

THE Watchword

*"On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have appointed watchmen;
All day and night they will never keep silent
You who remind the Lord, take no rest for yourselves,
And give Him no rest until He establishes and makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth."*

Isaiah 62:6-7

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The purpose of this newsletter is to encourage prayer and passion for a true revival of apostolic Christianity.

The following material is offered in the hopes of provoking zeal and providing a vision of what the church could be if we would fervently pray.

PRAYER MAKES HISTORY

In September of 1840 Scotland's famous praying pastor Robert Murray M'Cheyene wrote a letter to William C. Burns. He writes, *"I am deepened in my conviction, that if we are to be instruments in (A True Revival) we must be purified from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. Oh cry for personal holiness, constant nearness to God by the blood of the Lamb! Bask in His beams, - lie back in the arms of love, - be filled with the Spirit; or all success in the ministry will only be to your own everlasting confusion."*

William C. Burns, like M'Cheyene, was not merely a man of theories and hopeful ideas. Through his persistent praying and preaching, literally thousands witnessed the glory of God. Even from an early age, William C. Burns' heart was broken for a lost and dying world. The story is told that when he was seventeen he was brought by his mother from the quiet town of Kilsyth to the bustling city of Glasgow. His mother was separated from her son while she was shopping. After retracing her steps she discovered him in an alley with great tears streaming down his face. She could see he was suffering great agony and said, *"Willie my boy, what ails you? Are you ill?" "Oh, mother! mother!"* he cried. *"The thud of these Christless feet on the way to hell breaks my heart!"*

The eyes of young Burns had caught a glimpse of eternity that would effect the rest of his life. He soon found himself being driven to his knees in almost constant intercession. *"He wept for hours in deep soul agony on behalf of a*



William C. Burns

backslidden church and the lost souls going to hell." His life was characterized by an eternal urgency and passion for the perishing. He pleaded with men to repent of their sins and surrender to the love and Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Mr. Burns describes for us a time when the Lord empowered him to plead with the lost and careless. He recalls, *"During the whole time that I was speaking, the people listened with the most solemn attention. At last their feelings became too strong and broke forth in weeping and wailing, tears and groans, intermingled with shouts of joy and praise from some of the people of God. The appearance of a great part of the people gave me a vivid picture of the state of the ungodly in the day of Christ coming to judgement. Some were screaming out in agony. Strong men fell to the ground as if they were dead. Such was the general commotion even after repeating for some time the most free and urgent invitations of the Lord to sinners."*

Later, William C. Burns learned that the night before this precious meeting, a group of believers had gathered to labour in prayer for the lost and ungodly. During this time it was not uncommon for Mr. Burns and many other believers to pray throughout the night. As a result the glory of God fell day after day.

William C. Burns describes another time when the Spirit of God was poured out. *"At the conclusion of a solemn address to some anxious souls suddenly the power of God seem to descend, and all were bathed in tears. It was like a pent-up flood breaking forth. Tears were streaming from the eyes of many and some fell on the ground crying for mercy . . . The whole town was moved. The ungodly raged but the word of God grew mightily and prevailed."*

Even after turning Scotland upside down William C. Burns' passion for souls was not satisfied. He now volunteered to go to China to preach the gospel. James A. Stewart writes *"I believe that no other episode in his brimful life shows the sterling character of the man as this decision to be a pioneer missionary. In so doing he left popularity, prestige, wealth and loved ones behind."* When he was asked when he would be ready to leave for China, his answer was, *"Now!"* He boldly declared, *"I am ready to burn out for God. I am ready to endure any hardship if by any means I might save some. The longing of my heart is to make known my glorious redeemer to those who never heard."* What an example of sacrificial love for Jesus Christ. Surely the life of William C. Burns is a sharp rebuke to us all in these easy, soft, and self-centered days.

In Burns, God found a man who truly cared. He cared enough to listen, obey and stay on his knees. Ezekiel 22:30,31 warns us of what happens when God cannot find such men and women of broken-hearted prayer.

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"So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; **but I found no one.**

Therefore I have poured out My indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; and I have recompensed their deeds on their own heads,' says the Lord God."

Who among us will stand in the gap and pray for the lost and perishing?

References Used:

- *The Memoirs and Remains of Robert Murray M'Cheyne*
by Andrew Bonar
- *William C. Burns*
by James A. Stewart
- *The Memoirs of William C. Burns*
by Islay Burns



For Thy Sake

"My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."
(John 4:34)

THE most unhappy people in the world are the ones who live only for themselves. All that they do, they do only for their own sake. For these self-centered individuals, the most precious things in the world is their "self." Like a cancer that eats and destroys its own cells, the self-centered individual is slowly dying inwardly.

