

Doctrinal

Devotional

Directional

Truths for Our Day

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To "... strengthen the things which remain..." Revelation 3:2

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Lessons from the Lives of Four Old Testament Men

Robert Telfer

Moses left all

Heb. 11:23-27

Note first the faith of his parents; they were in touch with God. Faith is like the little bunch of hyssop that transferred the blood from the basin to the lintel and side posts of the door. (Ex. 12:22). Faith is a small thing, but it is what faith lays hold of that counts.

God rescued Moses from the place of death. The providence of God put him in Pharaoh's household but faith took him out of it. His life is divided into three parts: forty years in Pharaoh's household; forty years at the back side of the desert; and forty years leading God's people. The first forty years were not wasted. (Acts 7:22). He might have become a Pharaoh but he turned his back on all the treasures, pleasures, and court of Egypt—left it all. What for? To cast in his lot with the people of God.

What power came into his life that cut him loose from the court of Pharaoh, to cast in his lot with that down-trodden people and to enable him to take his stand against the mightiest magnate of that day? He esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt. He looked at the present in the light of the future; he looked off to the recompense of the reward. That must have been the judgment seat of Christ. He weighed everything in the balances of the sanctuary. The devil would say, "Stay where you are; how can you help your brethren if you don't stay in the court of Pharaoh? But, if you stay, you will be able to make laws that will make their condition more bearable." Worldly wisdom. If you look at things

from the standpoint of the world, you will come out at the wrong end. Moses passed out from the court of Pharaoh with all its grandeur, wisdom and treasures, and he identified himself with what a brother once called "a lot of gather-ups."

Note that it was the reproach of Christ, even in Moses' day. God had Christ always before Him, from the time sin entered into the world, the Seed of the woman that was to bruise the head of the serpent. Moses associated the reproach of Christ with the recompense of the reward and thus was able to leave all. If we are going to let go things seen and temporal, and be content to be "nobodies" down here, we may get to know what it is to be esteemed by God and His Son and His people. But if we are going to be esteemed by the world we cannot relinquish all as Moses did. Moses had no thought of "getting his name up" but when he took his stand with the people of God and forfeited his prospects, God honored him. Everybody knows of Moses; the very infidels delight to tell us of "the mistakes of Moses."

What he did, he did by faith. He laid hold of God and the result was that God took him up and sent him with a message to Pharaoh. What a message—"Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, let My people go." (Ex. 5:1). What he did by faith, we in our little measure can do. If the world has been getting a grip on you, and you find yourself in an unequal yoke—business, social, political, or religious—God says, "Come out from among them, . . . and I will receive you and will be a Father unto you." (2 Cor. 6:16-18).

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Thank you!

Joseph Endured All**Gen. 37:15-22**

His brethren were filled with envy and hatred against him; in this he was a picture of the Lord Jesus. How his heart must have been breaking as he endured their cruelty. Then in Potiphar's house a plot was laid against him. He lost his reputation but he did not lose his character. Reputation is what men think us to be; character is what we are before God. Joseph, in prison, endured all patiently. (Psalm 105:17-22, 1 Cor. 10:13. What do we endure?—Jms. 1:12. Keep looking to God. As Mr. Ross used to say, "God does not always keep our nose to the grindstone." When patience has had her perfect work, He loves to pour in the consolation as only God can do, and lift us up, as He lifted up Moses and Joseph.

Jonathan Surrendered All**1 Sam. 18 :1-4**

In chapter 17 Israel was without strength, all their resources were dried up, but God's resources were not dried up. Saul was a coward when it came to facing the giant; Eliab, though taller than David, was in terror; but God had a man for the occasion, one who had learned the art of dealing with Him. When Saul said, "Thou art not able to go against the Philistine," David told him what nobody had heard before. He had overcome the lion and the bear in secret, and now he is ready to face this monster in the public arena. Young believers have to slay the lions and the bears; the lusts, the worldly desires must be overcome in the presence of God, before God will bring them out to meet other foes.

When David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, there was one man whose soul was knit with the soul of David. This is a picture of true conversion. The battle in the valley of Elah was a foreshadowing of the cross. Jonathan surrendered all to his David. What have we surrendered to our David? He stripped himself of the robe that was upon him. What about you? Have you given up that pipe? (1 Peter 2:11). What about that jewelry? Frances Ridley Havergal was born again and in the church of England till God took her home to heaven but she laid aside her jewelry, sold it, and sent the money on. She saw that she ought to be consecrated to her divine David.

Jonathan spoke well of David, and strengthened his hand in God but the parting of the ways came. He did not go the whole length of identifying himself with David outside the camp. He fell short in that one thing. He said to David, "*Thou shalt be king over Israel and I shall be next unto thee.*" It never came to pass. God help us to have no reserves with Christ.

