

## FROM THE EAGLES NEST

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thought than your thoughts." Isaiah 55:8,9.

We must come to see what God sees and hear what God says and do what God wants. In the ultimate this is all that really matters. All else is transient and trivial.

To see what God sees and hear what God says we must for a moment shut out the clamor of the world around us -of secular sounds and human voices, even religious. (Sometimes the simple realities of ones life with Christ are obscured by religious forms and traditions -by humanly devised methods for being "spiritual." What we really need is to get to the heart of identifying with Christ and having His power work within us.)

Symbolically, we must get above the city with its din of worldly clamor; above the foothills of human thought, philosophical and religious; above the slopes of fleshly religious practices, to the rocky heights of God's thoughts, where dwells the eagle.

But we do not ascend to the heights to spend our lives in cloistered contemplation, aloof from society. Rather we go to see, through God's eyes, the world we then must embrace and serve in His caring.

It is hoped, without presumption, that the following essays, selected from a quarter of a century of writing, will help to accomplish this.

Perhaps in these pages and with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we too may experience a moment of vision.

## INTO THE ABYSS HE CAME

Into the abyss of human misery He came,  
And, though a babe,  
yet was His heart aflame with the Glory of God.

Into the abyss - the Glory of God for the world of men;  
Into the abyss, where once He dared to drink the cup of sorrow,  
And then -  
faced the consequence of that abyss,  
And bore upon His flawless frame  
the symbols of all human sin expressed;  
And in a tragic stroke the grand illusions laid to rest  
Of man's inherent dignity.

Strange it is that all the tragedies of time  
Have no sufficed to prove to man  
the depth of that accursed clime  
to which his soul was born.

Nor has it dawned upon his darkened heart  
That e'en the noble things of man are part of vain facade.  
And all the liberty  
In which he revels to indulge his selfish soul  
Is ;but a bondage, from th chains of which  
the grace of God alone can set him free.

And so, insensitive to all but grosser earthly things,  
And unaware the raft  
To which he blindly clings is rudderless and without sail,  
He drifts through life,  
grasping, striving,  
bearing fortune's perfidies -  
Until that disenchanting moment when the spirit  
flees the mortal cage

And knows  
that all he lived for was but ashes  
and all the good he shunned-  
the stuff of which eternal bliss is made.

Thus the abyss to which He came-the majesty of God enshrined  
for all the world to see-  
the Blessed Son of Man.

Into the abyss-  
the Son of God with the power to free  
The souls of all in one great deed  
of holy, and unselfish love.

Now on eagle's wings the souls of those who will, may soar;  
And, unencumbered by the chains of demon power,  
Know the thrill of love fulfilled;  
the joy of harmony with Him in whom  
the timeless universe remains secure.

## WHILE WE WERE YET SINNERS

At the right time, Christ died for the ungodly.  
(Rom.5:6)

What an anchor is this revised version of an age old text to the storm-battered soul.

When we see nothing in ourselves to commend us to God; when pious maxims seem a hollow mockery; when in spiritual poverty we fancy ourselves alone -cut off in our miserable unworthiness; the words of this text arise to challenge our unreasoned and unreasonable despair.

Wholly unsolicited, God identified Himself with the decadent race, supremely willing and supremely capable of lifting it to its destined state of glory, not for a moment tolerating the thought that something of His device should fail to fulfill its devised destiny. Nor could He ever fail to create unto the end of His own glorification through the created. That this divine reality should not go unrealized

CHRIST DIED FOR THE UNGODLY.

## OH THE BLESSEDNESS!

This cry from Psalm One echoes and re-echoes through the ages like a great bell caroling the glad news from God -"I have redeemed thee and thou art mine." What more glorious note has ever touched the ear of sin-smitten man than that there is a place of blessing and true joy in a restored fellowship with the God of all?

This is the starting point of the great book of the heart -the Psalms. Here is a contrast between the lot of the Godly and the lot of the ungodly. Here the true picture of life as it is in all its reality is painted vividly for all men to see and understand. Here the dark shades of godlessness accentuate the golden highlights of the man at peace with God.

