

# Milk & Honey

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*Spiritual Food and Encouragement for Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ*

## The Blessing Of Certainty

Lehman Strauss

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28). Many of God’s children have drawn strength, courage and comfort from this verse in God’s Word. The text is located within a context which describes sufferings and groans. The writer speaks of “the sufferings of this present time” (8:18). There is no area of life in which problems and pressures, sickness and sorrow, and trials and tribulations are not felt. It is in just such a setting where we find this blessed verse which has proved to be a soft pillow for heavy hearts, muddled minds and sick bodies.

The verse begins with the absolute certainty that we know. Now there are some things pertaining to this life that we do not know. For example, “we know not what we should pray for as we ought” (Romans 8:26). Jesus said, “Ye know not what hour your Lord doth come” (Matthew 24:42). Before He ascended to heaven He added, “It is not for you to know the times or seasons which the Father hath put in His own power” (Acts 1:7). There are many things about which none of us can be certain. But in spite of the uncertainties of life, God gives to a particular group of persons a blessed certainty. To whom is this blessed certainty promised? It is to “them that love God.” This is the only reference in the Roman Epistle to the Christian’s love for God. There are several references to God’s love for us (5:5,8), but here in our text there is a promise to those who love Him. Jesus reminded the Pharisee that the first and great commandment is to “love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind” (Matthew 22:36-38; cf. Deuteronomy 6:5). And we know that we love Him when we are obeying Him. He said, “If ye love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15)

We come now to the blessed certainty that is the portion to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ—“All things work together for good.” And it means *a//* things without exception. There are no limitations on the particulars involved. God’s providence covers a wide range; all things, little and large, pleasant and painful, better and bitter. You name it and it is included in the wide sweep of *a//* things. Along life’s pathway

we meet with friends and foes, situations that are at times trying and unpleasant, but God is able to cause every one of them to contribute to the glorious end He has in view.

Now please don’t get the wrong idea that all things work themselves into a pattern for good. It is God, your heavenly Father, who works all things together for good, including your illness. The point for emphasis is that God is at work at all times and under all circumstances, and because He is working, the net results are always for our good.

The Bible does not say that all things are good, but that all things work together for good. Yes, God can make your illness contribute to good because He controls the working process. David testified, “It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn Thy statutes” (Psalm 119:71). He is not saying that his affliction was good. What he is saying is that he was a better man because of the affliction. The Divine process is at work every day we live, so that we know there is something good in every experience. God knows the end from the beginning. He sees the finished product. Now you must lay hold of this blessed certainty by faith. God put it in print and preserved it for you. He will never take it back. Your illness is working for your good. You may not see it now, but you must believe it is so. One day God will enable you to look back on this experience. Then you will say as did Joseph, “God meant it for good” (Genesis 50:20). That, dear friend, is a blessed certainty. \*

*Beside Blessings*, Scripture Truth, Fincastle, VA 1982

## If Only...!

Often hindsight is filled with painful “If onlys.” If only Eve had not eaten of the fruit of the tree. If only Saul had done what the Lord directed Him concerning the Amalekites. The list could go on and on.

In our own experience maybe we look back and say the same thing. “If only I had followed my parents advice.” “If only I knew more about the effects of abortion.” “If only I had not watched those immoral soap operas.” “If only I invested more time in eternal things..”

Nowhere will “If only” be more painful than in the eternal lake of fire. “If only I had read the Bible.” “If only I had believed the Gospel when I heard it.”

Today is the first day of the rest of our lives. Let’s make the decisions necessary to avoid the painful “If onlys.”

Editor

## **Continued from Page 4 - *The Beauty of Simplicity***

that I hear from many Christian circles today. There are so many books, seminars, and programs that seem to turn the believer's life in to a very complex maze which does not really lead anywhere, other than to the "Paralysis of Analysis." Proverbs 23:7 tells us how we think has a great impact on what we are. One wonders if we get too complex in our thinking that it does not result in a complex life.

In reading books, and attending some seminars, I cannot help but be troubled with the complexity of what is being taught. Much of what is said is very impressive and exciting at the time, but I would go crazy just trying to remember it, let alone apply the multitude of "ideas." There are books on talking to yourself, analyzing yourself, finding yourself, and losing yourself. It is no wonder that many young people today are confused, discouraged, paralyzed, and/or burnt out. We have made the Christian life so complex that one almost needs a Master's degree in psychology just to know who he is and why he exists. The Bible states these facts in rather simple language. (Gen. 1:26-27; Rom. 11:36; Eph. 2:10)

I have sat and listened to some describe what they are currently learning "from Scripture" and I must confess I just can't find it there! Large structures of "truth" have been built on very small foundations of partial verses or man's philosophy. In other cases I have listened to individuals take a basic problem, or what they thought to be a problem and by using what they have "learned," turn it into an unbelievably complex issue. Burning your husband's toast is not an indication that you lack self-control! The fact that you do not hug every Christian you meet does not mean you are not a loving person! The fact that you and your husband can't agree on the paint color does not mean your marriage is failing! Because you do not "feel" spiritual does not mean you are not spiritual. It seems many spend more time analyzing every act and decision in life than they do actually living! It seems that many times the results of digging are worse than if the things discovered had never been found at all.

