

2020 Issue 1

MENBUILDERS

Building Godly men on the foundation of Jesus Christ **MAGAZINE**

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Why another men's magazine?

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s we introduce this first issue the question that could be asked is “Why provide another resource for men?” It’s a fair question and we hope that the answer is reflected by the title we have chosen for this publication---“Menbuilders”.

In his letter to the struggling church at Corinth, Paul told the believers, “Let all things be done for edification.” (See 1 Corinthians 14:26.)

In Scripture, ‘edification’ refers to the intentional process of properly building someone up in their walk with the Lord. We want to see each Christian man built up into the man of valour that Jesus Christ wants him to be! In case you haven’t noticed, many Christian men in North America aren’t thriving spiritually. We are in a desperate spiritual battle. Let’s face it, if we are honest with ourselves we must acknowledge that our enemies are rarely other people but rather our complacency and

spiritual short sightedness. We have not truly sought the Lord with our whole heart. We have become men that are by-products of our generation rather than men that are spiritual leaders and intercessors for our generation. We often look like the world, talk like the world and have the same earth-focused goals as unsaved men. Thoughts of our next vacation, car purchase, romantic relationship or home improvement consume us and steal our emotional energy, time and potential for a proper eternal investment. This should not be.

If there is one thing on our heart as we periodically publish this magazine it is that each Christian man would become a mature servant-leader in his home, church and workplace. In 2 Corinthians 13:9 the apostle Paul writes, “And this also we pray, that you may be made complete.” Be acutely aware: the time at which we were born again, or ‘saved’, was just the beginning of a process that Scripture calls ‘sanctification’. We are on a life long journey of being transformed into the image of Christ. It will not always be a comfortable process. The cliché is that “life is a marathon not a sprint.” This is true.



A new child in Christ must grow properly. The apostle Peter writes “As newborn babies, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.” In Colossians 1:9-11 Paul tells the believers in the city of Colossae (located in modern day Turkey) that he has a specific burden for them since he heard of their new faith in Jesus Christ. He writes, “We also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy.” Did you see that? Paul was praying earnestly that believers would be “fully pleasing” to the Lord. The implication is that the possibility exists that we may not be found fully pleasing at the Lord’s return. Our Christian walk is a process and a journey of submission to the Lord’s will as His Spirit speaks to us through His Word, prayer, circumstances and fellowship with other believers.

You may also have noticed the words ‘patience’ and ‘long-suffering’ in the preceding Scripture. These are not words that produce a lot of excitement in our hearts. We live in a culture that frequently eschews anything requiring commitment and delayed gratification. But the preceding Scripture also mentions being “fruitful in very good work” and “strengthened with all might” and having ‘joy’. Is this not what our heart really desires? So, let’s go on a journey together and be built up as the godly men that the Lord desires us to be. There may be an earthly cost but the impact for eternity will be absolutely worth it. Our families are worth it, our co-workers are worth it, the church life is worth it and a thriving personal relationship with Jesus Christ surpasses every earthly treasure!

We envision that the articles comprising each issue of Menbuilders will be a mixture of Biblical teaching, life stories and the addressing of issues specific to men. Our heart’s desire is that this will all be done in such a way that men are firmly built on the solid rock which is Jesus Christ.

"What makes a real man?"

has always been a loaded question to address, in any culture and generation. Scripture clearly describes the high and noble calling for men within their families, marriages, workplace and church life. Sadly, in 2020 the fundamental question of "What makes a man?" involves tackling subject matter that was barely imaginable even one generation ago. The notion of what constitutes a man has been blurred to such an extent that even physiological differences between men and women are simply being ignored in this process of re-defining gender. Current thinking among 'experts' is that gender is fluid and that one can simply 'identify' according to their inner desires and feelings. This vein of teaching says that one's gender identification does not have to align with the assignment of one's biological sex at birth. Thankfully, the shifting sands of popular opinion can be compared and contrasted with that of unchanging truth contained in Scripture.

First of all, the Bible clearly teaches that there are only two genders, male and female. Nowhere does Scripture provide any endorsement of 'gender fluidity' or multiple categories of gender identification. Each person's gender directly corresponds to their biological design. An honest reading of Scripture clearly evidences this. Consider Genesis 5:1-2: "This is the book of the genealogy of Adam. In the day that God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female, and blessed them and called them Mankind in the day they were created." Jesus reiterates much of this in Mark 10:6-8: "But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." Scripture also claims that its teachings are unchangeable. Hebrews 13:8-9 says that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines [teachings]." The confusion in our culture regarding gender does not originate from the Lord since "God is not the author of confusion but of peace." (See 1 Corinthians 14:33.) Our present culture has relegated the authority of Scripture into so far of a back seat that answers to basic (really,

trivial) questions have been completely redefined. Under the now far reaching scope of 'gender conversion laws' in Canada it is potentially a criminal act to merely tell people that certain sexual desires contrary to Scripture are indeed sinful.

Despite the preceding (and potentially inflammatory) paragraphs we haven't even scratched the surface regarding the high Biblical calling for men. We will keep things 'simple' and use Scripture as our guide. The Lord's call for every man is incredibly high and full of eternal purpose. But let's be honest. Our role as image bearers of Jesus Christ has been largely usurped. In the creation account of Genesis the LORD placed Adam in the Garden of Eden with the express purpose of guarding it and overseeing it. Genesis 2:15 says "Then the LORD God took the man [Adam] and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it." If you are familiar with the biblical account it was not a long time before Adam relinquished his God-given role by disregarding God's instruction to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Since then it has been Satan's desire, from generation to generation, to usurp and demean the role of men today.



Below are some highlights from Scripture regarding man's life purpose. In this issue we will only briefly consider each of these:

- (i) We are to find life from the Word and to put away childish things that starve our souls.
- (ii) We are to have our ultimate satisfaction and identity from Jesus Christ.
- (iii) If married, we are to love our wives as Jesus Christ loves His church.
- (iv) We are to be the primary example to our children.
- (v) We are to actively participate in strengthening the spiritual quality of our local church.
- (vi) We are to be 'salt and light' in the workplace.

