should be still mocked by the so-called prayer conferences where 98 percent of the time is wasted in vain talk.

I am reminded of a prayer meeting which I address at a hotel in Birmingham. After a brief message we got on our knees and the Spirit of God moved in our midst. One of my beloved brothers, whose addiction to tea was well-known, even forgot that it was well past tea time and he had not had his tea! Yes, we need the spirit of supplications that will cause us to forget our tea, our food and our social niceties on which we waste so much of our God-given time.

Beloved reader, put away all sin from your heart and conscience and cry to God and He will pour on you the spirit of supplications.

-Joshua Daniel

“Where art Thou?”

“And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, where art thou?” (Gen 3:9)

Where art thou? That's the question God is asking us today. Adam tried to answer that question in an evasive way. God wants straight answers from us. Oh, man, where art thou? Your answer is going to mean damnation or salvation. Are you proceeding in the right direction or in the wrong?

You cannot walk in two paths at the same time. You cannot have two minds and two different answers to a straight question like this. Some Christians dillydally with Christ. They miss the way and finally blame God. “A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways” (James 1:8). A friend asked me a serious question: “Daniel, is your eye single?” Ah! I examined myself carefully – if I had in any way come to serve God with a double motive. How many precious souls are ruined by not being single-eyed! My heart is bleeding for them. If you always think in positive terms – that is faith. Jesus Christ was never double-minded. He is always single-eyed. ‘Lazarus come out’ – that is positive. Talithacumi – that is positive! ‘I will abide in your house today!’ – everything here is positive. If you really mean business with God, God will mean business with you. Can you put your whole trust in Him? Then you will see the glory of God.

My great longing is that we should be like the first century Christians. What Christ will give us, is a single eye. He will teach you and lead you to God. When I was first converted God taught me and directed me. How well He led me! When I obeyed Him, I found success all around. Not even a stone would strike against my foot without God's will. Once when I was going to a certain place a stone struck my foot. I asked the Lord the reason. He said, “Turn back.” There was another road

which parted from this road which I had taken and I went along that road. Then I came by a hospital where I was told that a certain friend of mine was very sick there. I went to him and prayed for him and God healed him. See the dealings of the Lord! Four thousand years ago when Abraham talked with Him and walked with him, God was so concerned about him to commune with him about everything that concerned him. Do mean business with God. If your heart is after the world and the pleasures of the world, the path of Christ is quite difficult for you.

Are you entirely on Christ's side? When I was a student, my mother fell and broke her ribs. There was no hope of her recovery because she had to be taken by boat over a river to reach a hospital and moving her ever so slightly caused excruciating pain. But I whole-heartedly looked to Christ and said, “From the Cross you said, ‘Take care of my mother’. Now my mother is suffering. Please undertake for my mother.” I simply cried out with all my heart. I heard later that there was a sound of bone touching bone and she just got up and began to walk. Overnight God had united those bones!

Where are you? Are you single-eyed? Will you be His, out and out? So many families are miserable. You have the privilege of college education. You can be used of God to help them. But where are you today? In what direction are you moving? Go along the way of life which Christ will show you. You will be a cistern of water for thirsty people to drink from. People will see that. Are you willing? Which direction are you taking? Follow Christ and allow Him to be your Master. Are you going in the positive direction of love, faith, holiness, humility and righteousness? Then you will not fail. I wanted to follow Him and choose to be single. But God told me many things that were in His plan and warned me of things not in His plan and

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This Fellowship is an undenominational 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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I did just what He said. God said, "Marry the girl I show you." I simply obeyed. By His grace all these years have been years of victorious life in the family. It is Christ who is the way.

—N. Daniel

"The Only Bible People Will Ever Read"

It is important to come to church with our hearts prepared. One young man named Bill had wild hair and wore a T-shirt with holes in it, jeans and no shoes. He was brilliant, a bit esoteric, and very smart. While in college, he turned to Jesus and wanted to follow Jesus and be a true Christian.

Across the street from the university campus was a very conservative church, with many well-dressed and beautifully attired members. They wanted to develop a ministry to students, but weren't sure how to go about it.

