

Christ is Victor

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“The Lord is Our Strong Tower”

The story of Harper, a great Baptist minister in Glasgow, is a very interesting one. There is a church still named after him - the Harper Memorial Baptist Church somewhere in the south side of Glasgow. Well, Harper drowned and died on his way to America on the Titanic in 1912. The story of his death is very edifying. The Titanic, as you know, hit the iceberg and began to sink at a terrific rate. It was the biggest and most luxurious ship ever built, up to that date. And some of the people who were serving on it, they said, *“Even God Almighty cannot sink this ship!”* They were boasting of it, and its watertight bulkheads. But they were so careless they didn't even worry about icebergs, and they skimmed across the iceberg and it just was like a penknife cutting right through the metal at the level just under the water - and it went down at a terrific rate, as everybody knows. There was terrible loss of life. The cause for the sinking of the Titanic is not just the iceberg but human pride.

Well, Reverend Harper was offered a seat in one of the lifeboats. And as he turned round, he saw a poor drunkard beside him, and Harper said, *“No.”* He said, *“Give my seat to this man. I'm ready to meet God. This man isn't,”* he said. And the next thing is this beloved Baptist minister found himself in the water - cold, icy water. And there were lots of them swimming around.

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“My House Shall be Called the House of Prayer”- Mark 11:17

If we ask a man on the street to identify a house of prayer, I wonder what he would say. Probably, he would point to a place where charms are sold and weird counsels given, and call it a house of prayer.

The very conception of house of prayer has totally disappeared, in most countries. A house of annual festivity of one sort or another, or a house where devotees dance with their bodies smeared with oil or bright colours, or a house which resounds with chants not easily understood- yes, you will find. But what is a house of prayer and where is one to find it? Surely not in modern Christendom!

Someone took me over to see a very beautiful church building in the United States. It glistened with paint and polish and everything was tastefully and in fact, very expensively appointed. Someone said one or two millionaires worshipped there. Yet in spite of the sheer beauty of the interior decoration, there was only one service held there each week on Sunday morning. There was no prayer meeting or any midweek meeting whatsoever.

A church without a prayer meeting is a dead church. You and your children are not going to get anything of lasting value from a prayerless church.

What is known as the church is a body of believers, who have found in Jesus forgiveness of sins and deliverance from sin and pray effectively from their hearts; withal, enjoying true and loving fellowship with each other.

Where there is true love, there is always genuine concern and heartfelt prayer. Now, that is what the Lord Jesus wished to see in the temple. But alas! He heard only the bleating of the sheep, the dolorous cooing of doves kept there to be sold as sacrifices, the vigorous and vociferous haggling over purchases and the jingling of coins at the moneychangers. You can well imagine what a shock and sorrow all this noisy cacophony of voices and sounds

must have been to Him!

“My house shall be called the house of prayer for all people.” Jesus found the temple to be anything but a House of prayer. There was neither the atmosphere of prayer nor were there men intent on prayer there. The heart of the Saviour was filled with anguish and abhorrence and He cried, *“Ye have made the house of prayer a den of thieves.”*

I don't know how commercialism and a money-motive slowly and imperceptibly attaches itself to a religious cause. Then it soon develops into a stranglehold and be sure, it is all downhill, from that point. Where prayer was wont to be made, it is fights and arguments instead! Where there were godly and upright men before, crooks and clever dissemblers take over. Thereafter, a heartless commercialism holds sway over what was meant to be a spiritual institution, or a place where the weary and the heartbroken find peace with God and rest. I'm sure there are still some right-thinking men, who are well and truly fed up with the manner in which religious places of worship have become the seats of moneymaking racketeers. These temples do not promote holiness of life but are hotbeds of immorality and vice. Thugs and thieves do not come here to pray and repent, but to express their appreciation for a religious system or deity who, they feel, has helped to fill their coffers with money, regardless of its being ill-gotten.

