



THE GOOD NEWS MESSENGER

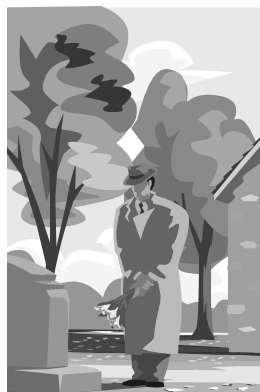
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Our Blessed Hope

An excerpt from *The Secret of Being Strong* by C. W. Naylor



Yesterday a funeral passed our home. The solemn procession moved slowly onward toward the cemetery gate a few squares away. The muffled sounds of the passing cars of a funeral cortege as they pass my window always tell a melancholy tale. A beloved voice is silent forever to earth. A heart has ceased to beat. A life has reached its end. Solemnly the words, "Dust to dust, and ashes to ashes," are spoken. The mourning friends go their way. Only a newly made mound in the cemetery remains to tell the story.

What, is this all? Is dust to dust and ashes to ashes the final end of the being who was once vibrant with life and joyous with vigorous energy? To every soul there comes the age-old inquiry, "If a man die, shall he live again?"

Time summons all, both rich and poor, both high and low, both great and small, to stand before the open grave and to answer in their inmost souls this old query. Let us follow the quiet processions, and let us inquire of each comer what is his hope for the future? Here comes a modern Sadducee. He is a materialist. He believes not in angel or spirit. Man to him is only brother of the beast. Death ends all. As one such said to me, "A man is just like a horse; when he dies, that is the end." The open grave closes above the form beloved to him and leaves hi bereaved of hope. To him life is a past that comes to its end upon a great cliff, beyond which there is nothing but space. To him the grave is a melancholy place. It is the end of his plans and dreams, of all his hopes and expectations. When those whom he loves go from him at the call of death, it leaves only a measureless void which nothing can ever fill, and which he never expects to be filled.

Behind the materialist comes the atheist, with eyes downcast. To him there is no God, no power which can say to death, "Stand back." For him there is no voice of consolation or of comfort. Hope is dead; her voice is no longer heard.

Next in order comes the deist. He believes in God, but the God in whom he believes is a faraway, unknown being who has no part in the life or death of man, who has no interest in what concerns him, a God who has gone off and forgotten. The deist

pauses beside the newly made grave. This to him is the end of all. He also is without hope beyond it.

After him an agnostic draws near. He does not know; he cannot find out. Perhaps life has not come to its final conclusion; he does not know. There may be something beyond the grave; he cannot tell. He knows nothing for certain. He is in doubt about everything. He knows no way to resolve his doubts. And so he stands before the newly made grave, and the wreath that he places upon it is an interrogation point.

Next comes the infidel. Perhaps there is a sneering smile upon his face. Frankly, he does not believe. He knows the Bible says there will be a resurrection, but the Bible is not God's book, in his judgment. So he believes only what it pleases him to believe of the present or the future. Perhaps he believes in immortality, but what does he believe of it, and upon what grounds does he believe it? If he believes in the resurrection, he does not know why he believes it. His hope has no true basis. He rejects the only basis that is given him, and so if he will but admit it, he must, like the agnostic, only question.

Next comes the philosopher. His philosophy may show him there is life beyond the grave. It may say to him that since the race believes in immortality, since they have an inner consciousness of immortality, and since so many things in nature seem to argue from analogy that there shall be a resurrection, he may conclude there is a resurrection, that there is a life beyond the grave. But what that life is like, or whether it is a certainty, he cannot tell. His philosophy falters. It is insufficient. And he, like those before him, is left to question.

Next comes the scientist. His science has not found the human soul. He does not know it as an entity. He cannot weigh it or measure it. The laws of chemistry do not reveal it. He finds strange things in man which he cannot explain. But they do not tell him of immortality. He does not know from his science whether there is anything beyond the grave.

Behind him comes the worldling, who finds his all in self, or riches, or fame. He lives for this world alone. He has not stopped to inquire about eternity. He has been quite content to occupy himself with the things of the present life. He has scarcely thought about anything beyond the grave. Indeed, he will not let the thought of the grave come into his mind when he can help it. Perhaps he believes in immortality in a casual way, but it seems nothing to him. It is unreal, uncertain; and if he has a dim, vague hope, it is a hope based on nothing trustworthy, nothing that can be the real basis of hope. And he, like those before him, is one of those whom the Bible pictured as "having no hope."

Look again at this company and you will see them all silent

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Erasing the Interrogation Marks

Excerpt from "The Secret of a Singing Heart—By: C. W. Naylor

Life is full of mysteries. There are many things we wish we might understand. It would be much easier to go happily upon life's way if we could understand everything that happens to us, and if we could see our way before us.