(i) We are to find our life from the Word:

Just like we need physical food in order to get through the physical demands of our day so we need spiritual food to fight the larger battles of life. We cannot successfully meet any other life demands without properly providing the 'spiritual calories' for our 'inner man', our spirit. John 1:1 describes Jesus as the Word. Since Jesus is alive, He is truly the living Word! John 6:57-58 says "As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He

who eats this bread will live forever." Jesus is not saying that we literally need to eat His physical body. He explains in John 6:63 that the words that He speaks are the food we need to grow: "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life." So, spending time with Jesus involves prioritizing time spent in the Scripture. The Scripture comes alive and feeds us as the Holy Spirit convicts us and illuminates the Word in our heart. Not surprisingly the worldly competition is fierce in alluring us to waste this time elsewhere. It is incredibly tempting at times to prioritize online searches for the latest sports score or news headline. However, to thrive we must first feed our spirit. Jeremiah 15:16 says, "Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; for I am called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts."

(ii) Our satisfaction and identity must come from Jesus Christ:

Since society loudly applauds men for their work accomplishments, physical acumen and intellect most men end up placing high priority on flourishing in these areas. In contrast, Scripture prioritizes an intimate walk with the Lord. "Thus says the LORD, 'Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,' declares the LORD." (Jeremiah 9:23-24, NASB). So, if we are to glory in anything it is to glory in

the fact that by the Lord's mercy we are growing into Him! Consider also Psalm 147:10-11: "He [God] does not delight in the strength of the horse; he takes no pleasure in the legs of a man. The LORD takes pleasure in those who fear Him, in those who hope in His mercy." What a contrast to what the culture teaches us.

(iii) If married, we are to love our wives as Jesus Christ loves His church:

Consider Ephesians 5:25-26, 28-29: "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word... So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church." What a lofty calling! We are to love our wives as we love ourselves! On multiple occasions I have despaired within myself as I have seen my shortcomings in this area. It is definitely unattainable without the Lord. We cannot look to ourselves to accomplish this in our own strength. Notice the role of the 'word' here in Ephesians 5. We are first to build up our wives by the living Word. This points us back to our need for being in the Word ourselves. If we see our wife struggling could it be that we are not living out the truth of the Word to her? Elsewhere Scripture says that "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends (John 15:13)." As I put the needs of my wife above my own I will see her flourish. How many marriages amongst believers have been ruined by a man's selfishness? At many times in my marriage I have been convicted of simply carrying out my own agenda for the day without considering the needs of my spouse. Marriage is not simply intended to meet my needs for companionship, sex and a helper within the home. Our marriage is to reflect the love that Christ has for His own body, which is the church (see Ephesians 5:29-32). Understanding the care that the Lord has for us as believers enables us to exemplify this within our marriage.

How does all of this apply to me if I am single? For starters, it is best to ground ourselves in Christ long before marriage. Any man can strengthen the possibility of a future marriage by walking in obedience to Christ while as a single man. A man can love his future wife by building himself up, prior to marriage, in the Word. As a single man, we are also to guard our eyes just as much as a married man. A verse that convicted me while still unmarried is found in Philippians 4:8: "Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things." Use this verse as a spiritual litmus test for assessing the content that you are placing in front of your eyes and dwelling upon within your heart. It is amazing how much 'information' in our life does not satisfy the standard described in Philippians 4:8.

(iv) We are to be the primary example to our children:

Ephesians 6:4 says "And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord." Nowhere in Scripture is someone else given the primary responsibility to raise our children. Raising children is a joyful yet sobering life-long stewardship. Psalm 127:3 says "Behold, children are a heritage [gift] from the LORD, the fruit of the womb is a reward." Also, Malachi 2:15 declares that "He [God] seeks godly offspring." Contrary to what much of our culture believes, children are not a mistake or an impediment to a good life. Yes, raising children for the Lord requires long term commitment and a deep spiritual vision. Raising children for the Lord does not come without a cost to our own self-centered plans. However, since children are eternal beings their impact for the Kingdom of God can have eternal consequences! Children are worth infinitely more than the temporal happiness that fleshly pleasures may give you. In our self-prioritizing culture it should come as no surprise that children are frequently depicted as financial and time burdens. The rampant sin of abortion is one tactic of Satan to attempt to destroy the possibility of children living for their Creator.

As a father I am continually amazed by the number of 'voices' out there clamouring to teach my children in the world's ways. Whether it is news media, social media, the entertainment industry or our own secular school system there are many sources of ungodly information that desire to grab hold of the minds and hearts of our children. Even more importantly than being a financial provider for the household, a dad is supposed to be the spiritual head and spiritual protector within the home. Our homes need to be safe zones from the ways of the world. Living in the age of the internet and wireless media, every home is easily accessible to the world without proper oversight. Beyond that, our speech, hobbies and the things that we run to for fulfillment as fathers are also readily apparent to our children as they grow older. Is our walk pointing them to find fulfillment in Jesus or are we pointing them to be satisfied in the temporary pleasures of the world and culture? Children are quick to discern any hypocrisy and distraction within us. By the Lord's grace, we can live a life that points our children to the Lord.

(v) We are to actively participate in strengthening the spiritual quality of our local church:

Before I lay any responsibility upon the shoulders of men for their local church, I first must point out that, by and large, the typical church life in North America does not follow the Scriptural model. The scope of this article cannot begin to address all that is meant by the preceding statement but let me summarize the current state of things just a little. When we hear the word 'church' today, sadly most people think of only a building. Much time, effort and cost is given to build elaborate and costly 'churches' that are used for only a fraction of the hours that exist in a given week. The success of a local church is often gauged by the curb appeal that the building generates. Further-