Daniel Overcame All**Daniel 1 :6-8**

In one sense all God's people are overcomers; but there is

another sense in which all are not. (1 Cor. 3:15). Daniel was one who overcame every obstacle. Some would say, "In Babylon you have to do as the Babylonians." "No," says Daniel, "I will not." Daniel was a man of purpose; so was Paul. (2 Tim. 3:10). He overcomes in the first chapter, refusing to defile himself with the king's meat. In chapter 2 he overcomes again through prayer and saves the lives of his companions and himself; even the wise men of Babylon owed their lives to him. In chapter 5, when the writing appeared on the wall, the king and all his courtiers trembled; none of them could read the writing; God's hand had written it and none but His servant could interpret it. In chapter 6 the king is entrapped into signing a decree, and then they watch Daniel. He opens his window toward Jerusalem, kneels and gives thanks to God and prays, as he did aforetime. The king is overcome, Daniel is cast into the den of lions but God is there before him. In the morning the very men who concocted the scheme against him are destroyed, and Daniel is an overcomer. Then from chapter 7 to 12, Daniel receives revelations of the mind of God.

May we be enabled to leave all, like Moses; to endure all, like Joseph; to surrender all to our David, like Jonathan; and to triumph over every difficulty, like Daniel, through our Emmanuel, God with us.

WIS 1923

Devotion (godliness) signifies a life given, or devoted to God. He therefore is the devout man, who lies no longer to his own will, or the way and spirit of the world, but to the sole will of God, who considers God in everything, who serves God in everything, who makes all the parts of his common life, parts of piety, by doing everything in the name of God, and under such rules as are conformable to His glory. William Law

Men who said "NO"*Joel Portman*

Young children early learn to say "No" to their parents. It's part of human nature to reject authority and they need to learn to obey and respond positively. In later stages of their development, we try to teach them to say "No" to wrong influences or desires that cross their paths. Sadly, they often say "Yes" to those things that are harmful. The basis of many programs that try to instill right practices, whether they involve sexual activities, drugs, or other wrong behavior is to seek to teach individuals to say "No" to those things that are wrong or harmful.

A vital part of a believer's life and spiritual development is to reject those things that are wrong or contrary to God's will in their lives. We learn from Titus 2:11-12, "*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world. . .*" The result of that grace that has been manifested is that it produces a right response in the heart of a believer.

There is great value in saying "No." The world opposes that response; it says rather, "Don't deny yourself those pleasures, just go ahead and do them." The results are seen in many ruined lives today. Man's first sin in the garden was that he didn't say "No" to Satan, and the results have been reaped and are very apparent in the world today.

Saints need to know When, How, and Why to say "No." Notice Three examples of men who said "No" to those who were in a place of authority over them. They did so because they recognized God's authority alone. They had said "Yes" to God first of all, and they continued to do so. Saying "No" means being different from others, rejecting the normal standards of men in the world.

Joseph said "No" to the Flesh . . . Passions Properly Controlled Genesis 39

Joseph had every inducement to yield to the temptation of Potiphar's wife. He was far from home and none of his family would know, he had an uncertain future, was subject as a slave, "likely others did it" in Egypt, and she was pressuring him insistently. He had natural desires, yet those must be kept under control. If not, those desires will control the person and ruin them.

He displayed absolute determination to refuse; he never allowed the thought of yielding to enter his mind. He knew that he would lose if he refused, but that was not the deciding factor. He just said "No," and kept saying it.

His purpose was not based on man's standard, but he lived as one who was conscious of God continually. "*How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?*" He was not one who was, like others today, governed by "situational ethics," but controlled by the constant awareness of God's will and God's holiness.

He suffered for His determination and refusal, but actually he gained. He honored God and God honored Him (1 Sam. 2:30). He proved himself to be a man that God could use, and He did! No one is a loser when they seek to honor God in their decisions and determine to refuse to yield to the control of the flesh, no matter what course it may seek to take. It is an element that is contrary and continually op-

posed to the Spirit of God (Gal. 5:17).

Naboth said "No" to the Devil . . . Possessions Properly Esteemed 1 Kings 21

Ahab and Jezebel had evil designs against him; those corrupt rulers represent the unceasing efforts of the devil and the world's system to undermine the believer's confidence in God and rob him of those priceless spiritual possessions that are part of the inheritance that He has given to them.

Just like Ahab, he will offer a believer possessions, prestige, position, power, pleasure, or any other perversion in order to cause him to yield and give up what has been received by grace, but at such a cost to God. How will you respond? It's so easy to yield and give up those things if we have not properly evaluated and esteemed them as we ought. There are those who have wasted their potential for God and ruined their usefulness in Divine service just for a little present gain. It seems, at the time, to be just as good; that was what Ahab held out to Naboth, but he wouldn't have it. It was not what He had received as an inheritance from God; "*the Lord forbid it me.*"

We see that this land, to Naboth, typically represented the spiritual blessings that we have in Christ. It was not really his to sell; it belonged to God and was a part of what God had given, even as we have the stewardship of those things that really belong to God and which we must care for and use according to His will. He had a concern to pass on this inherited property to the next generation, and this, certainly, should be our deep exercise as well. Are we going to lose what we have received and not be able to pass it on to others (2 Tim. 2:1)?

Naboth was fully committed to uphold and preserve it even as he enjoyed the use of it. He never even considered the possibility of letting it go, no price could induce him to sell it, nor would he trade it. Some are quite willing to sell, or to let go, what they have received. They forget the admonition, "*Buy the truth and sell it not,*" (Prov. 23:23). If they never bought it, they will readily sell it, sometimes for almost nothing.

Moses said "No" to the World . . . Place and Plans Properly Directed Heb. 11:24

It was "*when he was come to years,*" so he was now in a position to act on his own responsibility. It would be his choice, not because of exterior pressures but inward convictions. One always needs to ask, "What choices would I make if not responding to the pressures of others' opinions, acting on their convictions, or just wanting to please someone else?"