We all ask questions. We all wonder why some things occur and what they mean. But some of us are more given to asking questions than others. Some put a question mark after everything. Many people form the *habit* of being uncertain. They cultivate indecision so it is hard for them to make up their mind. Following this year after year increases the uncertainty of their lives. They are never quite sure about things. There is a lack of that positiveness that gives certainty.

How shall we overcome that uncertainty? First, we must set ourselves to the task of breaking ourselves of the habit we have developed. That is not easy, but it is possible. We should form right habits of thinking; we should look upon things from a reasonable standpoint. We should not look upon people and circumstances, and everything about us, as enemies. We should not live in a defensive attitude. We should not believe that everything we attempt to do will turn out bad, nor that everything is against us.

The majority of things in life are in our favor. God created our environment, speaking in a general way, and he did not make that environment an always hostile environment. It is true that there are many obstacles in life, many unfavorable influences. But the helpful things are more numerous. The influences for good are more prevalent than are the evil influences. This is true when we hold the right attitude ourselves. God wants us to get the interrogation marks out of a great many things. He wants us to know definitely our relations to himself. He wants us to have an inner consciousness that these relations are acceptable to him. He wants us to have a religious experience, with such a basis of certainty that it brings to us a constant assurance of rightness.

We need a consciousness of God's fatherhood. Many know from an intellectual standpoint that God is their father, but they cannot realize it. They *hope* he is their father. In a way they believe he is their father, but when it comes to having the inner satisfaction of realizing the relation of sonship to him they know little of him. To them it is not a practical thing.

Some imagine God is ready to cut them off from himself for any little trifling deviation from propriety. Their life is influenced more by fear of God than by love of God. If they have a consciousness that there has been something in their life worthy of reproof they count themselves estranged from God. All their joy is gone. Their attitude toward themselves and toward their relation to God is well illustrated by something a woman said to me recently. These are her words, "If I had to ask the Lord to forgive me, I would think I would have to get justified and sanctified over again."

Is God really our Father? Would he so readily break those tender ties between his soul and ours and cast us into outer darkness even though we had been overcome by some sudden temptation, if we had in weakness yielded to something without intent to offend him? Most of us have experienced times when we felt God's disapproval for something. We recognized that we were in fault. As soon as the thing was done or said we immediately felt a pang of regret. To a certain extent such things may make a



breach between us and God, but this breach is only partial and may at once be repaired.

If we take the right course God is ready to forgive. He is ready to repair the breach, to restore the interrupted flow of fellowship. Experiences such as this are not interruptions of the Christian life; they are merely regrettable incidents in it. Those whom God cuts off are those who turn away from him, those who in spirit rebel against him.

Sin lies in the attitude of the will toward God. Many times things are done that need repentance of a certain sort which because the will has not turned away from God, do not result in one's being cut off from God. Perhaps we have all heard teaching of such a technical nature that it made a person either a Christian of angelic character and deportment or else a sinner rejected of God. Between these two there is a great middle ground. None of us are too angelic, but at the same time we are not servants of the devil. Between these two extremes lies a great range of human experience in which men walk with God, their heavenly Father, guided by his justice, but overshadowed with his mercy.

Many times in life we think some strange thing has happened to us. We have experiences we cannot understand. Perhaps many of us have not learned God's method of dealing with his sons and daughters sufficiently to understand that it is not his displeasure that is being manifested but his hand of discipline. He has loved us with an everlasting love. That is not a love that can be easily broken. God's acts flow out of his love toward us. That everlasting love manifests itself in everlasting kindness. Jeremiah 31:3 says, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee."

This is God's attitude toward all his children, even those who have faults and shortcomings. God does not expect us to be as wise as he is, nor to exhibit the same power in our life, nor to be always as perfect as he is in our conduct. *He does expect us to do right.* He does expect us sincerely to try to please him. But he does not expect us to be free from blunders, mistakes, weaknesses, and those frailties that are commonly found in humanity. We should not excuse ourselves in doing anything improper. If we do so he will not excuse us. But with loving mercy he draws us back to him. As it is written, "As a father pitieth his children so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." That pity manifests itself in his longsuffering, his tender mercy, his ready forgiveness.

One thing very difficult for many people to learn is that the chastening rod of God is applied in love, not in anger. We are told that God "scourgeth every son whom he receiveth," and that scourging is the proof of our sonship. So often people are inclined to take it as an evidence that they are no longer sons. They look upon it as a mark of God's disapproval, or even of his anger. We are told that his chastening is for our profit. He does it not for his own pleasure, but that we may be better by it. It is a mark of his love. He says, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten" (Revelations 3:19; Hebrews 12:5-13).