more, most churches today are run by a confident and Type A 'senior pastor' under a model that mostly mirrors a business. In medium to large churches, a senior pastor typically has paid helpers (be it an assistant pastor or two, a youth pastor, a worship pastor, etc). Effectively the church life is run by paid staff and most of the church 'members' typically show up only for a brief Sunday morning service to hear the senior pastor exercise his spiritual gift of teaching or preaching. In such meetings the rest of the body does not get to function in their gifts, they merely go home after the service. If the members are asked to function in any capacity on a Sunday morning it is typically to give money in order to support the substantial costs of this hybrid church / business model. This is not the highest model for the church life. The North American church model effectively renders the typical male useless and unneeded (aside from giving money). The Scriptural pattern is for a plurality of spiritually mature elders to provide Godly teaching and discipleship to equip the next generation of believers (see 2 Timothy 2:2 and Ephesians 4:11-14 for starters). There is no room for 'mini popes' or for larger-than-life individuals to run their personal 'ministry' out of ego or show. All men who desire more of the Lord must be able to spiritually function within the parameters of a properly conducted church life. Seek the Lord as to where you may function. Ask your church leadership where they envision you serving according to your gifting. Mature church leaders will not be threatened by such requests but rather highly encouraged! There are many ways that the 'brothers' in a local church can properly function. This can be accomplished by having various men share over the course of the year rather than having every Sunday message coming from one individual. Perhaps you can also function in a small group setting, in out-reach to the community, meeting one on one with others, etc. The options are many. Again, be in prayer and be in fellowship

with church leadership concerning how you can be properly invested in the church life. Our church family lasts for eternity! It is wise to begin living in this reality even now.

(vi) We are to be 'salt and light' in the workplace:

Let me start off by saying that it is no more noble to be in 'full time Christian ministry' than it is to be working in the secular workplace. The key is to be where the Lord desires to plant you! Too many men have felt condemned in their minds because they are supposedly not doing the 'Lord's work' while working in the marketplace. Many men in the pages of Scripture (think of Daniel and Joseph) have been highly used of the Lord in very secular occupations. Even John the Baptist, when talking to Roman soldiers, did not tell them to quit the Roman army. Rather John told them "Do not intimidate anyone or accuse falsely, and be content with your wages." (See Luke 3:14.) Wow, no one would deny that the Roman army could use a godly witness! Other than your own family, your workplace will likely be your most important mission field. In fact you may be the only believer on your shift or in your entire workplace. What an opportunity! Matthew 5:13 says "You are the salt of the earth" and Matthew 5:16 says "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." Simply by having the job that you do, you will have opportunities for the gospel that your pastor will never have! These opportunities are not to be lost or minimized; rather, they are a precious gift from the Lord.





Honouring the Lord with our finances

What are evidences of financial bondage?

Whether through inner struggles with covetousness, small purchases beyond our income, or overwhelming pressure from debts, we've all felt the lure of greed. A person encounters significant difficulties if he places a **greater value on money than he should**. Scripture states, *"For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."* (1 Timothy 6:10).

The following pressures may indicate that we are under financial bondage:

- **Insecurity**

If we build our lives around people, positions, or possessions that can be taken away from us, we feel insecure.

- **Fear**

When we become aware of the possible ways we could lose our most cherished possessions, we become afraid.

- **Anxiety**

Physical and emotional tensions mount when we think about financial problems.

- **Loss of Sleep**

Worry and pressure from financial cares become greater at night and remove the possibility of peaceful sleep.

- **Ungratefulness**

Financial cares and concerns decrease the ability to appreciate or enjoy the benefits that God and others provide for us.

- **Enslavement**

Money and possessions have built-in demands for protection and maintenance. Thus, the things we own soon own us.

- **Envy**

Desiring to have what someone else has is envy. It is the by-product of comparison, robbing us of the ability to enjoy what God has given us.

- **Bitterness**

If we love money and possessions more than we love God, we will be prone to bitterness if what we have is taken or destroyed. When God is our most prized treasure, He can bring about good from the loss of “things” as He builds the character of Christ in our lives. (See Romans 8:28-29.)

- **Disillusionment**

When we attempt to use money to fulfill selfish dreams, we discover that what we thought would bring us joy and lasting fulfillment actually brings unforeseen disappointments and temporary pleasure.

Build Your Life on What Really Matters:

Financial cares and concerns are a natural part of life. Nonetheless, **when our lives are focused on God and His eternal kingdom, we can experience security in Christ.** Eventually, money and temporal things will be taken away, but nothing can ever separate us from God’s love and provision. (See Romans 8:38-39 and John 14:16-17.)

“Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’ So we may boldly say: ‘The Lord is my helper...’” (Hebrews 13:5-6).

Jesus addressed the conflicting interests of love for God and love of money. He said: *“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon [wealth or money]. Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”* (Matthew 6:24-26, 33).

What is financial freedom?

Discover God’s plan for money

True financial freedom involves understanding and applying God’s principles for handling money. God’s Word mentions money more than eight hundred times—God is serious about teaching us the right way to handle money. Be warned: the choice to follow God’s plan for money may require you to reject some financial practices that are widely accepted.

Most importantly, financial freedom is recognizing that **true prosperity comes only from God.** *“It is He [God] who gives you power to get wealth...”* (Deuteronomy 8:18). You must choose to serve God rather than money, because you cannot successfully serve two masters. (See Matthew 6:24.)

To be financially free, you must:

- Understand how financial obligations influence your priorities
- Choose a good name over riches
- Work diligently
- Conquer slothfulness
- Live within your means
- Make wise purchases
- Avoid debt
- Try to get the best buy

As you apply God’s principles, you will experience true freedom.

Freedom to Bring Glory to God

Exchanging eternal riches for the temporary pleasures of wealth only produces more greed. The more you gain, the more you want. When a believer is forced to borrow money to meet his basic needs, God’s reputation is dishonored, because God has promised to supply everything we need. However, if you follow God’s principles of finance, you will bring Him glory as others see His faithful, abundant, and timely provision in your life. (See Philippians 4:19.)

Freedom to Honor the Lord

A commitment to tithe affirms His ownership of all that you possess. In Proverbs 3:9-10, we are instructed, *“Honor the Lord with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase; so your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine.”* The testimony of financial freedom honors the Lord.

Freedom to Give to Others

Money is a gift from God. One of the benefits of financial freedom is the ability to give generously and cheerfully as you see needs in the lives of others. (See 2 Corinthians 9:6–12.) Financial freedom equips you with a plan to fulfill your financial obligations without fear of “not having enough.” (See Luke 14:28 and Proverbs 21:20.) You can even include “gifts to others” in your budget and then be alert to God’s direction to invest in the lives of others as needs arise.