All that Moses knew of divine truth was what his mother had taught him in those brief years, thus proving the great value and importance of parents instilling the truth into their children's minds and hearts when young.

Why did Moses refuse? It was because he chose. Why did he choose? It was because he esteemed. Why did he esteem? It was because he had respect to the recompense. Why did he have that respect? It was because he saw the Invisible One. It was God and God's people that filled his thoughts and molded his ambitions.

Moses never considered a place on Egypt's throne as he thought of his future. He knew where he belonged, to whom He belonged, and what he would do as a result. Never wavering in his decision, he *"forsook Egypt"* and *"endured, as seeing Him that is invisible."* Never wanting to go back, he only did so at God's command and in a different capacity than when he left.

He willingly rejected what seemed like the best, most expedient course to take, to take something better. Others likely called him a fool, since he rejected worldly advantage in order to suffer with God's people. But was it worth it? Yes, and most certainly so. The entirety of God's Word and eternity reveals the correctness of his choice and what God thinks of it. He might have had a place in Egypt's history, but his place in God's record is far greater and more important. As one responded to another who told him that he could gain a great place in the world by using his talents in that direction, "Which world?"

Without doubt, this world constantly seeks to rob believers of that which is more important and which must take priority at all costs. How many saints have been laid aside because of a weak yielding, either to the flesh, the devil, or the world. May God grant each of us to have a holy, settled determination that is the result of having gotten our eyes on Him that is invisible. Faith lays hold on the unseen and guides our pathway in those things that are seen, bringing honor to God and blessing to men.

Other men of God also said "No" and could be studied. Peter said "no" to those who forbade them to preach Jesus, Abraham said "no" to the king of Sodom in Genesis 14 and many others did the same. May God help us, in our day, to also say an emphatic "NO" to all that is not of God.

We are not to fight against the flesh... we are to count it dead; we are not to fight with the world, but to separate from it; but we are to resist the devil and he will flee from us.

W. Lincoln

"With Reverence and Godly Fear"

Steve Walvatne

The prophet Malachi seems to come from nowhere. Any knowledge of him is derived from the lone prophecy bearing his name. But that's not unusual, for divine messages always transcend their messengers, unless of course, that messenger is the Word of God incarnate. Malachi's "burden" or "utterance" from Jehovah lay heavy; it was not easy to deliver. Yet he faithfully dispatched it with clarity and conviction to the Jewish remnant that had earlier left Babylon for Jerusalem with renewed appreciation and zeal for the Place of the Name and the Law of God. The remnant's sanctified intentions had plummeted, however, to where all sense of God's majesty and holiness was now lost. This incurred the stern rebuke of Jehovah through Malachi: *"A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is Mine honour? And if I be a master, where is My fear (or reverence)? saith the Lord of hosts unto you"* (Mal. 1:6).

In their debased state, they actually believed that anything would mollify Jehovah. Blemished offerings were shamelessly offered on the Brazen Altar. When admonished, the people seemed stunned: *"Wherein have we despised Thy Name...Wherein have we polluted Thee?"* (1:6-7). All sense of God's greatness was lost. "With declension," writes Philip Harding, "comes a lack of spiritual perception and sensitivity to the claims of God. How easy it is to maintain an outward form without realizing that there has been a loss of spiritual perception and power" (*What the Bible Teaches: Malachi*).

This lack of spiritual perception and sensitivity to God's claims strikes at the heart of our subject here. The title – "With Reverence and Godly Fear" – comes from Hebrews 12:28, where proper approach to God is prescribed. Saints have long sought to maintain these virtues, but as each generation passes, fresh evidence of erosion appears. Present day irreverence, like an avalanche, threatens to bury all semblance of spiritual propriety, leading to impoverished worship and service. Recovery will only come through the revival of "reverence and godly fear" among us.

The word "reverence" (*aidos*) in our title occurs twice in the New Testament. In 1 Timothy 2:9 it's translated "shamefacedness," referring to the "timid" or "bashful" spirit desirable in women – the attitude displayed "in the presence of majesty, whether of the emperor or of God Himself" (Spicq: *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*). Similarly, "godly fear" (*eulabeia*) also occurs twice in the New Testament, the other occurrence being Hebrews 5:7 regarding the Lord Jesus in Gethsemane, who "when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and

tears...was heard in that He FEARED (*eulabeia*).” The word signifies “caution, circumspection, and discretion” (*Thayer’s Greek Definitions*); “a wholesome regard for a holy God and His standards and requirements” (Wuest: *Word Studies in the Greek New Testament*). Robertson translates the phrase, “With reverence and awe” (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*). Such is the only “acceptable” or “agreeable” way to “pay homage” to God, “for our God is a consuming fire” (Heb. 12:29).

Our aim is to consider the subject of “reverence and godly fear” among the Lord’s people. It’s a broad topic affecting many aspects of Christian testimony, but we’ll touch it briefly in three ways. First, we’ll reflect on **(I) Our Reverence with Regard to God**; then on **(II) Our Reverence with Regard to God’s Word**; and lastly, on **(III) Our Reverence with Regard to God’s House**.