What ever happened to the "simple life" that many godly Christians have known before us? I am not really sure. I know times have changed, but I know the Lord has not (Mal. 3:6). Maybe it is because we have gotten away from teaching the Word and are teaching the "thoughts of men" more. It may be that we read our Bibles in the light of psychology, rather than the other way around. Maybe it is because we place too much pressure on young Christians to "perform," rather than patiently instructing them in the Word and waiting for them to grow in their knowledge of God (Col. 1:10). Perhaps it is because believers are not aware of the pleasure that the Lord receives from the life of one who "just" loves his wife, does an honest day's work, raises his children in the fear of the

Lord, and faithfully supports a local assembly (Prov. 23:24; Heb. 13:21).

Maybe it is because we have placed more emphasis on knowing "yourself" than on knowing Jesus Christ (Phil. 3:10). Maybe it is because in our attempt to get away from dead religion and tradition, we have "thrown the baby out with the wash water." Perhaps we threw away the "old fashioned" fear of God as well (Acts 9:31). Maybe we are placing too much emphasis on a person's personality, rather than their character.

Whatever the reason, it seems evident that the "much learning" has not led to the knowledge of the truth that sets us free, rather than enslaving us to our own minds. (2 Tim. 3:7) I know full well that life itself can be complex and do not mean to over simplify it; however, as I read Scripture and review the life of Christ and the lives of other godly people, I am convinced that they were not, and are not characterized by complexity, but by simplicity. This is equally true of what they taught.

Is it possible that we have made the Christian life far more complex and difficult than it really is? Is it possible that we are our own worse enemy? Is it possible that we have filled our lives with many "brilliant ideas," but lack the beauty of simplicity? (Col. 2:8) Is Christ no longer sufficient? (2 Cor. 2:14-17) Is it possible that we should drink again from the wells from which our fathers did? (Gen. 28:18; Prov. 22:28) This is not a call to return to the past, but to the simplicity of Christ and His Word. \*

*Available in a free booklet with additional articles.*

## **How Do We Know?**

C. H. Mackintosh

Ask a simple believer how he knows that the Bible is the Word of God. He will tell you that he has felt its power. Has not the Holy Ghost given you to feel the power of the Word of God? If God cannot make me know that it is He who speaks to me in His Word, who else can? Were we merely to believe in the divine inspiration of the Scriptures on human testimony—be that testimony ever so powerful—it would not be faith at all. I believe what God says because He says it, not because of any human authority. If all the fathers that ever wrote, all the doctors that ever taught, all the councils that ever sat, all the angels in heaven, and all the saints upon earth were to agree in declaring that the Bible is the Word of God, and that we were to believe on their testimony, it would not be divinely given faith. And on the other hand, were all to agree in declaring that the Bible is not the Word of God, it should not for a moment shake our confidence in that peerless revelation. \*

## Play by the Rules

*I press toward the mark for the prize ... Phil. 3.13-16*

Today there are so many athletes and indeed other sportsmen and women who forfeit the medals they have won because they have cheated by taking performance enhancing drugs or used other illegal ways of getting an edge on their opponents. Paul is describing athletics in his day when it was not enough to run hard and win the race; the athlete had to obey the very strict rules.

Paul is encouraging us to go for the prize which one day God will hand out for finishing the race and disciplining ourselves by keeping to the rules. God has given us a very comprehensive "training manual and guidebook" for competing in and completing the race. His Word is everything we need to ensure that we run the race fairly. There's no ambiguity and there can be no dispute over that which is illegal and that which is not!! We need to know its contents as comprehensively as we can as there will be no excuse at the end of the day for not knowing the rules!

One day each Christian will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ (Romans 14.10-12). The Greek word for "judgment seat" is *bema* which is the word used to describe where the Olympic judges gave out the prizes! If we have run the race with discipline and obeyed the rules we shall receive a prize. What greater accolade could the Christian receive than to have the Lord Jesus say to us, "Well done, good and faithful servant". \* [Christian Living Today]

## His Victory

W. Graham Scroggie

Christ at his lowest vanquished the devil at his highest; the Saviour at His weakest routed the adversary at his strongest, thereby proving the limitation of the enemy's power, and the extent of our own in Christ. But we must identify ourselves with Him in His victory. \*

"Worthy of homage and of praise,  
Worthy by all to be adored:  
Exhaustless theme of heavenly lays!  
Thou, Thou art worthy, Jesus, Lord.