Wherein consists the curse and shadow of the godless man? Does it consist in material want? The fabulous treasures of pagan monarchs dispose of this thought. Does it consist in ill health? The gladiators in a thousand world arenas shout, "No!" Name what you will of earthly advantage, and history will prove that godless men have possessed them all. But in one stroke God makes ashes of all their earthly dreams when He says, "The way of the ungodly shall perish." The Hebrew rendering is more striking - "The way of the ungodly shall be lost." God has turned His back on them.

Wherein does the blessedness of the Godly man consist? Does it consist in earthly advantage? Out of the pages of history marches a ceaseless line of God's great saints-poverty-stricken, tormented in body, homeless, and sorrowing. But the banner over them is love. "The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous." Their hearts are at peace; their sins are washed away; they are full of hope. Not one would trade the glorious hope in his breast for the riches of Croesus. Who would trade the smile of God for the raucous laughter of the world's fools? Who would trade a page of the revelation of God for the thousands of books of the world's sages? To speak of it is folly. The wealth of the world is full of sorrow; the poverty of the Christian is full of joy. The laughter of the world is but an empty cup; the tears of the Christian are wellsprings of blessing.

But the Christian says, "I know all of this. What has been said that is new? Why labor this age-old truth?" Ah, do you know it, Christian? Do you know that all of this world's prosperity is vain and issues in sorrow? Do you know indeed that the blessing of the Lord is life and joy and peace forever? Do you know that all the world's wealth could not buy one smile from the Lord, or wash away one stain from the heart? Then why do you court the world's treasures? Why do you sacrifice the smile of the Lord for a little earthly pleasure? Why do you live so much for yourself and so little for God? Why do you spend so much of your life acquiring earthly comforts?

Blessed is the Godly man. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Why feed on the husks of the swine when the Lord would set a banquet table before you?

## THE COUNCIL OF THE UNGODLY

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. (Psalm 1:1).

The word translated "ungodly" has its roots in an old Arabic word which means "disjointed, ill regulated, or abnormal. While certain facts of man's earthly existence may be clear to him through scientific research, he will never be able to come to right conclusions or make right applications so long as the key is missing. This key will continue to be missing until relationship with God is restored through Jesus Christ. Since, therefore, the ungodly man, being abnormal, can never make sound judgements, it is the height of folly for the Godly man to walk in his counsels.

### The Way Of Sinners

Life is made up of only two ways, or courses. There is the way of the Godly that leads to life and the way of the ungodly or sinner that leads to death. Actually, the main choice in life is not between systems of philosophy or belief, but between ways of life. The problem is not so much intellectual, but ethical in the refusal to accept Christianity, or the way of the Godly. The way of the ungodly man is characterized by sin. Every decision he makes and every deed he does is tainted with sin, even though outwardly it may appear good. Therefore, the Godly man, who looks with approval upon or becomes too much involved in any so called "good thing" of the ungodly man, is only being deceived by a veneer. Men will always be motivated consistently within the framework of their way of life, even though the actual deeds may be deceiving. Beware of any words or deeds that have their roots in "the way of sinners."

### The Seat Of The Scornful

The inevitable conclusion of the counsel of the abnormal and the course of sinfulness is the judgement seat of the scorner. Here, misguided by incomplete understanding and spoiled by the taint of sin, he passes judgment upon matters of which he has no knowledge and mocks that holy life which his sin-dulled senses cannot appreciate.

Blessed is that man who, deposing the vanity of the ungodly, finds his counsel in the wisdom of God; who, shunning the association of the sinful, tarries in the presence of the holy; and who, stopping his ears to the scorner, perceives the truth and purity of the things that are spiritual.

## HIS DELIGHT

is in the law of the Lord and in His law doth he meditate day and night." (Psalm 1:2).