Our Reverence with Regard to God

No word or words can adequately describe God’s majesty and holiness. While believers appreciate divine Persons in a way that’s foreign to lost souls, their understanding of God remains meager at best. For who truly comprehends the omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence of God? Who can grasp His eternal existence or the trinity of His Person? Who can faintly measure the brightness of His glory, the purity of His throne, or the depths of His love? Surely no descendent of Adam has ventured far into these exhaustless realms! We stand back as the Psalmist and say, “*His greatness is unsearchable*” (Ps. 145:3).

An excellent tribute, however, does occur in Exodus 15:11, where Moses and Israel are found standing on the banks of the Red Sea following recent deliverance from Egypt. There, they struck up a song (the first in Scripture) that’s filled with praise of the highest sort: “*Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like unto Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?*” Charnock called this doxology “one of the loftiest descriptions of the majesty and excellency of God in the whole Scriptures” (*The Existence and Attributes of God*). This song’s question expects no answer, for no man-made “god” or “mighty one” was (or is) remotely like Jehovah (Israel’s Savior-God). Only a fool would set earth’s mighty ones alongside the God of heaven as if they’re comparable. As Samuel Stennett wrote:

No mortal can with Him compare
Among the sons of men;
Fairer is He than all the fair
That fill the heavenly train.

Israel’s song extolled Jehovah’s supremacy. They reveled in **(1) The Uniqueness of His Person; (2) The Uniqueness of His Praise; and (3) The Uniqueness of His Power**.

The Uniqueness of His Person

“*Glorious in holiness.*” Holiness is difficult to define. Like “eternity,” it is best defined by itself because other words fall short. Jehovah is “glorious” – “majestic” or “magnificent” – in holiness; it’s His very essence. D.A. Chadwick says “holiness” in Hebrew is “apparently suggestive of ‘brightness’...something in the purity of light, in its absolute immunity from stain...a lofty remoteness” (*The Expositor’s Bible*: v.1). This distinguishes Deity from humanity. The Son of God became flesh, yet was “holy” and “impeccable” – He could not sin. That wasn’t true of Adam, as his fall in Eden shows. God’s holiness incited “dread” in those that drew near Him in Scripture. Moses quaked “exceedingly” before God at Sinai (Heb. 12:21). Joshua “fell on his face to the earth, and did worship” (Josh. 5:14). “*Woe is me,*” was Isaiah’s reaction to the heavenly throne-sitter, “*for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts*” (Isa. 6:5). Gideon shook, saying, “*Alas, O Lord God! for because I have seen an angel of the Lord face to face*” (Jud. 6:22). Manoah and his wife saw One “very dreadful” and thought, “*We shall surely die, because we have seen God*” (Jud. 13:6, 20, 22). And John’s vision on Patmos of “the First and the Last” elicited this response: “*And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead*” (Rev. 1:17). The nearer one gets to God, the greater his feelings of reverence and awe become. Failure to draw near begets a casual, even arrogant spirit that explains why some are so bold and brash before Him. And it fosters unholiness – a “winking” at sin (Job 15:12). Occupation with God should bring us to our knees and be reflected on our countenances as it was with Moses (Ex. 34:30). We’re to be “*obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation (conduct); because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy*” (1 Pet. 1:14-16).

The Uniqueness of His Praise

“*Fearful in praises.*” While expositors differ on the exact meaning here, the underlying thought is one of reverential praise. It brings to mind the seraphim of Isaiah 6:3, who veil their faces and feet in the divine presence, crying, “*Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.*” No creature, human or angelic, can “over-praise” the triune God, or be “over-reverent” when offering that praise. The Lord Jesus on earth manifested the proper tone for addressing God by reverently stating, “*O Father, Lord of heaven and earth*” (Mt. 11:25), “*My heavenly Father*” (Mt. 18:35), “*O My Father*” (Mt. 26:42), “*Abba, Father*” (Mk. 14:36), “*Our*

Father which art in heaven” (Lk. 11:2), *“Holy Father”* (Jn. 17:11), and *“Righteous Father”* (Jn. 17:25). It is no light thing to approach God in prayer. We must keep our language Scriptural. For years, brethren out of deference to Deity, insisted on using the distinctive pronouns “Thou,” “Thee,” and “Thy” when addressing God, but now such language is being criticized by some as “archaic.” Archaic? The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines archaic speech as that “having the characteristics of the language of the past and surviving chiefly in specialized uses.” K. L. Cooper presses this point in *Assembly Testimony* (May/June 1997) stating, “There can be nothing more special than speaking to God in prayer.” He adds, “Every opportunity should be taken to show He is superlatively different...” J. Sidlow Baxter agrees, saying, “Is it not better to preserve the archaic ‘Thou’ and ‘Thee’ in publicly addressing the Triune Deity, than to use the recently popular ‘You’? The former **does add** to reverence if only by the distinction which it makes between speech to others and our address to God” (*Rethinking Our Priorities*). At a time when respect for all authority is waning, these practices shouldn’t be eliminated, but fortified. Hymns are another concern. A “hymn” is “praise,” yet many modern hymns fall dreadfully short, exhibiting little reverence for God. We need to reject these and embrace the Psalmist’s word: *“Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness”* (Ps. 29:2).

