

Greetings.

I suspect that some of you may be feeling rather like the inhabitants of Jericho at the time described in the first verse of Joshua chapter 6. For then the whole city was in lockdown: 'None went out, and none came in'.

Hopefully this week's email will help take your mind off any present depressing circumstances!

Yours in our Lord Jesus,

Malcolm

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### (i) Scripture.

This I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment; so that ye may approve the things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and void of offence unto the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are through Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

*Philippians 1. 9-11 Revised Version*

### (ii) Food for thought.

#### **John 17. 1, 4.**

'In the Synoptic Gospels ... the cross represents ... a forsaking of the Son. But not in John's Gospel. John gives us a unique angle on the cross. In John's Gospel, **the glorification of the Son begins with the cross**, not with the resurrection or ascension ... When the Son is lifted up on the cross, He will reflect to the universe the Father's glory. And the Father's glory will shine in and through the Son. So much so that it is in and through this cultural icon of disgrace — the cross; what no author in the first century celebrated; a form of death so hideous, no poet wrote about it — that will be the chosen location for God to showcase His majesty'.

(Tony Reinke, 'Glory-Finding in the Gospel of John'.)

#### **Ephesians 2. 8.**

'Mr. M'Laren and Mr. Gustard were both ministers of the Tolbooth Church, Edinburgh. When Mr. M'Laren was dying, Mr. Gustard paid him a visit, and put the question to him, "What are you doing, brother?" His answer was, "I'll tell you what I am doing, brother; I am gathering together all my prayers, all my sermons, all my good deeds, all my ill deeds; and I am going to throw them all overboard, and swim to glory on **the plank of free grace**".

Henry Pickering, '1000 Tales Worth Telling', page 217.

#### **'Never'.**

Two things in the Epistle to the Hebrews which can 'never' happen:

(i) 'Every priest stands daily ministering and offering often the same sacrifices, which can **never take away sins**' (Heb. 10. 11).

(ii) 'He has said, "I will **never leave you** nor forsake you"' (Heb. 13. 5).

#### **The Lord's presence.**

The words of the first verse of the first chapter of 2 Chronicles echo the words of the last verse of the last chapter. It is said of Solomon, in days of greatness and glory, that **'the Lord his God was with him'** (2 Chron. 1. 1). But then it is said, in days of weakness and small things, **'the Lord his God be with him'** (2 Chron. 36. 23). It is as if the Holy Spirit wishes to encourage God's people with the assurance that, whether they live in days of greatness or in days of weakness, God is always with them.

#### **1 Corinthians 6.**

The believer was **bought** by Jesus in the past (verse 20).

The believer is **indwelt** by the Spirit in the present (verse 19).

The believer will be **raised** by God in the future (verse 14).

#### **'Surely'.**

The Bible begins with a certainty and it ends with a certainty.

In His first recorded utterance to man, the Lord said, 'In the day that you eat of it you shall **surely** die' (Gen. 2. 17).

In His last recorded utterance to man, the Lord said, '**Surely** I come quickly' (Rev. 22. 20).

### **'Where?'**

The first question posed to a man in the *Old Testament*, **'Where are you?'** (Gen. 3. 9), enquired concerning the whereabouts of 'the first man', then fallen in sin (Gen. 3. 6).

The first question posed by men in the *New Testament*, **'Where is He?'** (Matt. 2. 2), enquired concerning the whereabouts of 'the second man', then come to put away sin (Heb. 9. 26).

### **1 Thessalonians 4. 17; Matthew 25. 21, 23; 2 Timothy 4. 8.**

'After World War II there was a sign on the shore of New York harbour facing all incoming troop ships, which read: "WELCOME HOME. WELL DONE". [See the attached 'Welcome home. Well done' picture.]

When the Lord Jesus Christ appears in the air, He is going to "WELCOME HOME" every saint ... Our entrance into heaven is solely on the basis of our faith in His shed blood and death on the cross, and every believer shall receive the same "WELCOME HOME".

But, how many of us will receive His "WELL DONE" and the "crown of righteousness"?

Virgil Hurley, *'Speaker's Sourcebook of New Illustrations'*.

### **God's word.**

God's word is spoken of as:

(i) A lamp (Psa. 119. 105);

(ii) A hammer, and a fire (Jer. 23. 29);

(iii) A sword (Heb. 4. 12); and

(iv) A mirror (James 1. 22).

It supplies (v) cleansing (Psa. 119. 9), and (vi) sustenance (1 Pet. 2. 2).

Don't neglect it today!

### **'My eyes'.**

'I have made a covenant with *my eyes*; how then could I gaze at a virgin?' (Job 31. 1; cf. Matt. 5. 28).

'I will not set before *my eyes* anything that is worthless' (Psa. 101. 3; cf. Psa. 119. 37).

'He who ... shuts *his eyes* from looking on evil, he shall dwell on high (Isa. 33. 15-16; cf. v. 5).

The children's song has it right: 'O be careful little eyes what you see!'

Resolve with David today, 'I will meditate on your precepts and fix *my eyes* on your ways' (Psa. 119. 15).