A temple is a house of prayer where sin is rebuked and from which men return wholly transformed. Men who have gone there under the grip of alcohol return with an abhorrence of liquor, and crooks turn into straight-living men. They have had an encounter with God in the temple and their lives have been transformed. This transformation or new life penetrates deep into the total life

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“And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury.”-Luke 21:1

Jesus looked at the treasury and at the rich people. He was assessing how much of their heart and faith was going with their money into God's treasury. Many give to God; but there is no faith content in their giving at all. Nothing in it contributes to the extension of the kingdom of God. What is the faith content in your giving? Does it go with your money? William Carey went to India. He had no money. The United Kingdom gave 1,000 pounds to help him: but it would not allow him to build a college, set up a printing press, or establish God's work. He worked and earned 25,000 pounds. What is the faith content of your giving? Many give money to God and they are satisfied with it. God looks at those gifts and feels sad because there is no faith in them. When tests come and when you have to go forward through them, you may find there is no faith in you. Once Carey had no money. He was in a strange land. A merchant took him into his home and looked after him. He started serving the Lord from there. Wherever he went he was a blessing. A man with faith is a blessing wherever he goes. Even if he is poor, it will not hinder the blessing.

We have had many kinds of people who helped us. Some served for their wages. Some chose to serve God with us. A man who served for many years felt depressed whenever he felt his finances were low. He left us and found a situation where he could earn much money. He did earn well, but his wife became sick. He himself became possessed with the love of money. Another servant who valued his stay with us later took the gospel to his village and brought much blessing to people. He spent his own money in this service.

When rich people empty themselves in God's service, they are filled. God fills them with great joy.

At the time when people were offering to God, Jesus was watching. He saw a widow. She was really a widow. There are some ladies who have husbands, yet they are like widows even while their husbands are alive. Their husbands do not love them or care for them. They do not know to whom to cry during their trouble. There are some others who are in the same plight, but they do not murmur at God. “How can I glorify God in this situation?” The husband of Pandita Rama Bai died. Did she behave like a widow? Did she despair? How many missionaries were inspired by her prayers! She had great faith. When a saintly widow prays, it is a blessing. Even angels will obey such women. Losing the husband will not be a calamity to them. ‘I can serve God. I will not lose heart. I will make my children obey God,’ is what they would say.

Proverbs 4:5 ‘Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.’ ‘Take care of your heart.’ This widow took care of her heart. Solomon did not take care of his heart. When Herod built a big temple, the disciples pointed at the stones to Jesus. Jesus said all these stones would be broken one day. Herod was a murderer and adulterer. Yet he was building the temple. When those who live in sin give money to the Church their example does such great damage that the offering is not accepted by God. All the young people are influenced by the bad example. We should weep day and night to God.

Although David advised Solomon as much

as he could, Solomon's heart was distracted by the women he married. David had warned Solomon to take care of his heart. How is your heart? The widow's heart was perfect when she gave those two mites. It was her all. Can you give all? Somewhere in some corner you want to have something you cannot give. The widow said in her heart, ‘God is with me and that is enough.’ Do you take care of your heart when you read popular magazines? When you move with people belonging to a high society, do their clothes and lifestyle attract you? Do you borrow money to spend like them? Something is wrong with you. Take care of your heart. It is God's treasure house. Out of it can come great songs which can inspire the whole world. Wesleyan hymns are great. I see my needs are expressed in these songs. They used to make me kneel down and pray.

Where is our faith? This widow was robust in faith. Jesus took note of it. When you have faith God takes note of it. When we came to this city, God gave us this promise: *II Chron. 7:15* ‘Now mine eyes shall be open and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place.’ Your prayer is never lost. The humble prayers of my wife and I are now fulfilled. Because of the element of faith in your prayer it will not be lost. God's eye is fixed on your house. David lost that blessing once. You too can lose it. Real faith never loses contact with God.

The widow's heart was with God. It is good to have such a woman in any prayer group. John Wesley had some men who were sanctified and were so close to God that Wesley said he could not compare with them. He wondered at their

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sanctity. A woman, like this, is a treasure. When a woman takes hold of God, she can be very sincere. If a man finds a wife who loves the Lord he gets a treasure. The widow was right with the Lord. Her face would have been bright and shining when she came to offer the two mites. We cannot tell how happy she felt when she saw Jesus.

Jesus did not want money. Yet He watched the offering of the people. He made a remark of commendation when this widow put in her two mites. Jesus looks at our heart. When Joshua commanded the sun to stand still God was with him. His heart was right with God. His voice was God's voice.