The Uniqueness of His Power

“Doing wonders.” Israel had witnessed God’s “wonders” in His multiple judgments against Egypt. No person, however great, could deny their impact. And when escape seemed hopeless at the Red Sea, God’s “right hand” dashed the enemy to pieces (15:6). *“With the blast of Thy nostrils,”* sang Israel, *“the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as an heap...Thou didst blow with Thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters”* (15:8, 10). The unique authority and power of God as witnessed in His wonders is evident throughout creation. Yet, as great as these wonders are, they cannot eclipse God’s power to redeem. A work of infinite magnitude was required to unshackle bound sinners. Samuel Davies captured this thought when he wrote:

Great God of Wonders! All Thy ways
Display Thine attributes divine;
But the bright glories of Thy grace
Above Thine other wonders shine:
Who is a pardoning God like Thee?
Or who has grace so rich and free?

These riches in grace extend to the believer’s life also. Paul spoke of **“the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly**

places” (Eph. 1:18-20). Many can attest to “Red Seas” in life that miraculously parted. David said, *“By Thee I have run through a troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall”* (Ps. 18:29). The English preacher, John Flavel, remarked that “man’s extremity is God’s opportunity” (*Varieties of Religious Experience*). A healthy recognition of God’s power in doing wonders is humbling and leads to “reverence and godly fear.” Humanism is the curse of our day – it is anti-God. If Christians allow it to affect their thinking, then they’ll forfeit divine power in their testimony. We dare not limit God’s sovereignty, whether it be in the deliverance of lost souls or in the maintenance and eventual glorification thereof.

When the mind and heart is set upon anything more than God; when anything is more valued ...anything more trusted, more loved, or our endeavors more for any other things than God, then we are guilty of soul idolatry.
David Clarkson

Eternal Security of the Believer

Peter Simms

1 John 5:11,13,18; Heb. 5:9; Col.3:3; Rom. 8:1

There are many believers in the Lord Jesus Christ who do not live in the full enjoyment of their salvation. They live in constant fear that they have not believed correctly or sufficiently, resulting in their fear of perhaps not being saved at all. Then there are those who fear that they may lose their salvation because of some failure in their life, etc. In this article we shall seek to reassure all that such fears are groundless. If one has truly trusted Christ for his salvation, it is eternally sure and the soul is eternally secure. When our Lord does something it is done to perfection, He leaves no cracks, as it were, that we might fall through, and so perish. The “falling away” doctrine is an affront to the Lord Jesus as to His ability to be a real true Savior in every sense of the word.

Two Important Verses:

Heb. 5:9 *“And being made perfect, (or qualified “G P Goodspeed,” He became the author (Christ is not merely the formal cause of our salvation. He is the concrete and active cause of it. He has not merely caused or effected it, He is, as His Name, “Jesus,” implies, our salvation itself, (Lk 2:30; Lk 3:6. W E Vine) of eternal (an adjective describing the kind of of salvation) salvation unto all them that obey (a present, active, participle) him” (Acts 17:30). The word “obey” is the same word as “to hearken” in Acts*

12:13. It's the idea of responding to a call, but does not necessarily mean, though, that ever after Rhoda would without fail respond to every knock on her door. Upon obeying the gospel, and not a second before we do, the Lord Jesus become responsible for our eternal salvation. As we did nothing to obtain it, neither do we do anything to keep it. He is our "salvation," for our life is hid with Him in God. (Col.3:3).

1 John 5:18: *"We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not (does not practice sin, 1 John 3:6,8), but He (Christ) that is begotten of God, keeps him, (Heb.7:25) and that wicked one touches him not"* (or cannot lay hold of and reclaim him again, Lk 22:31-32. . . Williams Trans, RSV, NEB). AMS Gooding suggested the same meaning in dealing with this verse..

Some things a Christian can lose

1. His enjoyment of fellowship with God (1 John 1:7-10)
2. His reward (1 Cor. 3:15)
3. His usefulness in God's service *"a castaway"* (1 Cor. 9:27)

Some Things that Give Assurance

1. A Believer Has Eternal Life

Rom. 6:23 says, *"The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."* This eternal life which we receive by faith as a gift, is the resurrection life of Christ (Col. 2:12-13, 3:1-3), is just as eternal as Christ is, and it's outside the realm and reach of destruction or dissolution (Rom.8:1). It is not a prize which we have earned, but an undeserved gift. Our salvation involves three things (even though we may not realize it at that moment)

1. Our dying with Christ (Col. 2:20. The "if" is the "if" of affirmation not of doubt),
2. Our burial with Christ, (Rom. 6:4)
3. Our resurrection with Christ (Col. 3:1... affirmation not of doubt). If it were possible for you to lose your salvation, then it stands to reason that the whole process of regeneration must in fact be reversed, and you be put back where you started as a sinner in Adam, once again sharing his life and death.

2. Christ is the anchor of our souls (Heb. 6:18-20). A

Christian is not like an anchor-less ship left adrift at sea, tossed by the waves to probable disaster. Rather, our souls are well anchored in heaven, and that anchor is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, who is both sure and steadfast. We often sing,

*We have an anchor which keeps the soul,
Steadfast and sure while the billows (of doubt & opposition)
roll"*

Who, or what, can tear the anchor of our souls free from

within the veil? That something, whatever it is, would need to be strong enough to dislodge Christ from within the veil (heaven), and sink both of us into hell, which, of course, is an utter impossibility.