One day Bill decided to go there. He walked in with his jeans, his T-shirt, and of course his wild hair. The service had already started, so Bill started walking down the aisle looking for a seat. The church was completely packed and he couldn't find a seat. By now people had noticed him, and they all looked a bit uncomfortable, but no one said anything. Bill got closer and closer and closer to the pulpit and, when he realized there were no seats, he just squatted down, sitting right on the carpet. Although perfectly acceptable behaviour at a college Christian fellowship group, this had never happened in this church before! By now the people were really uptight, and the tension in the air was thick. About this time, the minister realized that from the back of the church, an usher was slowly making his way toward Bill. This usher was in his eighties, had silver-grey hair, and wore a distinguished three-piece suit. He was a godly man, very elegant, very dignified.

He walked with a cane and, as he started walking toward this young man, everyone was saying under their breath, "You can't blame him for what he's going to do. How can you

expect a man of his age and distinction to understand some college kid sitting on the floor?" It took a very long time for the man to reach the boy. The church was utterly silent except for the clicking of the man's shoes. All eyes were focused on him. You couldn't even hear anyone breathing. The minister couldn't even preach the sermon until the usher did what he had to do.

When he was upon the boy he dropped his cane and with great difficulty, lowered himself to the ground and sat down. It is a moment filled with poignancy.

When the minister regained control, he said, "What I'm about to preach, you might never remember. What you have just seen, you will never forget. Be careful how you live. You may be the only Bible some people will ever read."

"Parent on their Knees"

John Paton's life was moulded in his childhood in a little cottage in Kirkmahoe, Scotland. The cottage had ribs of oak, stone-walls, a thatched roof, and three rooms filled with eleven children. The front room served as bedroom, kitchen, and parlour. The rear room was his father's stocking-making shop. The middle room was a closet where John's father retired each day for prayer and Bible study. The sound of his father's prayers through the wall made a powerful impression on young John.

Years later, when Scotland's Reformed Church issued a plea for missionaries for the South Pacific, John went to his parents for advice. They told him something they had never before disclosed – that he had been dedicated to foreign missions before birth!

John sailed from Scotland April 16, 1858, landing on the islands in November. He found himself among cannibals, endangered again and again. "They encircled us in a deadly ring," he wrote of one incident, "and one kept urging another to strike the first blow. My heart rose up to the Lord

Jesus; I saw him watching all the scene. My peace came back to me like a wave from God. I realized that my life was immortal till my Master's work with me was done."

For several years, Paton saw little progress, but he persisted in his work. The turning point came when Paton decided to dig a well to provide fresh water for the people. The islanders, terrified at bringing "rain from below," watched with deepest foreboding. Paton dug deeper and deeper until finally, at thirty feet, he tapped into a stream of water. Opposition to his mission work ceased, and the wide-eyed islanders gave him their full respect. Chief Mamokei accepted Christ as Saviour, then a few others made the daring step.

On October 24, 1869, nearly eleven years after his arrival, Paton led his first communion service. Twelve converted cannibals partook of the Lord's Supper. "As I put the bread and wine into those hands once stained with the blood of cannibalism, now stretched out to receive and partake the emblems of the Redeemer's love," he wrote, "I had a foretaste of the joy of Glory that well nigh broke my heart to pieces."

There was never a parent in the Gospels who came to Christ with a burdened heart and went away empty. God, being a Father, has a special interest in the prayers of parents. When those parents are on their knees, their shadows fall over the world, and their influence extends to the ages.

—Selected

REALITY CHECK!

"THEREFORE WHO-SOEVER HEARETH THESE SAYINGS OF MINE, AND DOETH THEM, I WILL LIKEN HIM UNTO A WISE MAN, WHICH BUILT HIS HOUSE UPON A ROCK:"

MATTHEW 7:24

U. S. Summer Retreat

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“Judging Others”

A certain preacher had a method of dealing with those people who were critical of others. He kept a complaint book in his desk. When a church member would come to tell him of another's faults he would say, “Well, here is my complaint book. I'll write down what you say, and you can sign your name to it. Then I'll go and take it up with our brother.”

Invariably the critic would stammer, backtrack, and insist that nothing be written or signed. In his 40-year ministry that preacher opened his complaint book hundreds of times—but never made a single entry.

