

Milk & Honey

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Spiritual Food and Encouragement for Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ

The Perilous Hour Is Upon Us

Louis T. Talbot

“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron.” (1 Tim. 4:1,2)

The perilous hour to which the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit referred is upon us. There has never been a time in which there was such a tendency to depart from the faith as there is in the present days. The days in which you and I are living are days in which Christians need to know their Bibles, for the only way by which we know whether or not a system of teaching is of God is by viewing the system through the lens of Holy Writ - reading the system in the light of the Bible and not reading the Bible in the light of the system.

The Holy Spirit, coming on the day of Pentecost, heralded through Paul, Peter, James, and John, and the other inspired writers, the same warning, making it know that toward the end of the age the great foundational truths of the gospel will be denied. The word “*denied*” will characterize the religious condition of Christendom when those closing days become reality. Let us observe several instances wherein this is evidenced.

1. There will be a denial of God and the Savior. “For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Jude 4)

2. There will be a denial that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. “And every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.” (1 John. 4:3)

3. There will be a denial of the Lord “that bought them,” referring to the ATONEMENT. “But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.” (2 Pet. 2:1) These false teachers may possibly acknowledge Jesus as a man, but deny His purchase

of mankind, and His redemptive work through the blood.

4. There will be a denial of the power of godliness. “But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come; for men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying its power. And from such people turn away!” (2 Tim. 3:1-5)

5. There will be a denial of sound doctrine, and the substitution of fables. “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.” (2 Tim. 4:3,4)

6. There will be a denial of authority. “Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority and speak evil of dignitaries.” (Jude 8)

Our imagination may be occupied with applying these conditions to China or India, bound by heathenism, but the Scripture reveals that these warnings and descriptions apply to professing Christendom at the end of the age. *

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“When I Survey the Wondrous Cross”

Lindsay Parks
Issac Watts (1674-1748)

Many consider this hymn, from the man known as the “Father of English hymnody,” to be the greatest hymn ever written in the English language. The hymn was originally titled Crucifixion to the World by the Cross of Christ. The inspiration for it is said to have come from Galatians 6:14: “But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”

It was written in 1707, to be used in a Sunday morning worship service. Still sung today by many Christians, these words continue to stir hearts. Whether sung by companies of the Lord’s people around a simple table of remembrance, or by a group of young folks around a piano at a hymn sing, the words still grip our souls.

Isaac Watts was never physically healthy. He was plagued by numerous medical issues from his birth in 1674, and he nearly died of smallpox in his early teens. He was a diminutive man, only five feet tall. When he was 38, he experienced a terrible fever, with lasting effects from which he never fully recovered, and he lived his last 36 years as an invalid. The one love of his life was Elizabeth Singer, whom he longed to marry. She turned him down, saying that “while she loved the jewel of his excellent mind, she could not admire the casket that contained it.”

A brilliant mind was his. He learned Latin by age 5, Greek by 9, French by 11, and Hebrew by age 12. He was saved by God’s grace at age 15, and developed into both a remarkable student of Scripture and an able public preacher of God’s Word. He preached his first message when he was 24, but had already written many sound and devotional hymns. As a teenager, he became dissatisfied with the poor spiritual content of the hymns of the day. He voiced to many his opinion that the hymns of the day did not inspire believers, either to genuine worship or to holy living.

Complaining of the current hymns one day to his father, he was encouraged, “Well then, give us something better, young man!” He immediately got to work. With the thoughts of devotion that had occupied his soul, that night, for the first time, one of his hymns was sung in the evening meeting. It was a hymn commencing with these words: Behold the glories of the Lamb, amidst the Father’s throne.

The wonderful thoughts expressed by his pen sprang from the devotion of his heart. From all accounts he was a deeply devotional Christian. Like the apostle Paul, he never married, but instead, threw his heart fully into the things of the Lord.

Isaac Watts preached for years in London, seeing many souls saved, and building up the saints of God in their faith. In spite of his physical limitations, he labored for years for the Lord Who had saved him.

In 1700, his own brother Enoch, had written him a personal letter, imploring him to publish some of the hymns he had already written.

“Dear brother ... in your last letter, you mentioned an inclination to oblige the world by showing it your hymns in print, and I heartily wish ... that you were something more than inclinable thereunto ... There is ... a great need of a pen, vigorous and lively as yours, to quicken and revive the dying devotion of the age ... Yours now is the old truth, stripped of its ragged ornaments, and appears, if we may say so, younger by ages.”

His first collection of hymns was published in 1707. He sold the copyright to Mr. Lawrence, the publisher, for 10 pounds. It was an instant and huge success. It was enlarged and republished in 1709. When I Survey the Wondrous Cross was included in his first hymn collection.

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss, and
pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
save in the death of Christ, my God;
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.

See from His head, His hands, His feet,
sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did e’er such love and sorrow meet,
or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
that were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
demands my soul, my life, my all.

Charles Wesley, who himself wrote over 6,500 hymns, reportedly said of this hymn that he would rather have written this one than all of his own hymns. Isaac Watts wrote over 600 hymns, and this remains his best.

Lessons may be learned from this life and from this hymn. Devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ at an early age is still the best of pursuits by every one of us. Living as devotional Christians seems to be a “lost art” among many believers today.