Freedom to Live Peacefully

Provision for every need is a demonstration of God’s power and love. (See Matthew 6:30.) Those who are financially free can avoid the stress and other difficulties that accompany financial pitfalls.

The Apostle Paul warned Timothy, *“But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows”* (1 Timothy 6:9-10). We, too, must heed these warnings.

Freedom to Focus on Family Priorities

When a financial crisis occurs, family priorities often take a back seat. Working late hours, overtime, and the demands of taking on a second or third job add unwelcome pressures to the family as relationships suffer from lack of attention. However, families who maintain financial freedom can avoid those pressures and invest in their relationships instead of mainly focusing on ways to pay the bills.

As you study God’s Word, be attentive to His guidelines for financial freedom. Do not put your trust in riches, but *“trust ... in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy”* (1 Timothy 6:17).

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GREG'S TESTIMONY

I was born in Churchill, Manitoba. My earliest memories are polar bears and mosquitoes. Because my dad worked for the federal government, we moved several times growing up. We finally settled in Winnipeg, Manitoba where I graduated from high school, went to university to study engineering, married, and eventually began a family.

My children soon became a problem for me but not in the way that you might think. I loved them, yes, but while I read them bedtime stories I would think...What's the point of this life? What's the point of loving them? Everything seemed meaningless—we're all going to die eventually, anyway. I didn't have any satisfactory answers, so I went to parties and tried to stop thinking about the future.

One summer, a co-worker surprised me by bringing a Bible to work. "Why would an educated man need this book of fiction?" I thought. Sure, I had attended church meetings during my childhood, but if there was a god, I didn't need one anyway. My co-worker would open his Bible at lunch time and we would talk. I began to see how the Bible was relevant to me. I began to read the Bible for myself, for the first time. I had thought I heard all about it in church. I was amazed to find that the Bible was all about eternal life.

I finally realized, if there was a god, this was definitely His book. However, I still did not believe. About this time, I needed to go on a business trip to Ottawa, Ontario. To make the trip more special I decided to bring my family and drive together. However, on the trip I began to have anxiety attacks. Fear overwhelmed me. I became physically sick and could not think of anything to give me peace. Despairing thoughts tormented me.

I tried to persuade my wife to take me to a psychiatric hospital, but she would not.

Finally, I called a church. The pastor invited me to visit him. Instead of psycho-analyzing me, he read Romans 3:23 from the Bible, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Then he read Romans 6:23, "For the wages (payment) of sin is death." That was exactly what was paralyzing me inside.

When he read the solution from John 3:16, "Whoever believes in Him (Jesus) should not perish but have everlasting life", I was given faith to believe. I turned from my sins and put my trust in Jesus who had paid the penalty for my sins. Now I could receive Him into my heart and have eternal life. A great peace flooded over me as I turned my life over to Jesus. I believe that God helped me by letting me have a little glimpse of hell, which the Bible describes as a place of eternal torment. I would not want anyone to go there.

When my wife saw what God had done, she also turned from her sins and received Jesus as her Saviour. Together we have now raised six children, and are thankful for our 15 grandchildren and counting. It has been my joy to pursue the Lord and serve Him wherever He leads!

[Greg Stetski is currently the director of Bible for Children which provides free, online Bible stories for children in over 200 languages. You can visit their website at www.bibleforchildren.org]

George Washington Carver

Overcoming Obstacles

The life of George Washington Carver exemplifies the kind of eternal, spiritual fruit that can be borne from forgiveness and a childlike faith in God. Born into slavery in Missouri during the 1860s, George Washington Carver had a childhood to which few of us could relate. While only a week old, he, a sister and his mother were kidnapped from his slave owner by raiders. Despite George eventually being safely returned to his slave owner, the eventual whereabouts of his mother and sister were never determined.

Teaching slaves to read and write was practically forbidden in the 19th century but the abolition of slavery in the United States afforded young George new opportunities. Although black children in his home town of Diamond Grove, Missouri were still not allowed to attend public school in the 1870s George was able to walk from his hometown to Neosha, Missouri (approximately a 15 km walk) to attend the Lincoln School for Coloured Children. The evening that George arrived in town he found the school closed for the night and history records



that he slept that night in a nearby barn. A kind woman, Mariah Watkins, had noticed George's predicament shortly thereafter and offered George a room to rent. Mariah also eventually gave George something eternally precious; his own Bible, for when he learned to read.

Despite the rampant segregation at the time, George was eventually able to finish high school having supported himself doing odd jobs. After applying at several colleges, George was accepted via letter at Highland University in Highland, Kansas. When he arrived for classes in the fall he was abruptly turned away by the dean of the university when the dean discovered that George was black. Despite the apparent set back, the Lord used this time for good in George's life. George subsequently tried his hand at farming on a homestead where he planted a variety of produce and trees. It is likely that this season of life fueled George's eventual passion for botany. The Lord was still working.

George eventually settled for horticultural training at the Iowa State College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts (now Iowa State University) in 1891. However, the lingering effects of racism still loomed large over George in Iowa. He was banned from eating in the student dining room due to being black. He took this persecution peacefully and without public complaint. The university saw it fit to treat George better when a prominent white woman, and an admirer of George's paintings, would intentionally eat with George in the campus kitchen. In 1896 George graduated with a master of science degree and was offered a faculty position. This would make him the first black faculty member at Iowa State. However, remembering the words of Mariah Watkins to "Give your learnin' back to your people" George instead accepted an offer from Booker T. Washington at Tuskegee Institute (now Tuskegee University) in Alabama to head its Agriculture Department. In Booker T. Washington's letter of invitation, he had written to George that "I cannot offer you money, position, or fame. I offer you in their place work. Hard, hard, work; the task of bringing a people from degradation, poverty and waste to full personhood." George's new direction was to teach southern black people more productive, and self-sufficient, ways to farm; this would be a mandate that George fulfilled over the next, almost half century.