Consider the law of God here as the will of God-the sum total of all His good pleasure for the individual and for the universe. The Mosaic law in the Old Testament is not to be identified with the law of God, although its principles were based upon that law. It was a codifying of God's pleasure for a certain people in a certain place at a certain time. In the broader sense in which we use the term "law," everyone is responsible to the law of God.

Our Text says that the mark of a Godly man is that he delights in this law. This is a profound statement. It contains the heart of the meaning of the Christian state. The test of our Christianity is not so much what we do, as what we are. What we do arises out of what we are. Our attitudes are part of what we are. "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he," says Solomon. The standard of Scripture everywhere is that the believer is marked by an attitude of concern for the will of God. Conversely, the unbeliever is indifferent to, or even rebellious against the law of God.

In I John 3 we have a very enlightening discussion of this matter. The only place in Scripture where sin is specifically defined is in I John 3:4. From the Greek text, this should be translated: "Whosoever committeth sin is lawless, for sin is lawlessness.: With this definition in mind we read with understanding, verse 9. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin (is not lawless) for His seed remaineth in him and he cannot sin (be lawless), because he is born of God." When one is born of God, he can never again be rebellious against the law of God, or even indifferent to him because he has the seed of God in him. On the other hand, verse 8 indicates that he who is rebellious against the law gives evidence that he has the seed of the lawless one in him.

The Word of God does not teach that a Christian will never offend the Lord. In fact it indicates that we will have to go to Him for forgiveness often. The difference between the believer and unbeliever is not always easily discernible on the surface. The churches are full of good, moral people who have signed pledges and made public confessions but in their hearts do not love to please the Lord. The Pharisees conformed outwardly to the Mosaic law, but they did it in such a way as to reveal the fact that they were not trying to please God. There is nothing so stark and cruel as legalism without love. Morality apart from love is always the greatest expression of pride and self-centeredness. Paul discovered this and called himself the Chief of sinners.

The text ;does not say that the man of God is marked by the fact that his will is to be moral, but by the fact that his delight  
**IS IN THE LAW OF THE LORD.**

## HE SHALL BE LIKE A TREE

planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." (Ps. 1:1).

The man that loves to meditate on the law of God will, like the tree, planted by the water course have his roots tapped into a ceaseless source of refreshment.

He will also bear fruit in season. The figure of fruit-bearing is often misunderstood. Bearing fruit is not the same as bearing fruit trees. To consider fruit-bearing as soul winning is to confuse the metaphor. It is the seed within the fruit that produces another tree. Hence, the winning of souls is something that arises out of the process of bearing fruit, but it is not the fruit. "The fruit of the Spirit," as Galatians 5:22 tells us, is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance."

We have been created in the image of God. This is not the physical image, since God has no body. It is therefore a moral image - the attributes of God: love, holiness, truth, etc. As God's creatures we have the capacity for reflecting these qualities. As "Godly" trees our fruit should be godliness. This is the plain meaning of Galatians 5:22. This is the seasonable fruit of Psalm 1. As we reflect these qualities of godliness, the lives of others will be blessed and from the bearing of such fruit many other fruit trees will be produced.

John 15 bears out this concept. The fruitful branch is pruned to bring forth, not more, but better fruit. The Greek text allows the thought of better in

## WITHOUT ANCHOR

The ungodly are not so: but are like the  
chaff which the wind driveth away.

Psalm. 1:4.

Verse three talks about the godly man as one who is planted, established, and secure. He is rooted in the Fountain of life. He is anchored in that which is within the veil. The ungodly man is adrift -at the mercy of the tides. Or in the figure of the text, he, like the chaff, is blown about at the caprice of the winds. Once a man has been gripped by the power of Christ, all the circumstances of his life will be drawn into focus by the Great Designer.



## WITHOUT ADVOCATE

Therefore the ungodly shall not  
stand in the judgment.

Psalm 1:5

The ungodly man has no one to plead his cause in the judgment. Men seem to be able to put on a veneer of bravado. The wrath of God seems to them quite distant and unreal. Perhaps it is because God has not opened their eyes to see it. Fearlessness is not always the result of courage -it is often a sign of ignorance. We, who have been awakened to the issues of life, appreciate the Advocate.