How is your heart? How is your mind when you go to church? I always considered my time in the Church precious. I listened to the message carefully. Shall we be fully consecrated? Zech. 3:7; 4:14 If a husband and wife are accepted by God this way, it will be a blessing. There is nothing of which you despair. Christ is risen. He is with you. Give your heart fully to God. This widow gave her all to God. As you are cleansing your heart, you are cleansing your home. One child after another will be touched. No harm can enter in. You can build the wall of heaven around you. Children of some widows became mighty men. Let some young people rise up, and change your home. Go on cleansing your heart. Heavenly graces and power will come through you. People will not be able to resist you. Ungodly parents cannot resist your influence. Victory is yours. You trust in the Word of God.

—Late Mr. N. Daniel

“Where Your Treasure Is, There Will Your Heart Be Also”

You can't carry a single penny when you reach the end of your time. When leaving the earthly sphere, all cash transactions stop here.

“...When he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.” *Matthew 13:45-46*. Each of us is a collector. Some collect coins, stamps, baseball cards, paintings and the list goes on. If you analyze yourself you will find that you are a collector of “treasures.” The Bible says where your treasure is there lies your heart. Are you wasting your time and money when not a single item can go with you after death? You need to obtain the only thing that

you can have now and take with you when you die—eternal life.

Eternal life is possible from God as a free gift you can choose. Social work and doing good cannot buy you this eternal life. You can't throw up a rope and climb to Heaven—it has to be dropped down. When you admit to your helplessness and hopelessness and call out to Him from your heart, He will listen and help you.

When you know that you are going to lose even your last penny, what do you have to lose by calling on God's mercy and pardon through Jesus? You only have eternal life to gain! Go ahead! Choose for yourself.

—A.C. Johnson, M.D

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of the recipients. Where he was a failure as a father, he begins to make amends. In the place of a homewrecker, we have now a home builder—a man who can be trusted as a true and faithful husband anywhere he goes. Yes, meeting the Lord Jesus produces in you a change of life which thrills you and makes you wonder at yourself.

On the other side of the picture, you see men who approach a religious festival, with the grossest of motives. They never once heard that a visit to the temple should be with the firm intention of praying and getting right with God. Such an idea is novel and totally alien to many people in our world today.

While walking through the majestic St. Peter's in Rome, I found hordes of tourists casually strolling round the place, not bothering to even pay scant respect to those people, who were carrying out routine religious observances, in a small enclosure. The irreverence and the godlessness of the scene were quite shattering. Have we only an impressive and magnificent structure to show? No! We have a great God, who changes sinners, teaches them to pray and be men of God, and rebuilds sin-ravaged and broken homes, a God who dwelleth not in mere buildings built of brick and mortar.

Standing in a long line of waiting people, who had traveled great distances to get a fleeting glimpse of a famous gilded idol, a young man told me that he had indulged in grossly unclean deeds, in broad daylight! His visit to a fabled temple had only worked him up to a state of uncontrolled bestiality! A den of thieves indeed!—where men are robbed of their virtue and women of their

virginity.

It looks as though, currently, in the name of religion, almost anything can be done. What a tragedy!

The Lord Jesus, who had come into this world to die for mankind's sins, was heartbroken when He saw the temple of His day devoid of prayer and true godliness. Nor did He get paralyzed by the scene of prolific wickedness— He cast out the wicked from the temple and cleansed it.

When we are washed in Jesus' blood, the dynamic of God's holiness takes hold of us; the uncleanness and wickedness around us hides its head in shame and flees from us. There is something vitally wrong with a Christianity that cannot change the world around it and usher in purity of life, where none existed.

The thieves and evil men are turned into soul-winners, when Jesus comes in; and a scene of total spiritual desolation and moral bankruptcy is changed into a scene of spiritual revival and renewal, when you repent before the Crucified and Risen Saviour who is waiting to cleanse and receive you. Oh, may the Living Saviour bring a cleansing wave of revival over homes and nations.

—Excerpt from “Pray with Purpose” by Joshua Daniel, Published by Laymen's Evangelical Fellowship International

Reality Check!

“A FALSE BALANCE IS ABOMINATION TO THE LORD; BUT A JUST WEIGHT IS HIS DELIGHT.”

-PROVERBS 11:1

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“Rich in God”

Mary Bosanquet was the daughter of a wealthy English merchant. She belonged to the elite. She wore the finest and the most expensive clothes and jewelry. Her father knew all the ‘right’ people. Whatever Mary lacked she only needed to buy. What more could she want? But a bombshell soon exploded in the Bosanquet home. Mary was invited to attend meetings held by the Methodist Society. Without telling her father, she went to a service, then more services.