Sometimes these self-centered individuals mask their concern for their own physical and mental welfare by insisting that it is for "their family." They are blinded by the pleasures and comforts of this world, and seek only to gratify themselves as they hoard luxuries within their households. Blinded to the truth of eternity, they cannot see either their own true needs or the needs of the multitudes around

them. Sometimes, out of guilt, they will "do something good." But when they do, it is with one eye toward the glory that will come to their name, and the praise, influence and power that will hopefully follow. And if these glories do not follow, the self-centered "do-gooder" then becomes insolent, upset and unhappy. Bitterness replaces joy, because while the deeds were good, the inner motive was corrupt.

But what a change when we come to the place in our life when we put Jesus in the center—when we can honestly say, "Lord, for thy sake I am glad to do all that pleases you." Our priority must not be our own joy and happiness, but God's will, His name, His cause. Doing anything we do for His sake makes all the difference in the world. Then, without seeking it, the joy and happiness follow.

It is well to ask ourselves, "Why am I doing what I do. And why am I not doing some things I know need to be done? Why is there no joy in my heart and I feel empty, even doing good?" The answer could very well be this: our good works are no longer being done

for His sake, but for our own pleasure. It is possible, as Watchman Nee once suggested, to be serving the house of God and to have forgotten the Lord who is Master of the house.

"For me to live is Christ," wrote the Apostle Paul. He said he did all things "For Thy Sake." May we this day—and always—live to do all things for His sake.

by K. P. Yohannan
from *One Month for Asia*
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**"He that gathers in
summer is a son
who acts wisely:
but he who *sleeps* in
the harvest is a
son that causes
shame."**

Proverbs 10:5

PRINCIPLES OF PRAYER

It is natural to man, from his earliest infancy, to cry for relief when in danger or distress, if he supposes that any one able to relieve him is within hearing of his cries. Every man then who feels his own dependence upon God, and his need of blessings which God only can bestow, will pray to Him. He will feel that prayer is not only his duty, but his highest privilege.

The man then who refuses or neglects to pray, who regards prayer not as a privilege, but as a wearisome and needless task practically says in the most unequivocal manner, I am not dependent on God; I want nothing that He can give; and therefore I will not come to Him, nor ask anything from His hand. I will not ask Him to crown my work with success, for I am able, and determined, to be the architect of my own future. I will not ask Him to instruct or guide me, for I am competent to be my own instructor and guide. I will not ask Him to strengthen and support me, for I am strong in the vigor and resources of my own mind. I will not request His protection, for I am able to protect myself. I will not implore His pardoning mercy nor His sanctifying grace for I have need of neither the one nor the other. I will not ask His presence and aid in the hour of death. For I can meet and grapple, unsupported, with the king of terrors, and enter, undaunted and alone, any unknown world into which He may usher me. Such is the language of all who neglect prayer.

by Edward Payson

TIME FOR JUDGMENT

by Vance Havner

"For the time has come that judgment must begin at the house of God; and if it first begin with us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinners appear?"

1 Peter 4:17,18

Peter wrote his letters to Christians in a day of testing and suffering to build them up for greater trials yet to come. In these troubled days, when Christians think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is testing so many of the saints, we do well to fortify ourselves with these words from the great apostle.

When I read this text, my mind goes back to the days of Ezekiel. He was another great preacher living in captivity in a sad and bewildering day. In the eighth and ninth chapters of his book, we read that God gave him a vision, turning time backward in its flight and carrying Ezekiel to show him the reason why Israel was now captive in Babylon. In this retrospective revelation, God showed him through a hole in the wall the elders engaging in idolatry, women giving themselves to phallic cults, and men worshipping the sun. It was as though God said to the prophet, 'Ezekiel, when the young generation now growing up in exile wants to know why I allowed my chosen people to go into captivity, these chapters from the past will explain it. It is righteous judgment for their sin.'

Then, in the ninth chapter, six men come forth, and a man with a writer's inkhorn by his side is sent out to mark all who are burdened for the sins of the people. Then the men with weapons are sent after him to kill all that are not marked, and they are told, "BEGIN AT MY SANCTUARY." So here judgment begins at the house of God.

Surely we live today in an age that bears all the marks of the days of Ezekiel. Idolatry, phallic cults and sunworship

have nothing on America. We can match the filthiest corruptions which Ezekiel saw any day and we don't have to look through a hole in the wall to see them.