3. Rom. 8:31-35 "What shall we say then to these things?"

Rom.8:31 **"No opposition"** For if God be for us, who can be against us?.

Rom.8:33 **"No accusation"** Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God who justifies.

Rom.8:34 **"No condemnation"** Who is he that can condemn us? While Christ is interceding for us.

Rom.8:35 **"No separation"** Who can separate us from the love of Christ?

Should we not all shout and sing **"Hallelujah what a Saviour."**

All of Grace

God of all grace, we bow the knee,
With grateful hearts to worship Thee;
Our deepest need has been supplied,
Through Christ our Savior crucified.

It was Thy work to bring us near,
To Thee we venture without fear;
Sin's guilt removed through Jesus' blood,
Perfect we stand before our God.

Thy matchless grace worked in us still,
To bring obedience to Thy will;
Baptized in water, we proclaimed,
Subjection to that Holy Name.

The grace of God brought us to see,
The place of gath'ring, Lord, to Thee;
With other saints of precious faith,
By Thy blest Word, to seek Thy face.

In joys and blessings of this life,
Mid grievous trials often rife;
Thy grace has kept us all the way,
We praise Thee, Lord, for every day.

Until we're gathered at His feet,
We'll always need the Mercy Seat;
When then beyond the starry blue,
"Thy grace, Oh Lord, has brought us through."

Modern Day Viruses

Robert Surgenor

We heartily sing, “When the roll is called up yonder, I’ll be there.” But what about the assembly meetings? Can we sing, “I’ll be there?” What about saints that only attend the breaking of bread meeting? Older preachers defined them as **SMO’s**, meaning **Sunday Morning Only**. They were also described as “Seventh Day Adventists,” meaning that they made their advent to the hall once every seven days – they were “**Sunday Morning Onlys**.”

A farmer in Iowa reminisced to me about the former “Oliver Smith days” when the saints had to hitch up the horse to the sleigh in sub-zero weather to attend the meeting, wrapped in blankets in an effort to keep warm. The whole assembly was gathered together on such occasions, and nobody stayed home. Then he said, “Today we have self-starting automobiles, heaters, snow treads and what not, yet, unlike the former days, many are not at the week-night meetings.” The winters were colder back then, and people had less of this world’s goods, but their hearts were warmer than those of today. Years ago, an old Scots sister was asked, “Granny, how come you are always here, you never seem to miss a meeting?” The saintly sister replied, “Me heart’s already here and me feet just follow.” Good for her! Can you say the same?

However, there are legitimate reasons for not attending assembly meetings. Listed are a few of the most prominent reasons.

- (1) Not physically able. There is however a strange sickness diagnosed as “meeting sickness” where the victim cannot get out to the meeting, yet never misses getting to his place of work.
- (2) Severe weather conditions.
- (3) Shift work.
- (4) Away on business.
- (5) A funeral.
- (6) An evangelist pioneering in the gospel, far away from any assembly.

Viruses that Cause Unfaithfulness in Attendance

1. The virus of Wrong Concept in that they are ignorant of what an assembly really is. God likens the assembly to a human body, no independency, no monopoly, but rather a mutual dependency, one of another. Just as the human body needs all of its members to function properly, so all are needed at assembly gatherings. Read 1 Corinthians 12.

2. The virus of Self-Interest. This poison permeates the whole body, and if not immediately checked, will cause the saint to become self-centered and selfish. This virus was

seen in Ezra’s day when the prophet Haggai declared, “*Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste?*” (Haggai 1:4). He was speaking of the house of God under construction at the time. The workers had ceased.

3. The virus of Poor Example, or Training. Parents set examples for their children. When God saves a child, how can you expect that child to be faithful to the testimony if its parents frequently miss meetings without a legitimate excuse? Elkanah and Hannah were a faithful and praying couple. They went up yearly to worship and to sacrifice before the Lord (1 Samuel 1:3). They produced a son of like nature – Samuel.

Hezekiah had a godly mother who influenced him for good. He repaired God’s house in the first month of his reign (2 Chronicles 29:1–3).

4. The Sandwich virus. Have you ever been in a “sandwich meeting” – a hymn and a prayer, a hymn and a prayer, and a hymn and a prayer throughout the whole meeting? Not only this, have you ever seen “sandwich parents?” The father is at the meeting, but not the mother. The next time, the mother is at the meeting, but not the father. The parents take turns in attendance. What’s the problem? It’s the child! Instead of bringing their child, or children, one parent stays home to baby sit. This is a strange malady that leaves the child in ignorance regarding God’s house. It is a denial of Ephesians 6:4, “*bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*”

In king Jehoshaphat’s day a great prayer meeting was held. Notice who attended. “*And all Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives, and their children*” (2 Chronicles 20:13). Notice the great Bible-reading in Ezra and Nehemiah’s day. “*And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel. And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of man and women, and all that could hear with understanding*” (the children) (Nehemiah 8:1–2).

We must admit, it can be a chore to get the little ones ready and “haul them off” to meeting, then make them behave when they are there, then rush them home and get the tired little ones ready for bed. This is work, really work! However, God promises, “*them that honour Me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed*” (1 Samuel 2:30).