Setting up a laboratory at the financially strapped Tuskegee Institute required a man as resourceful and intentional as George. Having little to no funds to make use of, George took his first students to the school dump where they collected any-



thing from pots and lids to curtain rods and rubber and repurposed them into beakers, strainers and Bunsen burners. George's lab research found immediate application. The soil in the southern USA had been depleted of minerals due to decades of continuous cotton plantings. George encouraged area farmers to practice systematic crop rotation thereby allowing essential nutrients, such as nitrogen, to be replenished in the soil. Plantings now became much more diverse. Crops such as peanuts, soybeans and sweet potatoes were offered as a useful alternative to cotton. The alternative cash crops and improved cotton yields assisted many black farmers in becoming financially independent. All told, George's diligent research culminated in over 300 promoted uses for the lowly peanut and over 100 products from sweet potatoes.

George Washington Carver's reputation as a creative scientist and a man of grace was further cemented toward the end of his life. On his many speaking engagements George spoke of much more than science. He often remarked on issues

such as character and the need for the Lord to be glorified by our lives and choices. Some remarks attributed to George include: "We have become 99 percent money mad. The method of living at home modestly and within our income, laying a little by systematically for the proverbial rainy day which is due to come, can almost be listed among the lost arts." "God cannot use you as He wishes until you come into the fullness of His Glory. Do not get alarmed, my friend, when doubts creep in. That is old Satan. Pray, pray, pray." "Ninety-nine percent of the failures come from people who have the habit of making excuses."

George died in January, 1943, from complications arising from falling down a set of stairs. In his estate he had saved nearly \$60,000 USD which was used to establish the George Washington Carver Foundation. After his death, President Roosevelt passed legislation declaring George's birthplace a national monument. Up until that time, only past presidents (George Washington and Abraham Lincoln) had been afforded that honor. George's favourite Bible passage is a fitting reminder where his true hope lay:

Psalm 121:1-2 "I will lift up my eyes to the hills—from whence comes my help? My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth."

The following article was first published in 1960 by Theodore Austin-Sparks (1888-1971) who was a British pastor, evangelist and author. This dear brother in the Lord had deep insights concerning God's eternal purpose as revealed through Scripture. Because of this, Mr. Austin-Sparks' writings often focused upon the person and pre-eminence of Jesus Christ and the value of His body, the church.

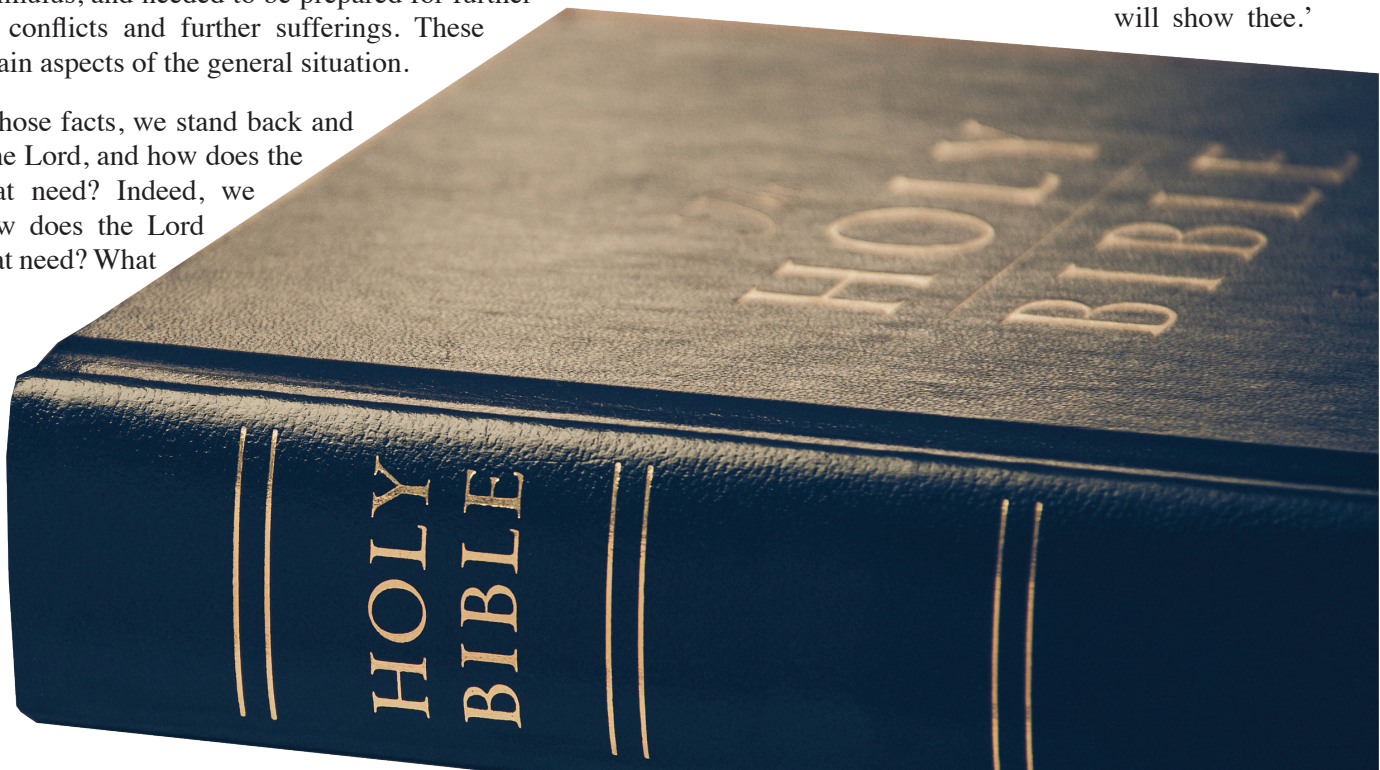
THE Unveiling OF JESUS CHRIST

At the beginning of the book of the Revelation, we find, on the one hand, a situation of spiritual loss and failure, weakness, and many other conditions and features which even the Lord Himself, in all His grace, has to deplore. Through His servant John He sends a series of letters to seven representative churches, aimed at securing the renewing of the life of His people, and the restoring of those primary and primal values of their beginnings. Then, it was a situation of many difficulties - sufferings and trials and adversities from various quarters and of various kinds. The Christians at that time were both actually in a time of much adversity and were moving yet more deeply into suffering. To one of these churches the Lord said that they were about to suffer, they were about to be cast into prison; they were going to have tribulation for a specified time (Revelation 2:10). It was a time when Christians both actually needed real help and stimulus, and needed to be prepared for further battles, further conflicts and further sufferings. These were the two main aspects of the general situation.