### **Prayer.**

(i) 'Thus says the high and lofty One that inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit' (Isa. 57. 15).

'Here is a wonder! God is on high; and yet the higher a man lifts himself up, the farther he is from God; **and the lower a man humbles himself, the nearer he is to God**'.

Thomas Brooks, quoted in Ritzema & Vince, *'300 Quotations for Preachers from the Puritans'*.

(ii) 'To desire that God would answer all our prayers is to desire **omnipotence without omniscience**'.

A. H. Strong, *'Systematic Theology'*, page 216.

(iii) 'This is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He hears us' (1 John 5. 14).

'One of the greatest lessons I've learned about prayer is this: **the prayer that gets to Heaven is the prayer that starts in Heaven**. Prayer is the Holy Spirit finding a desire in the heart of the Father, putting that desire in our heart, then sending it back to Heaven in the power of the cross ... Our part is just to close the circuit'.

Adrian Rogers, *'Prayer and the will of God'*.

(iv) 'Tobiah the Ammonite...said, "Whatever they build, if even a fox goes up on it, he will break down their stone wall". Hear, O our God, for we are despired ... So we built the wall' (Neh. 4. 3-6).

'Take time to **pray about things as they come up**. Years ago as a preacher I found it impossible to remember all the requests for prayer that would come to me in a day's time so as to pray for them when in bed or the next morning. So I formed a habit of stopping to pray about every case about which I was impressed that I ought to pray, at the time it was mentioned ... I have found a great peace in going to God with every burden the moment I feel the need for prayer about it'.

John R. Rice, *'Prayer: Asking and Receiving'*, page 281.

(v) 'We cannot all be leaders, but we can all be **pleaders**'.

C. H. Spurgeon, *'An All-Round Ministry'*, page 314.

(vi) 'You also **helping** together by prayer for us' (2 Cor. 1. 11).

The expression, 'helping together', translates a word which carries the idea of 'working under and alongside'. Paul paints a verbal picture here of someone labouring under some great burden, when

others come underneath alongside to share the toil and the load with him or her. And they achieve this, Paul insists, by prayer.

What a thought ... that my prayer today can actually lift the heavy weight off somebody else's shoulder!

(vii) 'The one concern of **the devil** is to keep the saints from prayer. He fears nothing from prayer-less studies, prayer-less work, prayer-less religion. He laughs at our toil, mocks at our wisdom, but trembles when we pray'. Attributed to Samuel Chadwick.

But the devil isn't likely to tremble at public prayers offered simply to impress human listeners!

(viii) 'The angel fetched Peter out of prison, but it was **prayer fetched the angel**' (Acts 12. 5-7). Thomas Watson, '*A Divine Cordial - The best things work for good to the godly*', number 8.

(ix) 'How hard it is sometimes to get the consent of our hearts to seek God! **Jesus Christ went more willingly to the cross than we do to the throne of grace**'.

Thomas Watson. '*Heaven Taken by Storm*', Kindle Locations 166-167. (For 'the throne of grace', see the attached notes.)

**Detailed notes.** [See the attached Word document, 'Hebrews 4. 14-16'](#).

And, separately, see the attached 'Prayer versus sin' picture. (The quote is taken from '*The works of that eminent servant of Christ, John Bunyan, minister of the gospel*', published by Bradley and Co. in 1871, page 80 'John Bunyan's Dying Sayings'.)

**(iii) Go on, smile.**

**Happy families.**

Nicholas had proposed to young Gina and was now being interviewed by his prospective father-in-law.

'Do you really think that you are earning enough to support a family?' the older man asked.

'Yes, sir', Nicholas replied, 'I'm sure I am'.

'Now think carefully', said Gina's father, '*There are twelve of us ...!*'

One day, two ladies met up who had not seen each other for many years. They spent their time together catching up on what had happened to them since they last met.

'I got married', said the one.

'*That is good*', said the other.

'Oh, it wasn't *that* good', said the first ... 'He was very ugly'.

'*That is bad*', said the second.

'Oh, it wasn't *that* bad', said the first ... 'He was very rich'.

'*That is good*', said the other.

'Oh, it wasn't *that* good', said the first ... 'He was very mean'.

'*That is bad*', said the second.

'Oh, it wasn't *that* bad', said the first ... 'He bought us a beautiful big mansion'.

'*That is good*', said the other.

'Oh, it wasn't *that* good', said the first ... 'After only a few months, the mansion was burnt down to the ground'.

'*That is bad*', said the second.

'Oh, it wasn't *that* bad', said the first ... '*He was asleep in it at the time*'.

A married Jew went to see his Rabbi. 'Rabbi, something terrible is happening to me, and I need your help', he pleaded.

'But whatever is wrong, Caleb?' the Rabbi asked,

'I am afraid of my wife, Miriam', Caleb replied, 'I'm sure she is going to poison me'.

Shocked, the Rabbi questioned, 'Are you sure?'

'I'm telling you', Caleb insisted, 'I'm absolutely certain she's going to poison me. Whatever can I do?'

'I'll tell you what. Let me talk to her', the Rabbi kindly offered, 'I'll see what I can find out, and I'll let you know'.

