July 2012 Signs of the Times Email Newsletter

The Signs of the Times newsletter is a collection of stories and quotes from past issues of Signs and These Times.

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A few years ago there was a large convention of pastors being held in a great Midwestern city. Delegates and preachers were gathered from all over the world. A brilliant young modernist preacher was asked to address the opening session of the convention on the subject, "The Second Coming of Christ." As the preacher stood before his audience, he opened his remarks by saying, "I don’t believe in the literal, personal return of Jesus. I believe that His coming will be seen in better politics, better peace plans among the nations, church union, and the spirit of understanding among men."

Then turning to one of the venerable ministers seated behind him on the rostrum, the youthful clergyman questioned, "Don't you think so, Dr. Brown?" The man of God quickly arose from his seat and took his place at the side of his fellow minister and said, with a voice quivering with emotion, "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." Acts 1:11. Then he sat down.

Yes, Jesus will come "in like manner." His ascent into heaven was visible, literal, and actual. "In like manner" His second coming will be visible, literal, and actual.

The coming of Jesus is near, even at the doors.—By Richard A Rentfro, Present Truth, Vol. 26, No. 7.

Quote: "Don’t carry the whole world on your shoulders, far less the universe. Trust the Eternal."—From Good Housekeeping, Signs of the Times, March 25, 1903.

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An unselfish, consecrated chaplain named Johnson was with a group of men on a South Pacific island during World War II. A bombing raid was planned which would take them over an enemy-occupied island several hundred miles away. The men were anxious and nervous, but they felt a bit more secure because their chaplain was along. They flew over the target, dropped their bombs, and headed for their home base.

Out there over that vast expanse of water, their engine began to sputter. Something was wrong. They managed to make a safe landing on a small island. Scouting around, they found the island was occupied by the enemy and an armed force of the enemy was on either side of them some distance away. Fortunately the enemy had not noticed the plane land. What should they do? They were in strange territory, out of gas, and almost entirely surrounded by enemies who were well armed.

A sergeant spoke up: "Chaplain, you have been instructing and exhorting us for many months now. A number of times you have told us that if we ever got in a tight place, to call on God, and He would hear our prayers and answer them right away. This is a good chance to try out some of the theories you have been preaching to us. With no gas for our engines, and with enemies on both sides of us, unless God does hear your prayers, we are done for." It was a challenge to the man of God.

The chaplain encouraged the boys as best he could and then slipped quietly from his men and fell on his knees. He prayed most of the afternoon. After supper the boys made themselves as comfortable as they could and went to sleep, excepting one man who kept watch. Johnson kept on praying.

In the middle of the night the sergeant, for some reason, awoke and wandered down to the water’s edge. A large dark object had been washed up onto the beach. It was a barge loaded with drums of gasoline; yes, and it proved to be high octane gas, just what they needed. The boys were awakened, they quickly filled the plane tanks with gasoline, and soon the chaplain and his men were safe at their base again.
A captain of a large U.S. tanker in that area had discovered he was in sub-infested waters, and, as with all that
gasoline aboard, he feared what might happen if they were hit by torpedoes, he had the cargo put overboard. He felt
much more safe with all that explosive material off his ship. The barge drifted to the island where the chaplain was
praying, just when it was needed; for God could not disappoint one of His trusting, praying children.

To some people prayer may be just a beautiful theory, but not to those boys with Chaplain Johnson. Thank God for
fearless, faithful men who braved any danger, made any sacrifice to help their men to know God, in a time when they
needed Him most.

Has He not promised, “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:
for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened”? Matthew
7:7, 8—By Charles L. Paddock, Our Times, April 1947.

Quote: “In times of crisis we must avoid both ignorant change and ignorant opposition to change.”—By John Stuart Mill,
Our Times, September 1950.

NEW from Pacific Press—The Green Cord Dream by Alex Bryan. “I surrender all . . . “ How often have you sung the
words to that song? How often have you followed through? In The Green Cord Dream Pastor Alex Bryan reminds us that
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A fox stood before a vineyard which was enclosed by a wall. The grapes attracted him, and he searched the wall
whether there was an aperture through which he might get into this vineyard.

He found a hole, but it was far too small to allow his getting through. He therefore determined to fast three days in
order to become thin enough to get through. He succeeded, and could indulge in eating grapes till he was quite strong
again.

But when the time came for his going out again, he searched for the hole but he found it impossible to get out. There
was nothing for it but to fast again in order to get through. At last he was once more outside, but lean and weak. “O
vineyard,” he cried, looking up to it, “how beautiful thou, and how good is thy fruit! But what profit have I from it all? As I
went in, even so did I come out again.”—Jewish Proverb, Signs of the Times, October 6, 1890.