In the light of those facts, we stand back and ask: How did the Lord, and how does the Lord, meet that need? Indeed, we might say: How does the Lord ever meet a great need? What

is that which alone will supply the need, and be the key to the problem, the answer to the demand, and the assured ground, both of recovery and renewal, and of fortification for the suffering? And the answer has ever been, and always is: A new revelation - an unveiling - of the greatness of Jesus Christ. That is the very platform, we might say, upon which and from which the Lord moves into these situations, and into all the situations that follow in this book. He prefaces everything with this fresh revelation or unveiling of His own personal greatness.

That has ever been the way. Abraham was called upon to take tremendous decisions, to make immense sacrifices. In his native country and city, with its marvellous and rich civilisation, he had a very full life indeed; and, without assurance that his movement would be justified, he was called upon to move under sealed orders. 'Get thee out... unto a land which I will show thee.'



'I will show... when you get there!' It was a tremendous move, very costly, and very testing. But if you have wondered how it was that Abraham went through, met all the tests, and at last survived, you have, I think, the answer in these words: "The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia" (Acts 7:2). If ever that happens, you have got something to move on; you have got a background; you have something that will again and again come to your rescue in a time of difficulty.

Moses was called upon to undertake a tremendous responsibility. We know the whole story now. Moses was not altogether ignorant of what he had to face, in Egypt and afterward; and we may wonder sometimes how he kept to the course and got through. But we know that he met God 'face to face'; it could be said equally that 'the God of glory appeared' to him. Reference is made several times in the Bible to that encounter with God in the bush. And we are told that "he endured, as seeing him who is invisible" (Hebrews 11:27). That was the secret of his sustenance.

Joshua was called as a young man to face very great responsibilities and undertakings, in the ridding and clearing of that country of those ten kingdoms, getting that people in - such a people - he knew them! - to possess the land, and all that was bound up with it. And no wonder the Lord had to repeat one word to Joshua continually, to get him on the move. 'Be of good courage'; 'be strong and of good courage'; 'only be of good courage... only be strong' (Joshua 1:6,7,9). How did the Lord give to Joshua the basis? He 'lifted up his eyes' and saw the 'Captain of the host of the Lord' (Joshua 5:13,14). From that time it was all right; he could go on and go through.

Isaiah was a young man in a very, very difficult day, one of those very cloudy days in Israel's history. He was taking up his great prophetic ministry in the face of great difficulties and threatening problems. How did he get through? 'I saw the Lord, high and lifted up', he said (Isaiah 6:1). That is the answer.

Think of Paul - did ever a man have to face greater difficulties, oppositions and antagonisms and sufferings and perils, more than that man? How did he get through? He saw the Lord, or the Lord appeared to him. He saw the greatness of Jesus Christ.

Stephen triumphed as he saw 'the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God' (Acts 7:56). So we could go on. Some thirty years later, the Lord's people had come to a point where there was going to be a devastating blow struck at their corporate life. It was just on the point of that final siege of Jerusalem, when everything was going to be shattered and scattered; a great earth-shaking was about to take place; all that the Lord Jesus Himself had foreshadowed, '...not one stone left upon another...', and all those other terrible things, were all about to take place within a very little time. How were the believers going to get through?

The Lord took up a man - we do not know now exactly who it was; some say one and some say another - but He took up a man to write what we call 'The Letter to the Hebrews', and he begins with an almost matchless unveiling of the greatness of Jesus Christ! The Lord was saying through that letter: If only you can get that as your foundation, you will go through it all. You will not go back as you are being tempted to do, as perhaps you are contemplating doing. If only you see how great your Lord is, you will go on. So He laid the foundation for survival of faith - for that is the issue; you know how it all comes up in the eleventh chapter - the survival of faith, on the ground of an apprehension of the greatness of Christ.

And then we come to this book of the Revelation, and again we are in the presence of these things: on the one side, spiritual declension, failure, breakdown, loss; on the other side, suffering, growing suffering, terrible afflictions for the Church. How will the one be remedied and recovery take place? What is the key to a renewing of spiritual life when it has reached a low ebb? How shall they go on through the tribulation and the tribulations, and come out in victory in the City of God? The Lord's only answer, His one answer, which has always been successful, and is the only one which will be successful in any situation of need, is a new unveiling of the greatness of the Lord Jesus.

But oh, these are but words! When we have said these things - and we would all agree that they are true - we are still so helpless, because it is the thing that matters - not talking about it! If only, by the Holy Spirit - and there is no other way, no other means - we could catch a new glimpse of His greatness, how many problems that would solve, questions that would answer, needs that would meet! How overwhelming it would be! - and when I say 'overwhelming', I mean, how much would be overwhelmed! A mighty tidal wave, making all these rocks, upon which we threaten to founder, as nothing; they are sunk beneath it, disappear from view.

Now that is not just language. Look - who is writing this? It is the apostle John. The apostle John? Yes, that man who walked with Jesus of Nazareth, listened to Him, watched Him at work, and, at supper, and at other times, sat next to Him, and put his head upon His shoulder - the most familiar picture of a man alongside of a man, in close, devoted, affectionate association. John always called himself 'the disciple whom Jesus loved': it showed that there was a sacred, holy familiarity between John and Jesus, marked by very human terms and language.

Yet that same man said: 'When I saw Him I fell, as one dead.' It is the same Jesus, and the same man; but - 'I fell to the ground as one dead.' And if that One had not, in His great mercy, come and laid His hand upon him, saying, 'Fear not, John: I am the first and the last; I am the Living One', John would have been there as a dead man. It was the same Jesus - but look at the transition from the 'Jesus of history' to the Christ of glory! That is the difference. From the John of the Gospels to the John of the Revelation it is a marvellous and mighty movement! He

never felt like that when he walked with Jesus, devoted as he was. With his fullest consciousness of who Jesus was, he was at most perhaps sometimes awestruck and awe-inspired. It was not until he saw Him glorified that he went down, helplessly prostrate, like a dead man. It was a great transition from the Jesus of history to the Christ of glory.