Continued on page 3

For From Within, Out Of The Heart Of Man, Proceeds Pride

Mark 7:21, 22

Bob Gessner

Pride is within the heart of everyone of us and is an ever present danger to avoid. We live in a world wherein pride surrounds us. "For all that is in the word - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the PRIDE OF LIFE - is not of the Father but is of the world. (1 Jn. 2:16)

When listing the qualifications of an elder or an overseer, we are told that he is not to be "a novice, lest being *puffed up with pride* he fall into the same condemnation, as the devil." (1 Tim. 3:6) Obviously, it is implied that pride comes to us naturally and early in our Christian experience. Then training in the school of God is a needed discipline in our life and this takes time along with many humiliating experiences.

Pride was often demonstrated in the experiences of the disciples of the Lord. Having become one of his select ones would expose them to this danger. John said, "Teacher, we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow us." (Mark 9:38) This is an example of the *pride of position*. If someone occupies a privileged position, he is apt to look with pride on those who do not. We need to be grateful, not proud, of any privileges that the Lord has extended to us by His grace. We should never feel that we are better than others.

There is also the constant danger of seeking a place of leadership or recognition above others. When arriving at Capernaum, the Lord asked His disciples, "What was it you disputed among yourselves on the road? But they kept silent, for on the road they had disputed among themselves who would be the greatest." (Mark 9:33, 34) This is an example of the *pride of promotion*. There is within each human heart that selfish desire to want to be promoted above others. The Lord's response to this demonstration of pride was: "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all." (v. 35)

"Then Peter answered and said to Him, See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?"

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(Matt. 19:27) Peter displayed that pride in his heart which expected reward for what he had done. This is an example of the *pride of practice*. We look for recognition because of what we have done. In a similar way, the Lord replied to this expectation with these words, "But many who are first will be last, and the last first." (v. 30)

May the lessons of experience in the Christian walk, teach us daily that pride has no place in the Christian life. "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up." (Jam. 4:10) "All of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time." (1 Peter 5:5, 6) *

Shepherding Conference

September 17-19

Greenwood Hills Bible Conference

Mark your calendar

Register at GreenwoodHills.net

See page 4 for details

Continued from page 2 — *When I Survey The...*

In addition, these timeless words were written by a young man who had many painful and bitter circumstances in his life. They did not conquer him, but he them. He rose above the sorrows and pain of his life, and "passing through the valley," He left us "a well" (Psa 84:6).

Finally, who among us has NOT been convicted by these words, even as we sang them? Do we offer our all to the Master, as Watts has written? The same God Who saved him saved us. Yet, we do not generally live our lives as if we had been crucified to a dying world. We have largely failed to understand the emptiness of the "vain things" of which he wrote. May the Lord stir our hearts and souls to live our lives alone to the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Isaac Watts also wrote this chorus, an apt summary of the thoughts of this wonderful hymn:

"His dying crimson, like a robe, spreads o'er His body, on the tree; Then am I dead to all the globe, and all the globe is dead to me." * Reprinted with permission from Truth & Tidings

Quote

Those who say they will forgive but can't forget, simply bury the hatchet but leave the handle out for immediate us.

D. L. Moody

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“Without Excuse”

F. B. Hole

1. Those peoples that are now heathen once knew God. Man’s course has not been from polytheism to monotheism, as some dreamers would have us imagine, but the other way round. They have sunk out of light into the darkness. Once “they knew God”, (v. 21) but the fact is, “they did not like to retain God in their knowledge.” (v. 28.).

2. The root cause of their fall was that they did not wish to yield to God the glory that was his due, for they wished to pose as wise themselves — as we see in verses 21 and 22. In short, pride was the root and God has allowed them to make fools of themselves.

3. Their descent has been gradual. First vain thinking; then, darkened understanding, gross idolatry, to be followed by outrageous sins in which they fell below the level of the beasts. Each generation went beyond the follies of their predecessors, thus ratifying for themselves the previous departure.

4. Their plight has been reached under the government of God. Three times over do we get the phrase (with slight variations) “God gave them up to . . .” If men object to thinking of God and give Him up, they have no ground of complaint when He gives them up. And if they give up God, and consequently good, they naturally find themselves given up to everything that is evil and degrading. There is an ironic justice about God’s government.

5. The final item in this dreadful tragedy is that they know their practices are wrong and worthy of death, and yet they not only go on with them but are utterly fascinated by them. They delight in them to such an extent that they find pleasure in others sinning even as they do themselves.

If we really allow this fearful picture of human depravity to imprint itself on our minds we shall have no difficulty in acquiescing in the Divine verdict that all such are “without excuse.” (v.20).

Shepherding Conference

September 24-26

Greenwood Hills Bible Conference

Mike Attwood, John Gordon, Steve Hulshizer, Mark Kolchin

Register at GreenwoodHills.net

For men of all ages

Tis My Happiness Below

William Cowper 1731-1800

’Tis my happiness below
Not to live without the cross;
But the Savior’s pow’r to know
Sanctifying every loss.

Trials must and will befall;
But with humble faith to see
Love inscribed upon them all—
This is happiness to me.

Did I meet no trials here,
No chastisement by the way,
Might I not with reason fear
I should prove a castaway?

Trials make the promise sweet;
Trials give new life to prayer;
Bring me to my Savior’s feet,
Lay me low and keep me there.