5. The virus of Neglect. When one neglects private prayer

and reading the Word of God, this virus goes to work and produces coldness of heart. It is amazing what excuses a cold heart can produce for not attending meetings, such as, tiredness, an itchy nose, slight physical pain, a cut finger, or even “the dog needed a walk.” The wise man said, “*The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways*” (Proverbs 14:14).

6. The Petty Grudge virus. “If so and so is there, I’m not going!” That doesn’t say much for Peter’s analysis, by the Spirit, of a born again child, does it? “*Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings*” (1 Peter 2:1). The word “laying aside” is in the aorist participle and should read, “Having laid aside,” showing that this is not an exhortation, but an established fact. To maintain a grudge against another child of God throughout an entire lifetime, would make one wonder if that person was saved at all. Can you picture a “saint” entering a hall, then noticing another saint unexpectedly present who they have a grudge against and their feeling is so bitter against that saint, that they make a quick exit and go back home? It has been done and one wonders, who did the fleeing person come to meet in the first place. He couldn’t have come to meet the Lord, for the Lord was there, yet he fled.

7. The virus of Discouragement. Ah dear saint, be aware of this virus for it lurks everywhere, seeking to enter the heart. It is strange the action some saints take when discouraged, for that is when we need the company of God’s people the most. Yet, that is when some who have this virus stay at home. Are you discouraged because of trouble in the family, trouble in the assembly, or perhaps trouble in the work place? Let me tell you of a discouraged man’s words that you have often sung. This man was born in County Down, Ireland. His fiancée drowned on the very eve of their wedding. He was saved through this. In 1845 he sailed for Canada. Due to ill health he returned to Ireland in two months. Two years later, he returned to Canada to take up a teaching post. Later he became a private tutor to the children of a military captain. Again he became engaged to a 23-year old, only to have her become very ill and die. He became a victim of severe depression and declining health. In Port Hope, Ontario, he managed a small dairy and became known as the local “Good Samaritan” – helping others, giving them food and clothing. He wrote a poem to his mother to comfort her in a serious illness. Ten years after he left Ireland he sent this poem to her. A friend, upon seeing the poem, asked him, “Who wrote these beautiful words?” He replied, “The Lord and I did it between us.” The man who wrote that poem was Joseph Scriven, and the poem goes like this:

“What a Friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer!
O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear!
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer.”

There’s the solution to discouragement my fellow-believer. In closing let me mention:

The Sad Result of Willfully Missing Meetings

1. It deprives one of the fellowship they could have enjoyed.
2. It can discourage those who do attend.
3. It detracts from the testimony of oneness.
4. It defeats the purpose of ministry. How can one learn if they are not there?
5. It deadens the conscience of guilt. Each time one misses, it makes the next time easier to miss.
6. It delights the devil – for it can weaken the testimony that he hates.
7. It diminishes the strength of the assembly.
8. It destroys one’s own spiritual growth.
9. It demonstrates a carnal attitude.
10. It denies what one professes – to be in fellowship, which means “partnership.”
11. It diminishes the weight of one’s person in the eyes of the faithful. His prayers and his preaching carry little weight. As the late David L. Roy once said, “The man in the message is worth more than the message in the man.”

In view of all that has been said, may the Lord help us, by His grace, to be “*stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord*” (1 Corinthians 15:58). Amen and amen!

The Backslider’s Theme Song

“I lived for myself, for myself alone.
For myself and none beside.
Just as if Jesus had never lived
And as if He had never died.”

Miss Frances Ridley Havergal was born in Astley, England, December 14, 1836, and wrote this beautiful consecration hymn on February 4, 1874. She died in Wales on June 3, 1879, at the age of forty-three and was buried at Astley. On her tombstone is engraved, as she herself wished, her favorite text: “*The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.*”

Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.
Take my moments and my days;
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my hands, and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love.
Take my feet, and let them be
Swift and beautiful for Thee.

Take my voice, and let me sing,
Always, only, for my King.
Take my lips, and let them be
Filled with messages from Thee.

Take my silver and my gold;
Not a mite would I withhold.
Take my intellect, and use
Every power as Thou shalt choose.

Take my will, and make it Thine;
It shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart, it is Thine own;
It shall be Thy royal throne.

Take my love; my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure-store.
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all for Thee.

Can we sing this hymn truthfully, as she did?

If the sufferings of Christ, who humbled Himself and became obedient unto death—the death of the Cross, be much in my heart, I shall see my worst enemy to be pride, especially pride of wisdom, and pride of righteousness. I shall charge my soul, as did the king of Syria his captains: “Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king of Israel.” In my soul’s warfare let pride be subdued, and every other sin is held in chains.

R. C. Chapman

Christ on the Throne

J. R. Caldwell

Read with me a few passages in the Epistle to the Hebrews which direct our hearts to the Lord Jesus Christ on the Throne of Glory. Heb. 1:3: “When He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.”

The Sin-purger on the Throne

We have here before us, at the outset of this epistle, the Lord Jesus as the risen and glorified One. He is seen here seated on the right hand of the Majesty on high. But He is there in a certain character, viz., as the One who has purged our sins.

That is the very first aspect in which, as believers, we were made to know Him. He took our place, took our guilt upon Him, became answerable for our transgressions, and by His own blood made a cleansing (or purging) of them all. It is the very same expression that we have in Rev. 1:5: “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins (made a purging of our sins) in His own blood.” It is well for us to seek to make it the habit of our souls to look up to the throne of God and to discern there the One who purged all our sins.