Note carefully God's attitude in his chastening. We are all ready to admit the truth of the eleventh

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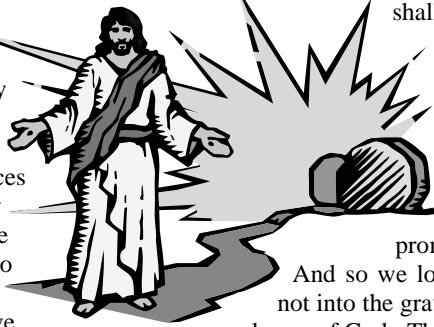


Our Blessed Hope

(continued from page 1)

before the newly made grave. No voice comforts them; they have no words to comfort another. Death is a leap into the dark. Beyond is only the great unknown.

Only the Christian has hope in his death. His hope in death is not a hope in himself. His hope is in a person, the Lord Jesus Christ—he who was dead, but is alive forevermore. He believes in him who said, “I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.” And this hope is called our “blessed hope;” it is the one great hope of the Christian. As we have this hope, death has no terrors for us, and we can say, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” and so it comes that believing this so many Christians go down into the valley of the shadow with a smile of joy upon their countenances and with an unwavering faith in their hearts. Only the eye of faith sees beyond the grave. Only the tongue that speaks through faith hath words to break the silence with the clear joy tones of triumph. Faith stands before the newly made grave and falters not. And the Christian, though sorrowful, is always rejoicing, for with the eye of faith he sees beyond the present into



the glorious eternity, and his heart doubts not.

There are three phases of our hope, or three things to which hope looks forward in expectancy. The first is the coming of Jesus our Lord (Titus 2:13). We have hope in him, not merely for the present life but for the life which is to come (1 Corinthians 15:19; Acts 24:15). Through him we look forward to being “children of the resurrection,” hoping and believing that it shall be according to his word that we shall nevermore die and that we shall be equal to the angels, that we shall possess everlasting life through the eternal ages and dwell at the right hand of God.

This hope of eternal life is not a new thing. It is older than the world. Paul speaks of the “hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began” (Titus 1:2). God planned eternal life for us. He promised it to us before we had an existence. And so we look forward with eager expectancy that sinks not into the grave, but goes beyond it and rejoices in the eternal ages of God. This is the blessed hope, the anchor of the Christian soul.

Erasing the Interrogation Marks

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verse which says, “No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous.” None of us like to be chastened, but yet that is necessary; out of it comes the fruits of righteousness. When the Lord chastens us, therefore, let us bear it with meekness. Let us profit by it. Let us not be grieved and discouraged. The Lord says, “Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees” (vs. 12). You can understand what that means. It means—stand up like a man. Do not bow down and tremble for fear. And he adds, “Make straight paths for your feet.”

Gold is purified in the furnace. It is not destroyed; it is made better by the flames. You and I must pass through the furnace. The purpose of the furnace is that we may be purged from our dross, that we may be refined, that we may be rid of grossness, that we may be made more spiritual. Does the gold as, “Why hast thou put me in the furnace?” If you and I have to pass through the furnace of affliction or sorrow, of losses or failures, let us submit ourselves to the hand of God. Let us not question his mercy or his goodness; neither let us question ourselves. Let us endure as “seeing him who is invisible.” Let us trust his hand, and trust his love. Let us not fear that we shall be destroyed.

We must often endure the chisel of pain as God carves in us his image. We desire to be in his image. We desire to be godlike in character. Remember that God hurts only to heal. Like the surgeon he does not hurt willingly, but only of necessity. We have read of the balm of Gilead, but of what use is that balm until we are hurt? There would be no such balm were there no hurts in life.

God knows there are things that will hurt us. He knows that sufferings of various sorts are inevitable. He knows that we shall bring upon ourselves by lack of wisdom or carelessness, or by lack of understanding, or in other ways, many things that are hard to endure. But he would not have these things unduly trouble us nor make us feel that he has become our enemy. He would have us

ever to recognize that he is our tender, compassionate Father. He would comfort us in our troubles as a mother comforteth her children. In our times of trouble, he would not have us run from him nor shrink from his presence. He would have us run into his arms and tell him all our troubles, our questionings, our heartaches. He would have us so trust him that the interrogation marks would be removed.

So many Christians are always on the defensive. They are always facing an enemy either without or within. Their lives are a constant battle with themselves, a struggle to repress something. They are constantly harassed lest they do wrong or feel wrong, lest they be deceived, etc. They are a prey to apprehensions. They are constantly trying to strengthen themselves in an attitude of resistance against something. They hold themselves under a strain. They are constantly troubled over things that God would not have them to be troubled over. Instead of living thus God wants us to live positive lives, to be on the offensive, to be victorious. He desires us to be courageous, confident, serene, and without anxiety, conscious of divine help.