How about it? Are you willing to write out and sign the ugly things you have said about others? If not, perhaps it would be best to leave judgment where it belongs—with God.

—Selected

“Loving the Unlovable”

One day St. Francis of Assisi was riding on horseback down the road that went by a leper hospital situated far from Assisi, for then, as in Biblical times, lepers were a rejected lot. Francis at that time, was not yet the saint of history; he was still caught between the lure of wealth and glory (he assisted in his father's successful cloth business and he longed to become a gallant knight) and the life of discipleship (he had recently sensed God leading him into a life of spiritual service). As he rode along, he was absorbed in his thoughts.

We pick up the story as recorded by historian Arnaldo Fortini:

“Suddenly the horse jerked to the side of the road. With difficulty Francis pulled him back by a violent jerk at the reins. The young man looked up and recoiled in horror. A leper stood in the middle of the road a short distance away, unmoving and looking at him.

“He was no different from the others; the usual wan spectre with stained face, shaved head, dressed in grey sackcloth. He did not speak and showed no sign of moving or of getting out of the way. He looked at the horseman fixedly, strangely, with an acute and penetrating gaze.

“An instant that seemed eternity passed. Slowly Francis dismounted, went to the man, and took his hand. It was a poor emaciated hand, blood stained, twisted, inert, and cold like that of a corpse. He put a

mite of charity in it, pressed it, and carried it to his lips. And suddenly, as he kissed the lacerated flesh of the creature who was the most abject, the most hated, the most scorned, of all human beings, Francis was flooded with a wave of emotion, one that shut out everything around him, one that he would remember even on his deathbed.

“It was an early step in Francis's conversion which took many months, But he was learning that to follow Christ may require doing some things that may naturally repulse us. What Francis didn't know at the time was that something greater was prompting him, allowing him to do that which, humanly speaking, he was incapable of doing.”

—Selected

“Too Full of the Grace of God!”

Dwight L. Moody said that one of the happiest men he ever knew was a man in Dundee, Scotland, who had fallen and broken his back when a boy of fifteen. He had lain on his bed for forty years and could not be moved without a good deal of pain. Probably not a day had passed in all those years without acute suffering. But day after day the grace of God had been granted him.

When Mr. Moody was in his room it seemed as if he was as near heaven as he could get on earth. When Mr. Moody saw him, he thought he must be beyond the reach of the tempter.

So he asked him, “Doesn't Satan ever tempt you to doubt God and to think that He is a hard master?”

“Oh, yes,” he said, “he does try to tempt me. I lie here and see my old schoolmates driving along, and Satan says, ‘If God is so good, why has He kept you here all these years? You might have been a rich man, riding in your carriage.’ Then I see a man walk by in perfect health, and Satan whispers, ‘If God loved you, couldn't He have kept you from breaking your back?’”

“And what do you do when Satan tempts you?”

“Ah, I just take him to Calvary, and I show him Christ, and I point out those wounds in His hands and feet and side, and say, ‘Doesn't He love me?’ The fact is Satan got such a scare there nineteen hundred years ago that he cannot stand it; he leaves me every time.”

That bedridden saint of God did not have much trouble with doubts; he was too full of the grace of God.

... “TRIAL” FROM PAGE 1

“Art thou willing to give up this child to me?” My heart responded, “As it seems good to Thee, my Heavenly Father. Thy will be done.”

“But as our hearts were made willing to give back our beloved child to Him who had given her to us, so He was ready to leaver her to us, and she lived. “Delight thyself also in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart.” (Psalm 73:4) The desires of my heart were to retain the beloved daughter if it were the will of God; the means to retain her were to be satisfied with the will of the Lord.

“Of all the trials of faith that as yet I have had to pass through, this was the greatest; and by God's abundant mercy, I own it to His praise, I was enabled to delight myself in the will of God; for I felt perfectly sure, that, if the Lord took this beloved daughter, it would be best for her parents, best for herself, and more for the glory of God than if she lived: this better part I was satisfied with; and thus my heart had peace, perfect peace, and I had not a moment's anxiety. Thus would it be under all circumstances, however painful, were the believer exercising faith.”

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