

Christ is Victor

SEP/OCT 2003

“The Heating Apparatus of the Church!”

Five young college students, before ordination, spent a Sunday in London, and were anxious to hear some well-known preachers in churches other than their own.

They found their way on a hot Sunday to Spurgeon’s Tabernacle. While waiting for the doors to open a stranger came up to them and said: “Gentlemen, would you like to see the heating apparatus of the church?” They were not particularly anxious to do so on a boiling day in July, but consented.

They were taken down some steps, and a door was thrown open, and their guide whispered, “There, sirs, is our heating apparatus!”

They saw before them 700 souls bowed in prayer seeking a blessing on the service about to be held in the tabernacle above. Their unknown guide was Spurgeon himself. Are we surprised that Spurgeon’s sermons are still circulated?

—selected

“Moses’ Communion with God”

“And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, ... Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people.” (Exodus 19:3,5)

Moses went up to the mountain and the Lord spoke to him and gave him a message. Many people are preaching today. But it is important that we should get a message from the Lord. We must receive the Word from the Lord in our prayer.

God says, “Remember how I have borne you as on eagles’ wings. You shall be a peculiar treasure if you obey Me.” It is impossible to be a disciple without difficulties. You cannot be a disciple unless you face some adversities and some persecutions. Every disciple goes through that discipline. Otherwise he will not learn to lean on God.

We have seen many mercies of God. But are we growing to that level when we can go up to the mountain of God? Moses could go up to the mountain three times. Again and again he went into the immediate presence of God and the Lord gave him

the Ten Commandments. “And the LORD said unto Moses, Thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven. Ye shall not make with me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold.” (Ex. 20:22) How this law of God is being broken all over the world. I don’t know how grateful we are to God for delivering us from the darkness of idolatry! But then, how much are we ascending up

the mountain of the Lord? How much communion do we have with God in prayer, like Moses?

Today, many of us have to work very hard. In some companies they are told “Twenty-four

hours you belong to us. You must think the product, you must sleep the product.” But we must have a longing for a deeper communion with God. Otherwise unconsciously we will get satisfied with our shallow religion.

At least three times we see Moses going to be alone and closeted with God, talking as it were, face to face with God! “And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights.” (Ex. 24:18) Forty days and forty nights- the Lord was enough for Moses!

“Many people are preaching today. But it is important that we should get a message from the Lord. We must receive the Word from the Lord in our prayer.”

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“The Power of the Bended Knee”

Birds go to sleep on their perches, but they never fall off. This is because of the tendons in the bird's legs. They are so constructed that when the leg is bent at the knee the claws contract and grip like a steel trap. The claws refuse to let go until the knees are unbent again. The bended knee gives the bird the ability to hold on to his perch so tightly.

Isn't this also the secret of the holding power of the Christian? Daniel found this to be true. Surrounded by a pagan environment, tempted to compromise with evil, urged to weaken his grip on God, he refused to let go. He held firm when others faltered because he was a man of prayer. He knew the power of the bended knee.

From sleeping birds we can learn the secret of holding things which are most precious to us- honesty, purity, thoughtfulness, honour and character. That secret is the knee bent in prayer, seeking to get a firmer grip on those values, which make life worth living. When we hold on firmly to God in prayer, we can rest assured he will hold on tightly to us.

“Worn Out Trousers of Gypsy Smith!”

Gypsy Smith, when converted, immediately desired the conversion of his uncle. Among gypsies it is not proper for children to address their elders on the subject of duty; so the boy just prayed, and waited.

On day his uncle noticed a hole in his trousers, and said, “Rodney, how is it that you have worn the knees of your pants so much faster than the rest of them?”

“Uncle, I have worn them out praying for you, that God would have you.”

Then the tears came. The uncle put his arm around the boy, drew him to his side, and soon bent his knees to the same Saviour.

“You cannot stumble if you are on your knees”

“A Praying Church”

“Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.” Acts 12:5

Why was Peter in prison? Herod wanted to kill him. Herod had killed James. This pleased the Jews very much. He wanted to please the Jews still more by killing Peter. The Jews

were always carrying evil reports about the Herodian family to Caesar and so Herod wanted to please the Jews. The Jews felt their religion was in jeopardy because of the disciples of Jesus. Herod stretched forth his hand to vex the Church. His end was near. When a man's end is near, he becomes more active than usual against the Kingdom of God. This is one of the signs that this man's end is near.