## WITHOUT ABODE

-nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.  
For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous:  
but the way of the ungodly shall perish.  
Psalm 1:5-6

One of the basic human drives is the desire for belonging. Everyone seeks a place for themselves. Christ satisfies this need when he says,

I go to prepare a place for you.

The godly man has a place -the congregation of the righteous. Some Christians may be lonely in this life - bereft of family and friends. But let them take heart. There is a family to which they belong. They have a place, and Someone who cares. "He careth for you." In the Hebrew text, verse 6 can be read,

The way of the ungodly shall be lost.

No one will care what happens to him. Many a heart has been broken in this life and many a suicide has taken place because there was no one to care. How desolate the lot of the ungodly! There is no place for him, and no one to care.

## CONFORMED

Men, created in the image of God, were designed to know Him and to be conformed to His image. This is at the very heart of the meaning of life. One who is not moving in this direction has missed the point of life completely.

If one desires to analyze life and to consider his personal responsibilities in the light of a serious approach to it, then let him consider as the foundation of the entire structure that he was made to be complete in God. The most wonderful thought ever entertained by the mind of man is that the Absolute God has communicated Himself to men and has made it possible that men should be conformed to Him.

This is accomplished through Jesus Christ, who is the living, personal manifestation of God. Christ may be known by man, and he who has seen Christ, has seen God. Men may be conformed to Christ. He who has been conformed to Christ has been conformed to God. How does this take place practically?

The knowledge of the person of Christ comes by revelation. The Holy Spirit must open the heart to receive not only Divine truth, but the Divine impact. The heart must be confronted, wooed, and conquered personally by Jesus Christ. When the revelation has come and the heart has made its natural response of faith, then begins the process of conformity. This conformity comes not by some mystical touch -not by a hypodermic injection of holiness, but by the living with Christ -by beholding Him day by day.

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (I Cor. 3:18).

Let this simple truth dawn upon the heart and the vast superstructure of spiritual exercises erected in a human effort to achieve superficial piety, comes crashing to the ground, and with it the veneer of fleshly superiority. The great barrier of religious machinery that had separated the soul from God is removed; and one is left with only the reality of himself confronted by Jesus Christ. Then he may embrace Christ and start on the true path to conformity.

## IN THE DREAD OF NAMELESS FEARS

And in the labyrinth of confusion that marks today's world, to walk without God is to walk in blind despair. This despair that stalks the minds of men as they face the vastness of an unknown and terrifying universe has been expressed by poet and philosopher through the millennium of history. Typical of these expressions is the one by the Persian poet, Omar Khayyam, who said,

"Into this universe, and why not knowing  
Noe whence, like water willy-nilly flowing;  
And out of it, as wind along the waste,  
I know not whither, willy-nilly blowing."

The lament of men groping in the darkness should serve to accentuate in our own thinking the unspeakable glory of the realization that we possess light - we know the meaning of life, through the written and living revelation of God.

In the complexity of modern life when anxiety and distraction harass the minds of all - even Christians, it is imperative that we clarify for ourselves the purpose and goal of life and fix our eyes upon it as upon a guiding star in order that we may safely and fearlessly pursue the course of life on this earth.

We must ask ourselves, "What is the meaning of life? Why am I living?" Scripture clearly indicates to us that all of life is to be considered in relationship to God. In Him is its source, its purpose, its goal. Man lives for fellowship with God. This is our first responsibility. Any part of our life which does not have this in view is vain and wasted.

Life then consists in being, not doing - being a son of God. Above all else let us be sure we have become a son of God through Jesus Christ and then give ourselves to the living out of that relationship.

Out of the being, there will naturally flow a desire for doing - doing the things that will please and serve the One to whom we are so intimately related. "Whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God." (I Cor. 10:31) This is the only certain guiding star of conduct.

To live successfully is to live in continuous consciousness of our relationship to God.