The man with the writer's inkhorn was to mark all who were burdened over the sins of the people and all others were to be slain. If that procedure were followed in America, no massacre in history could compare with it, for few there be who care that we have forsaken God. Amos lamented in his day that no one was grieved for the affliction of Joseph. Jeremiah asked, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?" In the days of Malachi the people met his condemnation of sin

with a cynical "Wherein?" Isaiah lamented that he dwelt among a people of unclean lips. Paul could wish himself accursed for the sake of his brethren. Moses asked to be blotted out of God's book for the sake of Israel. Our Lord was grieved over Jerusalem. We need today the spirit of a Knox crying, "God, give me Scotland or I die!" We need the heart of a Brainerd wrestling in prayer for the Indians. Not only do we not care for the souls of sinners, alas, we care not for our own. The man with the writer's inkhorn would not be overworked today marking all Americans who are concerned on account of sin. **He wouldn't need much ink to brand the burdened among us.**



God has a striking figure in the Old Testament to describe human hearts that have grown indifferent to God. In Zephaniah we read: "And it shall come to pass at that time that I will search Jerusalem with candles and punish the men that are SETTLED ON THEIR LEES, that say, the Lord will do no good, neither will he do evil" (1:12). And Jeremiah says of the Moabites: "Moab hath been at ease from his youth and he hath SETTLED ON HIS LEES and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel; neither hath he gone into captivity; therefore his taste remained in him and his scent is not changed" (48:11).

The figure "settled on their lees" is that of vinegar, for instance, that has been allowed to set until a scum has formed over it; or of milk that has turned to curds. It describes the same spiritual state as 'resting at ease in Zion'; it is the lukewarm state of the Laodiceans. And it is the condition, not only of sinners, but of thousands of Christians today. **Our churches have settled on their lees. They have been let alone so long, they have been undisturbed by real**

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conviction and repentance, until a scum has gathered over the saints. It is disastrous to be let alone too long. God has a way of shaking up His saints. He pours them from vessel to vessel to prevent their turning to curds. Sometimes sickness will stir them up. Financial reverses, even a death in the family, may be necessary. If we judged ourselves, we should not be judged, but we settle on our lees and God has to jolt and jar us loose. That is why we need revivals.

A good old revival is always a blessing because it pours the saints into a new vessel. *"It is high time to awake out of sleep,"* and, however much they may resent it, better disturb the Sunday-morning sanctuary sleepers and empty them from vessel to vessel than let them come to judgment settled on their lees. Too many sermons are bedtime stories to lull the saints to sleep instead of morning reveilles to wake them up!

The men who carried weapons were to follow the man with the writer's inkhorn and kill everyone whom he had not marked and **THEY WERE TO BEGIN AT THE SANCTUARY.** Peter says, *"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God."* God begins with His own people: judgment, like charity, begins at home. **Much of the blame for world conditions lies at the door of the church.** Our indifference, our neglect, our failure to cry out against iniquity have encouraged the devil. Unfaithful preachers, modernism, formality, worldliness, unholy living have disgraced the house of God until He must like the Saviour of old, first cleanse the temple. God's house has become a den of thieves and it is time for the whip of judgment.

Two kinds of judgment appear in our text: **CORRECTIVE JUDGMENT**

FOR THE SAINTS, CONDEMNATORY JUDGMENT FOR THE SINNERS. *"If it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" "Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner"* (Prov. 11:31).

We are entering upon the last days and God is sifting His people. There is beginning right now a separation between the great crowd of Sunday-morning church goers and those who really mean business with God. On one hand, we have the mass of nominal Christians who belong to church because the family does or because it is the nice thing to do, who draw nigh to God with their mouths and honor Him with their lips, while their hearts are far from Him. These will soon be shown up in their true colors: they will trim their sails to catch the breeze and end up in one great apostate aggregation in league with the powers that be, the world, the flesh and the devil. On the other hand, is the faithful remnant who hear the Lord and speak often one to another, saints from all the church bodies, drawn together by a common love for Christ. These will be melted together in fires of testing with a comradeship like that of the early Christians in the catacombs of Rome.

This drawing together is a work of the Spirit, but when we try to do it we fail. This union of Bible Christians does not lend itself to our systems and plans, and when some man tries to head it up or put a tag on it, he fails, but the movement goes right on. We would do better to exalt Christ and preach the Word and not try to engineer the work of the Spirit too closely.

Truly, the time has come that judgment has begun at the house of

God, and the best advice I can give is found in the first part of this same chapter from First Peter. There is an Old Testament exhortation, *"Sanctify yourselves against tomorrow."* It is a timely word now. **If you are a lukewarm Christian, out of fellowship and out of tune with God, I beseech you, set your house in order, for the storm is upon us and even the righteous will scarcely be saved.** Return to God, confess your sin, claim the cleansing blood. Get back to the Book and watch unto prayer. Straighten out your affairs with your fellow men. See that you have a conscience void of offense toward God and man. Commit your soul to God, rest in the Rock of Ages, where neither bombs nor blackouts can disturb. Learn the joy of abiding in the cleft of the Rock and learn how to sing:

'When peace like a river
attendeth my way,
When sorrows like
sea-billows roll;
Whatever my lot,
Thou hast taught
me to say,
It is well with my soul.'

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ALWAYS REMEMBER

A truly prayerful and consecrated life unto God can only be established by faith.

It is by trusting in the finished work of Christ that we are empowered to produce the fruit of love and righteousness.

"For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world; our faith."

(I John 5:4)