To be on the throne is to be in the place of highest authority; as He said before He left the world, “All authority is given unto Me in Heaven and on earth” (Matt. 28:18). The One who was crucified is now in the place of power, and what an immense fund of grace, strength, and blessing is there for us in Him! Authority over angels, over the powers of darkness, over the affairs of the world, over the winds and the waves—all authority in Heaven and on earth is committed to the One who loved us and bore our sins.

Then notice how perfect must be that work, how perfectly accomplished, how thoroughly finished and completed! He became answerable for our sins on the Cross. He was forsaken by God as the Sin-bearer. He was delivered for our offenses; and that word delivered means, one that was taken and delivered up into the hands of justice to bear the sentence, whatever it be. “He was delivered for our offenses,” and therefore God in His inflexible righteousness forsook Him. But “when He had by Himself purged our sins,” He “sat down on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens,” and there He has been ever since, ordering all things, controlling all things. “Head over all things to the Church which is His body” (Eph. 1:22); so that He can make “all things work together for good to those that love Him” (Rom. 8:28); so that we might glory in the tribulations He permits and sends, so that in those very things that seem against us we can learn the most blessed lessons.

What a beautiful opening for a book—sin-purged, and the Sin-purger on the throne!

The Victor on the Throne

Heb. 2:5: “For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.” That is the world which shall be ordered and blessed after this dispensation is past. “But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that Thou visitest him?” (v. 6). This is a quotation from the 8th Psalm. “Thou madest him (that is, Adam) a little lower than the angels: Thou crownedst him with glory and honour (that is, Adam), and didst set him over the works of Thy hands” (that is, Adam) (v. 7). “Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not

yet all things under him” (v. 8).

We do not see Adam, or the sons of Adam, triumphing and reigning and governing in this world. We do not see the fulfillment of that for which God created man at first. Sin came in, and the dominion was dashed from the hands of Adam. Sin and death have marred the whole creation. But what do we see? *“We see Jesus.”* Here is the Man; here is the second Man; here is the last Adam, the Head of the new creation. *“We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels,”* who came down to take the very position that Adam had at first. He became partaker of flesh and blood because the children were partakers of it. *“We see Jesus crowned with glory and honour” (v. 9).* There is the pledge of the ultimate dominion of man; there is the pledge of the fulfillment of God's purpose concerning man; and though at the Cross it would seem as if God had allowed Satan to go on without restraint, yet at the end we see Jesus exalted and *“crowned with glory and honour.”* There is the pledge that those who trust Him will be crowned with glory and honor too. There is the pledge that sin and misery will come to an end.

In the first chapter He is exalted as the Sin-purger; and in the second He is crowned as the mighty Victor.

The High Priest on the Throne

Heb. 4:12, 13: *“For the Word of God is quick (the old-fashioned word for living), and powerful . . . and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.”* May we allow the Word of God to search us and to expose us to ourselves. It is not pleasant, but it is good for us to be detected and exposed to ourselves, to show how unlike Christ we are; and that is the process of sanctification.

“Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth” (John 17:17). But how does the Word sanctify? It enters into the heart like a sword. Sometimes Nature would take one course and the Spirit of God would take another. The Word of God comes in to show what is natural and what is spiritual; but Satan is constantly watching to take the edge off it. Never does he better succeed than when he gets us to apply it to others and not to ourselves. *“Now is that not a right hint to brother So-and-so? I wish he were here to hear it”;* and *“That suits sister So-and-so.”* Let us cease judging one another, and allow the Word of God to search us. Let it get home, and let it have its whole effect upon conscience and heart. Satan does not object to us reading the Word of God with a cold heart and a hard head.

But you say: *“I am afraid of the light.”* What does verse 14-15 say? Look at it: *“Let us hold fast our profession*

(don't give it up, don't sink down in despair), for we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.” We have not a lofty, indifferent High Priest.

Heb. 2:17, 18: *“Wherefore in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted.”* In order that He might be perfected, not perfected in the sense of being better than He was, but perfected as *“the Captain of our Salvation;”* perfected as the High Priest to enter into our sorrows and temptations, now that He has passed through the heavens up to the very throne of God.

There is an advocate for God within our hearts, that is the Holy Ghost; and there is an advocate for us in the bosom of God, and that is Jesus Christ the Righteous. Oh, how near God has brought us to Himself, and how near He is brought to us.

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (chap. 4:16). When we draw nigh to God in prayer it is well always to get one steady look at this merciful and faithful High Priest, this One that has suffered being tempted, this One who is touched with a feeling of our infirmities, now at the right hand of God. He bears our names upon His breast, He makes intercession for us, He lives for us, and is prepared to supply to us all needed grace.

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Closeness of fellowship with Jesus, and therefore of whole-hearted devotedness to Him, is by far the happiest path for the Christian.

It was when Peter followed "far off" that he fell into his great sin and sorrow. Jesus Himself has told us the impossibility of the course so many of us are trying to pursue, by plainly saying, "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon."

A wordly Christian is a great stumbling block, and does far more harm, than an unprofessing worldling, and Satan is well content to have it so. Jesus, who desires not only His Father's glory, but also our happiness here, says to each believer,

"Follow me."