## CARELESS SEEMS THE GREAT AVENGER

history's pages but  
record  
One death-grapple in the darkness 'twixt old systems  
and the word;  
Truth forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on  
the throne, -  
Yet that scaffold sways the Future, and behind the dim  
unknown,  
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own.  
James Russell Lowell

In the bloody wake of the tragic launching of Congo's "ship of state," these words of James Russell Lowell are reborn with new meaning. Congo is only a symptom of an oft-repeated malady.

The earth seems to "reel as a drunken man" in the surge of violence and revolution-selfish, avaricious man breathing out the issue of a polluted soul; locked in mortal conflict to win at any cost the devil's alluring treasures of personal gain-images of wood and stone, carefully gilded with deceptive glitter of unfulfilled promise.

As a thinking informed Christian, one cannot be optimistic about the course of this world. The Bible clearly indicates that these cosmic convulsions follow one upon the other with ever increasing velocity until, amidst the thunder of the seven Apocalyptic seals we hear the cry of Gods saints: "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"

The world today seems to be on the threshold of a great systemic revolution- that is, a revolution which will alter the entire structure of society. There have been perhaps two such revolutions in the history of the world-the Peloponnesian War of the fifth century B.C., which ushered in the shift from the city states to empire, and the Teutonic invasions which marked the collapse of empire into the fragmentation of feudalism, or the land Lord with his serfs.

Such a structural revolution seems on the way for our world. How will it affect us believers? The great question is, to what extent does our security and wellbeing depend upon the present docile circumstances which our world-system, especially as seen in the United States, has created for us, and to what extent does it reside in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, who transcends all systems, and remains the anchor in all the convulsions of a changing society?

We know not what is before us. In a sense never before true, the world has not passed this way before. In the course of most of human events, we hear echoes of the past. History has invariably repeated itself. Now we face something altogether new.

As believers we had better be certain that we know where our security lies. We are about to walk the "valley of the shadow." Praise the Lord! "The eternal God is our refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms."

## LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED

The people of earth are deeply troubled. In addition to the myriad of economic, social and physical problems, crime and terror are making jungles of quiet communities. International greed and gangsterism on the part of nations and worldwide movements are turning the bedrock of once stable countries into quicksand. There is no security on the face of the earth.

The Christians, of course, is not immune from these troubles. As a matter of fact, in addition to these earthly woes, he has also the spiritual warfare against the Devil. How can he not be troubled? To many, an untroubled heart seems a far off hope, not attainable by the average Christian. But the Bible does not make empty promises, of course. What does it really mean? Does it mean that a Christian will never be concerned or worried? Certainly not. Even Jesus, in another place, using the very word of this text said, "Now is my soul trouble." John 12:27. Is Jesus contradicting Himself?

The key to the problem is the word, "heart." In John 12, Jesus uses the word, "soul." There is a difference. As the New Testament uses it, soul refers to the natural man. Heart usually refers to the inner spirit. In the flesh we often struggle with fightings and fears. Paul confessed to the believers at Corinth, "For when we had come to Macedonia, we did not have any rest in our flesh at all, but in every way we were troubled; fightings without and fears within." II Corinthians 7:5. And in I Corinthians 2:3 he said, "And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling." Here again the key is in the terms. The flesh refers to the natural man. As long as we are on the earth we will struggle in the natural man with fears and weakness. Contrary to the popular slogan, it is not a sin to worry. The Bible never says it is. It is natural. Can you imagine a parent watching over a child that is seriously ill and not being distressed or worried? Of course we know the Lord can heal of course we know that in the end all things work together for good. But we do not know what His will is in this case and our natural desire is that the loved one be spared. One is inclined to be a little suspicious of those who are so certain that everything is going to be lovely. It is possible to get into such a state of spiritual euphoria that one blocks out all feeling for others.