Quote: “The true way to gain influence over our fellow men is to have charity towards them.”—Kingsley, Signs of the
Times, September 24, 1896.

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Humorously remarked the old sage, Benjamin Franklin, as he and his colleagues attached their signatures to the
Declaration of Independence, on that eventful day, the Fourth of July, 1776: “We must all hang together, or we will hang
separately.” They knew it was a gamble between treason and triumph, a real proposition of “give me liberty or give me
death.”

When the king of England learned what they had done, he immediately denounced them as traitors, and offered
rewards of $2,500 apiece for their apprehension. Had their struggle for liberty failed, the Declaration of Independence
would have been a death warrant instead of a document of freedom.

“All men are created equal,” those courageous patriots declared, and “are endowed by their Creator with certain
unalienable rights; . . . among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”—By Claude E. Holmes, The
Watchman, July 1940.

Quote: “Discretion of speech is more than eloquence; and to speak agreeably to him with whom we deal is more than to
speak in good words or in good order.”—By Francis Bacon, Our Times, May 1948.
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The Christian Life

MEASURE the following ingredients in the bowl of eternity—all your talents, life, health, strength, and means; the leaven of a fully yielded heart; the oil of gladness; the milk of human kindness.

ADD the life of Christ, completely submerging all ingredients; stir in thoroughly with a consecrated will the graces of the Spirit; thicken with the flour of an undivided purpose; enrich with the vitamins of good works; strain out all selfishness, criticism, and indiffERENCE; purify in the cleansing blood of Christ; season distinctively with the love of the brethren.

POUR out and evenly distribute with a fine sense of balance on the plane of human experience, guarding against extreme positions of fanaticism on the one hand, and a treacherous attitude of self-righteous all-sufficiency on the other.

BAKE in the furnace of trial with a spirit ready to learn all of life’s lessons.

CUT with the Sword of the Spirit into squares of daily living and influence.

AWAIT with eager intensity the soon coming of “Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.”—By Donald F. Haynes, Our Times, August 1947.


We can fight the world’s evil best, not merely by trying to shut it out of our life, or ward it off, but by having our heart so full of good that the power of the evil will be more than counterbalanced. In the old legends the sirens sang so sweetly that all who sailed near their home in the sea were fascinated and drawn to their shore only to be destroyed. Some tried to get safely past the enchanted spot by putting wax in their ears, so that they should not hear the luring, bewitching strains. But Orpheus, when he came, found a better way. He made music on his own ship which surpassed in sweetness that of the sirens, and thus their strains had no power over his men.

The best way to break the charm of this world’s alluring voices is not to try to shut out the music by stopping our ears, but to have our hearts filled with the sweeter music of the joy of Christ. Then temptation will not have power over us, because there is a mightier power within us. A deep love for Christ is the best antidote against the debasing influences of sin.—From The Ram’s Horn, Signs of the Times, April 22, 1903.

Quote: “The man who trusts others will make fewer mistakes than he who distrusts them.”—Cavour, Signs of the Times, September 15, 1898.


A writer tells the story of a minister who “called upon a member who had been neglecting the week-night service, and went straight up to the fireplace in the sitting-room, and with the tongs removed a live coal from off the fire, and placed it on the hearth, then watched it while it turned from the red glow of heat to a black mass. The member in question carefully observed the proceeding, and then said, ‘You need not say a single word, sir; I’ll be there on Wednesday night.’”—Selected, Signs of the Times, September 7, 1904.

Quote: “O, for closest communion with God, till soul and body, head, face, and heart shine with divine brilliancy! But, O, for a holy ignorance of our shining!”—By Rutherford, Signs of the Times, August 28, 1901.

A touching story is told of the late Prince Napoleon. He had joined the English army, and was one day at the head of a squad riding horseback outside the camp. It was a dangerous situation. One of the company said:
"We had better return. If we don’t hasten, we may fall into the hands of the enemy."
"O," said the Prince, "let us stay here ten minutes and drink our coffee!"
Before the ten minutes had passed, a company of the enemy came upon them, and in the skirmish the prince lost his life. His mother, when informed of the facts, in her anguish said:
"That was his greatest mistake from babyhood. He never wanted to go to bed at night in time, or rise in the morning. He was ever pleading for ten minutes more. When too sleepy to speak, he would lift up his two little hands and spread out ten fingers, indicating that he wanted ten minutes more. On this account I sometimes called him 'Mr. Ten Minutes.'"
How many have lost not only their lives, but their souls, by this sin of procrastination! When God calls, we should promptly obey.—From Episcopal Recorder, Signs of the Times, December 12, 1895.

Quote: "Sorrows are like the thunder clouds; in the distance they look black; over our heads hardly gray."—Unknown, Signs of the Times, January 9, 1896.

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