Then it happened! Wealthy Mary Bosanquet was converted. She felt as though she were floating on clouds. Oh, the joy of it! She told her father. He was ashamed that she was dropping out to join the Society of Methodists! How cruel, how ungrateful!

What was more, Mary invited her brothers to the meetings and spoke to them about their souls! She began to dress plainly like people in the Society of Methodists. That added insult to injury, and one day her father came to her with a demand.

“Mary, there is a promise I require of you. That is, that you will never, now or hereafter, try to make your brothers what you call ‘Christian.’”

Mary replied, *“Father, I dare not consent to that.”*

“If you refuse to consent to that, you force me to put you out of my house!”

“According to your view of things, I will do.”

Her father chided, *“You don’t appreciate what I provide for you; you wear the plain clothes of those people!”*

How could poor Mary explain that she really loved her father and appreciated his interest and provision? But she was resolute in her reply: *“When I think of the word ‘holiness’, or of the adorable name of Jesus, my heart seems to be on fire for God more than ever before. I cannot go with you any more to places of amusement; neither can I wear the expensive clothes you buy me. I must be God’s and His alone.”* Imagine a young man or woman being uplifted by the thought of holiness or the name of Jesus!

Mary’s father was furious and told her to pack her things. He summoned the family coach and soon Mary, with her belongings in one trunk, left home to follow Christ. Her young maid and companion, who was also a Christian, was allowed to accompany her. At the parting, Mary told her father of a promise God had given from Revelation 3:4.

“God has promised me that I shall walk with

Him in white.”

From the homes of the rich, finely gabled and terraced with servants’ quarters and lush, beautiful gardens, the coach traveled to Laytonstone where the homes of the poor stood. Mary’s new residence had two rooms, with a dismal view of chimneystacks and the filthy yards of her neighbours. She had not brought candles, and she borrowed a table and two chairs. But she had *“the peace of God, which passeth all understanding”* (Philippians 4:7)

Mary was driven to her knees many times, and there she found Jesus, the “fairest of ten thousand”. The Lord reminded her with the words of the psalmist: *“When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up.”* (Psalm 27:10) The Lord kept His promise; He never failed her. Mary often said, *“Why, I am brought out of the world, and I have nothing to do but to be holy for God: holy in body and in spirit. What a happy soul I am! Truly my abode is a bit of heaven.”*

Prayer meetings were held in Mary’s new home and one woman after another asked to join. Their numbers grew to such proportions that Mary appealed to John Wesley to send them a preacher for Sunday services, which he did. Mary took a number of children into her home, and about thirty adults. They depended wholly on the Lord for sustenance. God, the Father of the fatherless, never failed to supply their needs.

Mary’s father put her out of the family in 1760. Some 37 years later, Henry F. Lyte was born in Scotland. While Lyte was preparing for the ministry in Ireland, Mary was still ministering to the poor and outcasts of Laytonstone and Hoxton. Young Lyte (later the Vicar of Lower Brixham) heard Mary’s story. Inspired by her courage and purity of life, he penned this lovely hymn:

Jesus, I my cross have taken,
All to leave and follow thee;
Destitute, despised, forsaken,
Thou from hence my all shalt be;
Perish every fond ambition,
All I’ve sought and hoped, and known;
Yet how rich is my condition,
God, and heav’n are still my own!
Let the world despise and leave,
They have left my Saviour too;
Human hearts and looks deceive me;
Thou art not like man, untrue;
And while Thou shalt smile upon me,
God of wisdom, love, and might,
Foe may hate, and friends may shun me;
Show Thy face, and all is bright.

—Selected

“THE LORD IS...” FROM PAGE 1

As Harper came in the water to a man beside him, he cried out: *“My friend, are you saved? Trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved!”* Thus saying, Harper drowned and died a heroic death. But this other man was picked up, mercifully! Not many were, but he was! And he was taken to America and he testified: *“Mr. Harper the faithful and beloved man died courageously, and as he was dying, he was preaching still to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ!”*

How does a man get that courage? How can a man offer another person his seat when it’s certain death to do so? How can a man be preaching confidently of Christ when the waters are coming over his body and mind, almost over his soul? The answer is: he has a strong tower - the Lord Jesus! He knows that God is with him! He knows that all the trials of life cannot destroy him! And his instinct is to flee to God. *“The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.”* (Proverbs. 18:10)

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