All that has been said so far has to do with feelings in the flesh. It is perfectly natural for human beings to experience worry and fear. Bravery is not necessarily fearlessness but pressing on in the face of fear. But if it is natural to be troubled in the flesh, it is also natural to be at peace in the spirit, if indeed Christ is in your spirit/ The presence of Christ in the spirit makes peace a reality for every believer. Jesus said, "If one love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and we will make our 'dwelling place' with him." John 14:23. The word here translated dwelling place or abode, is the same word in the original Greek text as the word used in John 14:2. The use of the word, "mansion" in 14:2, as in the King James translation, misses the basic meaning. The reason Jesus can urge the disciples not to be troubled is that He is soon going to send His Spirit to dwell within them. Peace is a fruit of the Spirit as in Galatians 5:22. It does not come by human, religious reasoning. when the soul is torn apart, it is not enough to reason that we ought to have peace because we are Christians. The Holy Spirit in us must give us peace, or we will not have it. There are some situations that are such that the human mind is overwhelmed and then it is that the power of Christ within us brings us "the peace that passes all understanding." Phil 4:7.

If you are in a situation at the present time that has you in deep distress or worry, do not let Satan add guilt to your already burdened soul by making you feel it is wrong to worry. It is quite possible for you to be trusting Christ in you spirit, and yet be struggling with fears in the flesh. Remember that it is not feeling of faith, but the fact of faith that is important. The very act of praying is a fact of faith, because if we did not believe we would not pray. Like peace, faith is a fruit of the Spirit. Its reality lies deeper than the feelings. All feelings, even those we classify as religious, are of the natural man. There is nothing wrong with having feelings, but they should not be trusted, as Paul said in Philippians 4:3. "We worship God in the spirit and have no confidence in the flesh." So, in the crisis hour, whatever struggles you may experience in the flesh, let your confidence not be in the false feelings of the natural man, but in the reality of the faith and peace of Christ within your spirit.

Note: For a more extensive study of the conflict between flesh and spirit, send for the author's booklet, The Struggle.

## SOUNDING BRASS AND CLANGING CYMBALS

Hollow, aggravating noise is the loveless ministry. Rhetoric, resonance of voice, superb outlines, convincing arguments - all are irrelevant when love is not there. To stand in the pulpit and preach, or to witness to the man on the street is a hollow mockery when love is not there, and is as much an imposition upon the ears of the people as the din of clanging cymbals when they are not harmonized in their orchestral setting. And, lest anyone feel excluded from the above categories, even to attempt to win one's neighbors, or family to Christ apart from a real exhibition of love is a farce.

Love is the core of the Christian life. To be without love is to be empty. The church lashes out in fury against "worldliness"; it expels moral offenders; it crucifies non-conformists. And yet, lack of love - the greatest ill of all - is never even thought of as an offense. What are the evidences of love?

- 1 LONGSUFFERING
- 2 GRACIOUSNESS
- 3 LACK OF ENVY
- 4 HUMILITY
- 5 UNSELFISHNESS
- 6 EVEN TEMPER
- 7 PURITY OF THOUGHT AND CONDUCT
- 8 FORBEARING
- 9 TRUSTING
- 10 HOPEFUL
- 11 PATIENT

Say no more, but lay the standard alongside the life.

## Out of the Innermost

"Jesus stood and cried saying, `If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters,'" (John 7:37-38)

In Psalm 1, the emphasis is upon the fruitful tree, planted by the water course. Christ goes a step further in describing the godly man. He tells us; yes, even promises us that as Christians we will have rivers of water flowing out from us. As Christ makes this statement he is in contest with the Pharisees, who, of course, were substituting activity for holiness. Christ says that only that which originates out of the innermost is of consequence. And this realm belongs to the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

In applying the ancient truths of Psalm 1 to modern living, we take Christ's approach. Let us make certain that the bearing of fruit and the observance of the law of God represents the inner self and not a Pharisaical facade of good works. This will bring great rest to the soul that is wearied from being pressed on every hand to "get going for God" - the fallacy of making the activity the test of piety. This is Pharisaism. When God is ready to use us He will see to it that we "get along." In the book of Acts, the apostles went out as the Holy Spirit sent them - not as the church sent them. The activity came out of the upper room. The upper room was not fostered by the activity.