Now, I take nothing whatever from the values and blessings of the Gospels, when I say that I am sometimes afraid that we may dwell too much upon the Jesus of history, and fail to remember that the men who wrote those four Gospels wrote them long after Jesus was glorified. You notice, they did not, at some point toward the end of His life, when they perhaps began to sense that He would not be with them much longer, get away and decide to write the story of that life - of His birth, and His manhood, and His teaching, and His miracles - as a mere human, earthly story. When they wrote, they had all the mighty facts and realities of His resurrection, ascension and heavenly glory, which they were seeking to crowd into that story of His life here, as those who would say: 'That One was This One! That was not just Jesus of Nazareth - that was the mighty Son of God from Heaven!' They were crowding every incident with the fullest apprehension that they had of the glorified Christ - Christ, who was now there at the right hand of God! They were not just writing a human story.

That is the only way in which to preach the Gospel from the Gospels. Do you notice, when after His ascension and His glorification they preached or they wrote, how little, how remotely little, they ever said about the three-and-a-half years? - just a fragment here and there. They said very little about His teaching and His miracles and His walk about Palestine. They were all occupied with this One who had been 'crowned with glory and honour' - that was their message. Yes, there was that other One - Jesus of Nazareth, 'who went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed with the devil' - a sort of passing reference to that earthly phase, a summary... 'But God raised Him'! God honoured Him, this One! It will not get us very far just to be occupied with the incidents of His earthly life, however precious they are. If we are going on and going through, we need an apprehension of that fulness of glory that is His now - the greatness of Christ.

It is, indeed, just because men have robbed or stripped Him of His essential greatness, that we find, down the centuries, the deplorable conditions that have obtained. Our 'liberal' theologians have stripped Him of His Deity; with what result? Oh, devastating results in the impact of Christ upon this earth! They have made Him a lesser Christ than He is. The philosophers have just made Him one in their gallery of great and wise men. It was against that tendency even with the Christians in Corinth that Paul raged in his first letter - taking something from the Lord Jesus, and just putting Him amongst other great men. The gnostics of Colossae - what were they doing? They had a theory of angelic ranks and orders, from the highest order of angelic beings down to the lowest subordinate; and they put Jesus, per-

haps at the top, but as nothing more than an 'angelic being', robbing Him of His essential Person. He is Very God!

The 'comparative religionists', all along and in our own day, are saying, Well, there are great founders of religions - there is Buddha, and Confucius, and Mohammed, and Jesus... and so on. You see the subtlety? - a comparative, not an absolutely Supreme and unique! And then there are the humanists of our time, inflating and glorifying man and humanity to such a point that, after all, humanity will be deified one day, will reach God-head - and Jesus is only, after all, the Super-Man! So it goes on, and it is all these things, this Satanic work, to reduce the size of Christ, to make Him less than He is, that has done so much mischief. If we lose, or fail to have, the essential greatness of Christ in our consciousness, ours is going to be a lesser spiritual life than it could be, and we shall break down under the stress and the strain of adversity. The only thing for every need is the recovery of His greatness.

Now here He is presented in the Revelation, and He is not presented in the language of Deity, although it runs very close. At some points, you cannot distinguish between the humanity and the deity. You do not know whether John is speaking of God or of Christ at certain points. The fact is, he is speaking of the One who is both. But the title, as we have already seen, by which He is presented in this matchless, incomparable unveiling, is 'Son of man'. Let us now consider the personal greatness of the Son of Man, who is, at the same time, Son of God, Very God.

We have referred to the Letter to the Hebrews, and we call it in now for our help in this matter. We read from it, and we begin with this "*effulgence of his glory*", and then we read: "*Whom he appointed heir of all things*" - appointed heir of all things! - "*through whom... he made the ages...*" and so on. "*But one hath somewhere testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou ... didst set him over the works of thy hands: thou didst put all things in subjection under his feet... We see not yet all things subjected to him. But we behold him who hath been made for a little while lower than the angels, even Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour, that by the grace of God he might taste death for every man.*"

Here is the Son of Man in *His own personal greatness*. See who He is: 'the effulgence...', 'the express image...' See His appointment: 'heir of all things'. See His instrumentality and agency: 'through whom the ages were made'. The Son of Man - how great this One is! You would not think that, when you see Him walking about Palestine - not all that! You do not recognise Him. But that same One is now here before John, with these devastating effects; that same One, now revealed, unveiled, as to what He is essentially in His Person; who He is; what position He holds. He is here as the Heir of all things come for His inheritance. And the rest of the book sees Him working it out - the securing of that inheritance of which He is the Heir, and, in the end, of a 'new heaven and a new earth'.

What a glorious inheritance comes into view in the last chapters of this book! This is the Son of Man; this is His greatness! But we are completely defeated at any attempt at a true, not exaggerated, unveiling of Jesus Christ. There is His personal greatness.

But as Son of Man, we have, in that very title, *His representative greatness*. To borrow again from the Letter to the Hebrews, where first He is appointed Heir of all things, then He is the 'Captain of their salvation', 'bringing many sons to glory'. The word 'captain' there would be better translated the 'Pioneer' of their salvation - the One who goes before to lead them into that into which He Himself has entered. Of course, that is the substance of this Letter to the Hebrews. He has gone before; He has entered into the heavens; He has "passed through the heavens"; He has gone the whole way, and reached the end, as the Pioneer of the many sons being brought to glory, whom He calls His 'brethren'. His representative greatness, as there at the end, in fulness, in glory - for there He represents all those whom He is going to bring and is bringing - how great it is! We read in the Revelation of a 'great multitude which no man can number out of every tribe and kindred and tongue... thousands... ten thousands of thousands...' Language is taxed to breaking point to describe the fruit of the sufferings of the Lamb!

And He is the Representative in glory of them all. How great is His Person and His representation!