"Yet, Saviour, Thou shalt have full praise.  
We soon shall meet Thee on the cloud;  
We soon shall see Thee face to face,  
In glory praising as we would."

Miss. F.T. Wigram

## The Epistle To The Colossians

Hamilton Smith

In the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians the Spirit of God has unfolded to us, through the Apostle Paul, the highest truth of Christianity. Both Epistles give prominence to the great truths that the Church is the body of Christ, and that Christ is the Head of the body. *There is, however, this important difference that, whereas the Epistle to the Ephesians brings into prominence the privileges of the Body, the Epistle to the Colossians emphasizes the glories of the Head. Moreover, in the Epistle to the Ephesians the Church is viewed as represented in Christ in heaven, in the Epistle to the Colossians Christ is seen as represented in the Church on earth.*

It would seem that the Colossians was written with a *two-fold purpose. First, to unfold the fullness that resides in Christ—the head of the Church* – so that believers, realizing the fullness of their resources in Christ, may escape the snare of adopting the devices of religious flesh to sustain the Christian life. *Secondly, to set forth God's purpose that Christ should be displayed in the Church*, not only in the future glory, but in her passage through time.

In chapter 1, after the introductory verses (vs. 1– 14), there is presented first, the glories of the Person of Christ (vs. 15–19); secondly the glories of the mystery, which is "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (vs. 24–29) .

In the first nineteen verses of chapter 2, we are warned against the different devices by which the devil seeks to frustrate the present purpose of God that the character of Christ – the Head in heaven – should be displayed in the members of His body on earth.

From chapter 2:20 to chapter 3:11, the apostle presents the practice that should flow from believers being dead and risen with Christ.

Chapter 3:2–6 we are exhorted to express the life of Christ morally in the Christian circle (vs. 12-17), the family circle (vs. 18-21), the social circle (vs. 3:22–4:1), and toward those that are without (4:2–6). The usual salutations close the Epistle. \*

## Milk & Honey Information

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3237 Faire Wynd Pl, Dover, PA 17315

Editor: Stephen Hulshizer

Fax/Phone (717) 467-5729 phone

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## The Beauty of Simplicity

Steve Hulshizer

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The ground is covered with a dusting of snow and there is a full moon shining brightly in a dark and cloudless sky. While it is not flashing, multicolored, or overpowering in its brilliance, it is beautiful in its simplicity.

As you drive through your community during the Christmas season you see many homes covered with a great number of lights in a variety of colors. Your eye is immediately drawn to them, but they do not seem to impress you with the warmth of the season. Then there is the home which has a simple wreath with its red bow hanging on the front door and illuminated by a single light. Every time you drive by your eye is drawn to it and you feel as if it is inviting you in for some warm fellowship around a crackling fire. It is beautiful in its simplicity.

You sit and ponder the life of your godly parents. Your mind runs back over many years, some of them difficult, others filled with laughter. You did not think of it then, but as you sit now and review their lives there was a simplicity that marked them. They loved the Lord and each other, supported the local assembly, and worked hard. They were not flashy, nor charismatic, but their lives were beautiful in their simplicity.

Does your life reflect the beauty of simplicity?

I must confess that for some time my mind has been overwhelmed with the complexity of present day Christianity. By complexity I do not mean the use of technology, such as the computer I am using to write and edit these thoughts. I am thinking more of the complexity of thinking and ideas

**Continued on Page 2**

## The Words Of The Lord Jesus

A. B. Simpson

“Never man spake like this man.” (John 7:46)

“Grace is poured into Thy lips.” (Psalm 45:2)

Is there anything in all literature to be compared with the words of Jesus? The Lord never wrote, so far as we know, a single line except the unrecorded sentence that He wrote in the sand one day, and yet His speech has gone out into all the world and His words to the end of the world. Where shall we find such marvels of literary beauty, consciousness, and truth, as His matchless parables? Where shall we find such immortal rules of holy conduct as the Sermon on the Mount? What can be compared with the music of His promises which speak to the ear of even the coldest literary mind with an unearthly melody?

“God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.” (John 3:16) There is no single sentence in all literature to be compared with that single verse.

“Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” (Matt. 11:28) Not all the music or poetry of the world contains half the sweetness of that one short sentence.

“Let not your heart be troubled...In My Father’s house are many mansions.” (John 14:1-2) What oceans of tears that promise has dried! What myriads of sinking hearts it has sustained!

“Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age.” (Matt. 28:20) What human voice has ever spoken in such tones of majesty and sublimity?” \*

## York Bible Study Program

December 9 The Comings of Christ Keith Keyser