A week later, the Rabbi got in touch with Caleb. 'I was on the phone to your wife for three hours', he told him.

'So', Caleb interrupted, 'what's your advice?'

'Well', the Rabbi replied, 'if I were you ... *I'd take the poison!*'

A couple had been married for 25 years and were also celebrating their 60th birthdays. During the celebration a fairy appeared, and said that because they had been such a loving couple for all those years, she would give them one wish each.

The wife wanted to travel around the world. The fairy waved her wand, and boom! The wife had the tickets in her hand.

Then it was the husband's turn. He paused for a moment, then said boldly, 'Well, I'd really like to have a wife 30 years younger than me'.

The fairy picked up her wand, and boom! *He was 90.*

A young Welsh boy came home from school to tell his mother that he had been chosen for a part in the forthcoming school play.

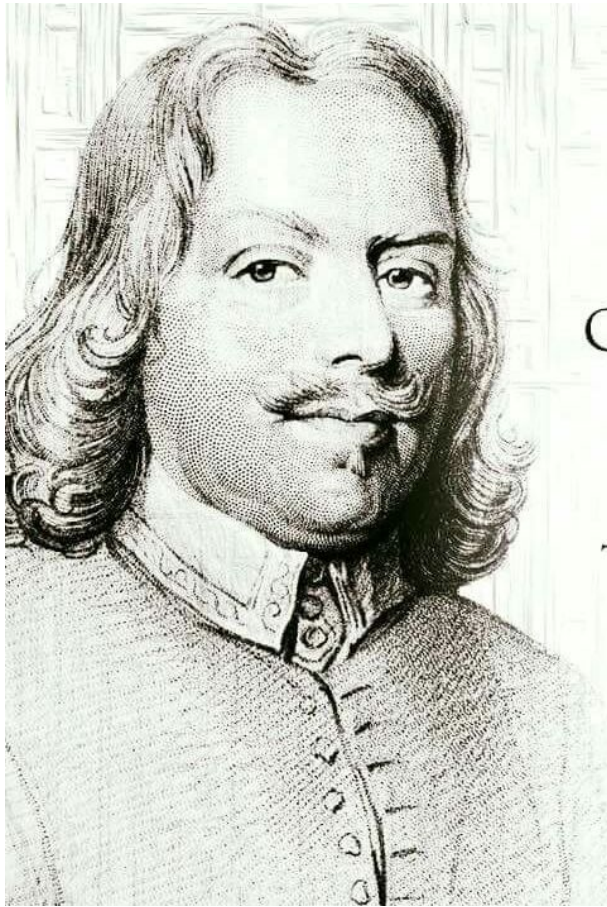
'That's marvellous, she responded, 'What part do you have?'

'Oh', the boy explained, 'I'm to play the part of a good Welsh husband'.

His mother's face fell. 'You go back to school right now', she barked, 'and you tell that teacher of yours from me that *you want a speaking part*'.

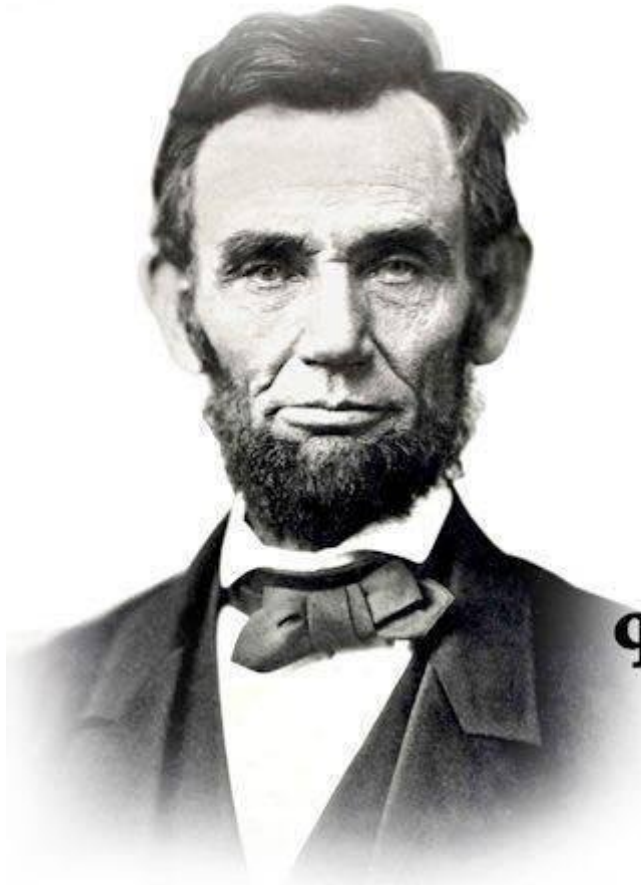
See also the attached 'Internet quotes' picture.





“PRAYER WILL  
MAKE A MAN  
CEASE FROM SIN,  
OR SIN WILL  
ENTICE A MAN  
TO CEASE FROM  
PRAYER.”

-JOHN BUNYAN-



**"Don't believe  
everything you  
read on the  
internet just  
because there's  
a picture with a  
quote next to it."**

**-Abraham Lincoln**