And then, *His official greatness*. That is seen through this book of the Revelation, and again in the Letter to the Hebrews. His official greatness, as High Priest - what a great High Priest He is, as according to that book; what a tremendous thing He does! Think of it: through century after century, sacrifices of lambs, and goats, and bulls and other things - blood enough to fill an ocean - all through the centuries, day after day, and never reaching an end in effectiveness where sin was concerned: but *He*, One Offering - only one! - went far beyond the millions of sacrifices on Jewish altars. How great was His sacrifice, and His priesthood, as He offered Himself without spot to God, once for all.

And here, in this book, as the other side of His official greatness, we have His description as 'King of kings, and Lord of lords'! What a thing to say, in a day when that tyrant at Rome was dominating the world, assuming lordship over all lordships, and seeking to subject to himself every power, not only in earth, but in heaven, since he claimed deity. In *that* day, the unveiling of Jesus Christ is 'King of kings' - yes, and Nero amongst them! - 'and Lord of lords'.

To sum up: I believe we would have very much better converts if they were presented with a very much greater Christ. To anyone who does not know in their own life and experience salvation in Jesus Christ, what it really means to be born again - to be really a 'child of God', and *to know it* - to be able to join in heartily with this apostle John when he said, 'Beloved, now are we the children of God... Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God, and such we are!' - to any such I would say this. While Jesus would be your Saviour, the Forgiver of your sins, and many other things to you, He is far, far greater than anything you can imagine. Salvation takes its greatness from the measure of the Saviour. If you want a great salvation, see what a great Saviour He is. And remember that because of what He is, you need have no fears in putting your trust in Him; you need not fear that you may not be able to 'keep it up'! No, you won't, but He will; He will be able to keep you up - He is great enough! We need an unveiling of the greatness of Jesus Christ, to get a better kind of Christian.



For the recovery from our spiritual losses and declensions and failures, and deliverance from all these things which are so abhorrent to us and to Him, there is only one way, and that is, really to see His greatness. If we do that, we cannot live on a 'little' level. I recently went to the Planetarium in London.

The thing that was with me, while listening to the lecture, and afterward, was, how ever can anyone be 'little' when they are dealing with these things all the time! I suppose it is possible even for a Fellow of the Astronomical Society to be a 'little' man in character (I am not implying this about this man, but it is possible!) But it is not possible to have a revelation of the greatness of Jesus Christ and remain a little person! Oh, for our enlargement, our ennoblement, our deliverance from our pettinesses, and all this which is so despicable! What is the answer? A new grasp of His greatness - that is all!

And then, if we are suffering; if we are knowing adversity and trial; if the clouds seem to be gathering, and increasing, how will we get through? Only by getting away, and asking, seeking, pursuing in prayer a new heart revelation, a new unveiling, of Jesus Christ, and that will surely do it.

First published in "A Witness and A Testimony" magazine, January-February 1960, Vol 38-1 by Theodore Austin-Sparks.

An Ounce of Prevention is Worth a Pound of Cure

The poem below is a good reminder that ‘an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure’. How much more so in our walk before the Lord? Although forgiveness from the Lord is always available to a repentant heart, our desire should be to honor the Lord everyday in our decision making and in our conversations with others. It is better to suffer for doing what is right before the Lord than to simply be suffering for our mistakes and poor choices. 1 Peter 2:20 says “For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God.”





A Fence or an Ambulance

(by Joseph Malins, 1895)

'Twas a dangerous cliff, as they freely confessed,
Though to walk near its crest was so pleasant;
But over its terrible edge there had slipped
A duke and full many a peasant.
So the people said something would have to be done,
But their projects did not at all tally;
Some said, "Put a fence 'round the edge of the cliff,"
Some, "An ambulance down in the valley."

But the cry for the ambulance carried the day,
For it spread through the neighboring city;
A fence may be useful or not, it is true,
But each heart became full of pity
For those who slipped over the dangerous cliff;
And the dwellers in highway and alley
Gave pounds and gave pence, not to put up a fence,
But an ambulance down in the valley.

"For the cliff is all right, if you're careful," they said,
"And, if folks even slip and are dropping,
It isn't the slipping that hurts them so much
As the shock down below when they're stopping."
So day after day, as these mishaps occurred,
Quick forth would those rescuers sally
To pick up the victims who fell off the cliff,
With their ambulance down in the valley.

Then an old sage remarked: "It's a marvel to me
That people give far more attention
To repairing results than to stopping the cause,
When they'd much better aim at prevention.
Let us stop at its source all this mischief," cried he,
"Come, neighbors and friends, let us rally;
If the cliff we will fence, we might almost dispense
With the ambulance down in the valley."

Better guide well the young than reclaim them when old,
For the voice of true wisdom is calling.
"To rescue the fallen is good, but 'tis best
To prevent other people from falling."
Better close up the source of temptation and crime
Than deliver from dungeon or galley;
Better put a strong fence 'round the top of the cliff
Than an ambulance down in the valley.

How to Ascertain the WILL OF GOD

" I seek at the beginning to get my heart into such a state that it has no will of its own in regard to a given matter. Nine-tenths of the trouble with people generally is just here. Nine-tenths of the difficulties are overcome when our hearts are ready to do the Lord's will, whatever it may be. When one is truly in this state, it is usually but a little way to the knowledge of what His will is. 2. Having done this, I do not leave the result to feeling or simple impression. If so, I make myself liable to great delusions. 3. I seek the will of the Spirit of God through, or in connection with, the Word of God. The Spirit and the Word must be combined. If I look to the Spirit alone without the Word, I lay myself open to great

delusions also. If the Holy Ghost guides us at all, He will do it according to the Scriptures and never contrary to them. 4. Next I take into account providential circumstances. These often plainly indicate God's will in connection with His Word and Spirit. 5. I ask God in prayer to reveal His will to me aright. 6. Thus, through prayer to God, the study of the Word, and reflection, I come to a deliberate judgment according to the best of my ability and knowledge, and if my mind is thus at peace, and continues so after two or three more petitions, I proceed accordingly. In trivial matters, and in transactions involving most important issues, I have found this method always effective. "

- George Müller, Answers to Prayer

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Menbuilders is published periodically, as the Lord directs, by Faith Church of Winnipeg.

The companion website may be found at www.menbuilders.ca

Requests for additional paper copies and other comments can be emailed to the Editor at editor@menbuilders.ca

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In every season of our lives, He is faithful