Peter was not troubled about his condition. The next day was the day of his death but he was sleeping soundly. Peter wanted to follow Jesus. Jesus told him that he could not follow Him then, but a time was coming when he would be able to follow Him even to death. Peter's desire was now being fulfilled. That night in his mind he must have willingly died. His faith had grown so strong. Those who continue in the Word will find their hearts' deepest desires fulfilled. God is greater than our desires. In fulfilling our desires He will far exceed them. Such is Christ! Peter had desired for this death- daring faith.

Prayer was being made in the Church without ceasing. We wonder at the Acts of the Apostles. They were possible because the Church was praying. There was not one person in the church with another mind among them. If there was one man there with contrary mind, he would have been as an earthing wire, which discharged the circuit. Some people want to join our Saturday night prayers without having faith. They will be earthing wires. This was

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a live church and it was praying for the impossible- for Peter's release from the Roman prison.

Peter was chained to two soldiers one on either side. There were other soldiers on guard and a final gate outside.

The prayer of the Church will release those in prison. Many are bound by evil spirits, evil desires and vanity. No one can release them. Some families are bound so that they cannot understand the gospel.

Father, mother and children are all in darkness. Every kind of sin will be there and they will be reeling in great misery. How to release them? There are sins of commission and sins of omission- two chains that bind them. Some are released from one chain but still bound by the other. Who will save them? Only a praying church can save them.

This was a real Church. They were praying without ceasing. An angel came and the chains on either side snapped. There may be big churches which cannot break chains. They are not churches. Peter was asked to put on his sandals. A man, who is freed, puts on the sandals of the gospel of peace. Peter crossed the first ward and then the second ward. After conversion we have still two wards to cross. We have to be planted together with Him in the likeness of His death and then we have to rise into the newness of the risen life. When the church is praying these deliverances will be experienced. There was still the iron gate to cross. We have to join the saints in glory. If we are praying together as a church great things will happen.

—N. Daniel

“The Bait of Covetousness”

Think for Balaam. He is generally regarded as a false prophet, but I do not find that any of his prophecies that are recorded are not true; they have been literally fulfilled. Up to a certain point his character shone magnificently, but the devil finally overcame him by the bait of covetousness. He stepped over a heavenly crown for the riches and honors that Balak promised him. He went to perdition backwards. His face was set toward God, but he backed into hell. He wanted to die the death of the righteous, but he did not live the life of the righteous. It is sad to see so many who know God miss everything for riches.

Then consider the case of Gehazi. There is another man who was drowned in destruction and perdition by covetousness. He got more out of Naaman than he asked for, but he also got Naaman's leprosy. Think how he forfeited the friendship of his master, Elisha, the man of God! So today life-long friends are separated by this accursed desire. Homes are broken up. Men are willing to sell out peace and happiness for the sake of a few dollars.

Didn't David fall into foolish and hurtful lusts? He saw Bathsheba, Uriah's wife, who was *“very beautiful to look upon,”* and David became an adulterer and a murderer. The guilty longing hurled him into the deepest pit of sin. He had to reap bitterly as he had sowed.

I heard of a wealthy German out west who owned a lumber mill. He was worth nearly two million dollars,

but his covetousness was so great that he once worked as a common laborer carrying railroad ties all day. It was the cause of his death.

Achan was no different. *“Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done: When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it”* (Joshua 7:20-21). He saw, he coveted, he took, and he hid! The covetous eye was what led Achan up to the wicked deed that brought sorrow and defeat upon the camp of Israel. Beware of covetousness.

—D.L. Moody

“Heaven's Grocery Store”

As I was walking down life's highway many years ago, I came upon a sign that read Heaven's Grocery Store. When I got a little closer the doors swung open wide. When I came to myself, I was standing inside. I saw a host of angels standing everywhere. One handed me a basket and said,

... “HEAVEN'S” CON'T ON PAGE 4

REALITY CHECK!