The open-hearted God is a fountain of power. He would have our hearts open to receive his power. He would not have us trust in self but in his sufficiency of grace and power for our every need. He would have us constantly believe that in any situation that may arise there will be no lack of what is necessary to make us overcomers. By believing this, and acting as though we believe it, we *shall be* overcomers. We shall rid ourselves of many of life’s question marks. Some of them will remain to eternity, but many of them need trouble us no longer. Those that cannot be removed need not darken our lives. Trusting him we can go onward, singing the glad song that flows from the sense of his Fatherhood and his understanding love.



A Child of God

Excerpt from "Stories Behind the Songs"

It was inevitable that the positive preaching which brought out this movement should be hard on conscientious people. The judgments of God do move the hardhearted and ungodly sometimes; they almost always make the going very uncomfortable for the tenderhearted and eagerly obedient, especially when they are yet young in the way. Out of the inner conflicts of scrupulous folk, however, God has a way of creating beauty and helpfulness. Precious in his sight must be the carefulness to please him that brings agony when doubt is thrown upon the relationship of the soul to its Maker. No wonder he makes use of these inward turmoils to bless the world. Witness the effect of *Pilgrim's Progress*, to mention only one great work conceived in the matrix of inner struggle.

"A Child of God" was born of such mental warfare. No wonder it has been an encouragement to thousands and has become one of the most used of our songs. It first appeared in *Truth in Song* in 1907, and its origin is thus described by its author:

In the early years of my Christian experience I had often to struggle to resist the buffetings of Satan's accusations. Again and again this dart was hurled at me: "You are not saved; if you were, you would not feel so bad." At one time an enemy seemed determined to overthrow my soul. Suddenly one of God's promises came to my help: "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him" (Isaiah 59:19). Some words of D. S. Warner came in with the promise: "I have so much confidence in God that I would feel perfectly safe to hook my little finger over the least of his promises and swing out over the infernal regions." Immediately my spirits began to lift and I took a firm hold on another promise: "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13). Every doubt fled away and my happy soul began singing: "I am a child of God."

A Child of God

By: B. E. Warren

Praise the Lord! My heart with his love is beaming,
I am a child of God;

Heaven's golden light over me is streaming,
I am a child of God.

Let the saints rejoice with my raptured spirit,
I am a child of God;

I will testify that the world may hear it,
I am a child of God.

Let a holy life tell the gospel story,
I am a child of God;

How he fills the soul with his grace and glory,
I am a child of God.

Saved from sin today, every band is riven,
I am a child of God;

Thro' the tests of life I have peace from heaven,
I am a child of God.

I am a child of God, I am a child of God;
I have washed my robes in the cleansing fountain,
I am a child of God.



The Parable of the Sower (Matthew 12:1-9; 18-23)

Taken from "Our Little Folks" June 26, 1910 edition

This man is sowing seed. He puts his strong brown hand into the bag of grain again and again. He walks back and forth through his field scattering the seed.



Some of the seed the man sowed fell on a hard path. The birds came and ate it. Some seed fell on stony places. There was not much soil; so the little plant soon died. Some of the seed fell where thorns grew. The plants were crowded by the thorns so they could not grow. But some seed fell on good ground. The little plants grew and grew until they had heads of grain on them. Some of the heads had thirty fold, some sixty, and some an hundred.

Jesus told this story to many people. He sat in a boat on a lake while they stood on the shore. One time he told his men what the story meant.

The seed is the word of God—the Bible. Those who hear about Jesus and how to do good and then forget it, are like the hard path.

Some people think they will live to please Jesus; but when trouble comes, they do not try to please him any more. Such people are like the stony places.

The people who are like the thorny places live to please Jesus for a while. Then they begin to love money or fine clothes or something else more than they love Jesus.

There are some people who live to please Jesus all the time. They do what the Bible says. They are like the good ground. Little boys and girls are like the good ground if they do what the Bible says and live to please Jesus.

1. What did Jesus tell a story about? A man who sowed seeds.
2. Did all the seed grow until it had heads of grain? No, some of it fell on a hard path, some in stony places, and some where thorns grew.
3. What is the seed? The Word of God.
4. Where is the seed sown? In the hearts of the people.
5. How may boys and girls be like the good ground? By doing what the Bible says and living to please Jesus.

Questions and Answers

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Spanish interpretation is available in the services.

Service Times:

Wednesday Prayer Meeting	7:00 p.m.
Sunday School	9:30 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30 a.m.
Young People's Service (Sunday)	4:45 p.m.
Children's Service (Sunday)	5:00 p.m.
Sunday Evening Service	6:00 p.m.

We have literature available for those who would like to study the Word of God in the confines of their home. Let us know if you are interested by contacting us at the above telephone number, address, or website.