“FINALLY, MY BRETHREN, BE STRONG IN THE LORD, AND IN THE POWER OF HIS MIGHT. PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOUR OF GOD, THAT YE MAY BE ABLE TO STAND AGAINST THE WILES OF THE DEVIL.”
EPHESIANS 6: 10-11

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When we go into the presence of God, there is a certain spiritual and mental diet necessary. Today the world is so full of filth. We must be very careful about our minds. Otherwise, we won't even know what is dirty and what is pure. You cannot have communion with God then. You will be excusing yourself. When you should repent, you will be almost thinking, "Okay, okay, I am alright." We can be happy that everything is going on wonderfully but that is not enough. God says, "You shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a peculiar treasure."

"And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the Lord; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin." (Ex. 32:30). Moses goes up into the mountain again to just wrestle with God. Look at that desperate cry of Moses: "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written." (Ex. 32:31). How he loved this disobedient people! We don't love disobedient people, do we? Are we ready to lose our souls for the sake of disobedient people? He prays, "Save these people and deliver them,"

We don't have any desperation about the sin around us. Some of our relatives are still in darkness. We don't realize how terrible their sin is. The fact that he is your son or that he is your brother or your sister doesn't reduce the seriousness of sin. When it comes to our own people, we tend to take it very lightly. Moses is not taking it lightly. He says it is a matter of losing their souls, and so he cries to God, "I am ready to lose my own soul, but why don't you forgive these people?" We have not reached this level of prayer! Moses is praying for millions of disobedient people that they should not be destroyed.

May God help us to pray like Moses!

—Joshua Daniel

"My child shop with care." Everything a human needed was in that grocery store, and what you could not carry you could come back for more. First I got some Patience. Love was in that same row. Further down was Understanding- you need that everywhere you go. I got a box or two of Wisdom, and Faith a bag or two. And Charity of course I would need some of that too. I couldn't miss the Holy Ghost- It was all over the place. And then some Strength and Courage to help me run this race. My basket was getting full but I remembered I needed Grace, and then I chose Salvation, for Salvation was for free. I tried to get enough of that to do for you and me. Then I started to the counter to pay my grocery bill, for I thought I had everything to do the Master's will. As I went up the aisle I saw Prayer and put that in, for I knew when I stepped outside I would run into sin. Peace and Joy were plentiful, the last things on the shelf. Song and Praise were hanging near so I just helped myself. Then I said to the angel, "Now how much do I owe?" He smiled and said, "Just take them everywhere you go." Again I asked "Really now, how much do I owe?" "My child" he said, "God paid your bill a long, long time ago."

God's Call

Scotsman John Harper had been invited to preach for three months at the Moody Church in Chicago, so he booked passage on a ship to travel there. With his six year old daughter, Nina, and her nanny, Miss Jesse Leitch, he boarded the RMS Titanic for it's first—and last—Atlantic crossing.

When the ship struck the fateful iceberg and began to sink, Harper wrapped his daughter in a blanket and handed her to Miss Leitch in lifeboat number 11. He then began the last evangelistic work of his life.

Harper took off his life jacket and gave it to another man. "Don't worry about me," he reportedly said, "I'm not going down; I'm going up!"

When the ship began to sink, the 1,528 passengers the lifeboats left behind fell into icy waters, where all but six eventually drowned or froze to death.

Harper was seen swimming from one passenger to another, pleading with them to

ask Jesus to save them from imminent eternal loss. To one man who had climbed up on a piece of debris, Harper shouted from the water, "Are you saved?" "No," the man replied. Harper yelled the words from scripture, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

The man did not answer, and after a moment he drifted away. A few minutes later the current brought the two men back together. Harper Shouted, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

Then and there on top of a small piece of debris, the young man asked Jesus to save him for all eternity. We know this because hours later he was one of the six survivors pulled from the frigid waters of the North Atlantic.

It has always been this way— God can find anyone anywhere, even floating on a piece of debris from the Titanic in the middle of the ocean. God can find you and call to you, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved."

—Dr. Robert Wenz

(Alliance Life, March 2003)

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at 10:00 am
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