September 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.

While walking with a friend one day, John Bunyan saw a man staggering under the influence of liquor. The friend expressed his repugnance to the scene, and wondered how a man could sink so low. But Bunyan, who had been a great sinner, saw the man through different eyes; and, with deep emotion, said, “It is only by the grace of God that that man is not John Bunyan.”—By Albert E. Barnes, Signs of the Times, April 13, 1926.

Quote: “It is easy to exclude the noontide light by closing the eyes; and it is easy to resist the clearest truth by hardening the heart against it.”—By Keith, Signs of the Times, August 10, 1926.

Don’t miss the October 2012 issue of Signs of the Times: “Gift of Love,” “You Shall Not Commit Adultery,” “Messages From God,” “Will the Real Jesus Please Stand Up?” “How to Be Friends With God,” “When You Can’t Buy or Sell,” “Is Baptism Really Necessary,” “How to Understand the Delay in Christ’s Return” and other important articles.

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As Banfield, the distinguished missionary to Nigeria, sat with his native teacher, translating the twentieth chapter of Revelation, he reached the verse that speaks of Satan being bound for a thousand years. The native had been listening spellbound, and suddenly made a rush for the door and ran up and down the yard in a state of ecstatic joy. When the translator followed to find the cause of his joy, the pundit said, “Good news too much, no devil for a thousand years!”—By Kenneth J. Holland, These Times, February 1954.

Quote: “Prayer covers the whole of a man’s life. There is no thought, feeling, yearning, or desire, however low, trifling, or vulgar we may deem it, which, if it affects our real interest or happiness, we may not lay before God and be sure of sympathy. His nature is such that our often coming does not tire Him. The whole burden of the whole life of every man may be rolled on to God and not weary Him, though it has wearied the man.”—By Henry Ward Beecher, These Times, September 1971.

NEW from Pacific Press—Love Under Fire by Ellen G. White. What is happening to our world? Storms, earthquakes, tsunamis, wars and conflicts surround us. Economic crises threaten the security of people and nations around the globe. Love Under Fire outlines the grand sweep of events that have brought us to this point and will usher in this world’s final events. This book, like no other, offers a behind-the-scenes glimpse of the ongoing, inescapable conflict between good and evil. A thrilling presentation of the past and present, Love Under Fire points us to a glorious future—grander than we could ever imagine! Condensed and adapted by the White Estate from The Great Controversy.

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A certain poor immigrant whom we will call Leo found himself entirely without resources or friends in New York City. Finally, driven by hunger and fatigue, he was forced to beg. He was unable to speak the English language, and he found no one who spoke his language in the fashionable neighborhood where he was calling.

Door after door of homes which bespoke the presence of every comfort, closed firmly in his face.

“Go away, ragged beggar, or I’ll call the police!” Leo did not understand any of the words, but the tone of the voice, and the facial expression, were plain enough in any language. They did not offer help or hope.
Leo could understand only one word in English. This was the word “come.” He had learned it passing through customs. There he had entered the right doorway, or approached the proper counter or window, because someone had smiled at him, beckoned with the hand, and said, “Come!”

One day, after knocking on many doors, and listening carefully for the word, he began to fear that he would never hear it again. Hunger’s pangs had spurred him to the last of his endurance. Should he return to the pier and hurl himself into the blue-green waves? At least they would receive him.

Wearily he decided to knock on one more door. It was a little brownstone house with a white picket fence, and ivy at the windows. The gray-haired woman who came to the door was unable to understand his entreaties, spoken in his own language, but her face was kind. Her eyes took quick note of his pale features, trembling hands, and worn clothing.

“Come in, and let me fix you something to eat.”

“Come?” asked Leo doubtfully.

“Come!” She beckoned with a gracious smile. This time there could be no doubt. His response to that magic word brought him food and, later, contact with Christian people who spoke his native tongue. They put him in touch with an agency which could help him solve all of his problems.

The thought behind the word “Come” is as old as the world itself. It is one of the most elementary of human responses. A mother’s reaction to her child’s cry of hunger, or fear, or discomfort, is “Come!” The repentant prodigal, the person seeking employment, the discouraged suitor, all long to hear this word. It is also the fundamental word of Christian doctrine and practice.

Take that word “Come” out of the gospel story and what would you have left? It is an expression of the heights of Christian hope and experience. Gather together all of the noble words and phrases which men use to proclaim the kingdom of Christ; simmer them down until you have the nugget, the meat, the kernel, and you will find it all in that mighty word of invitation: “Come!”


Quote: “No height is too high to scale if God is on our side, no task too impossible to undertake.”—By Charles H. Brent, Signs of the Times, August 3, 1926.

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Place this in your church bulletin or newsletter: Want an easy way to introduce a friend or neighbor to Jesus? Send them Signs of the Times! They will notice your thoughtfulness and appreciate your interest in their lives.

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An English officer in India awoke one morning to find his body covered with leeches which, during the night, had found their way into his tent and fastened on his body. He was about to tear them off with his fingers when his native servant stopped him and told him that such action would cause his death, because part of the animal would remain in the wounds and prove fatal through blood poisoning.

The servant prepared a bath, into which the officer plunged, and immediately the foul parasites dropped off and left the man uninjured, and not poisoned. This is the only cure for sins: the poison must come out. “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.”—From The London Sunday School Times, These Times, August 1951.

Quote: “I long to accomplish a great and noble task, but it is my chief duty to accomplish humble tasks as though they were great and noble. The world is moved along, not only by the mighty shoves of its heroes, but also by the aggregate of the tiny pushes of each honest worker.”—By Helen Keller, These Times, October 1968.

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Many people do not have anything worth living for. They spend their lives dropping buckets down empty wells and grow old drawing nothing up. To have no mission is life’s final bankruptcy. A story that illustrates this point concerns a lady who was mourning for her son and for two years had made her home a second tomb. Finally her doctor told her to arrange her affairs, for she had only a few weeks left to live. So she ordered her uniformed chauffeur to drive her out to the cemetery for one last look at the grave. They stopped at the office, and the chauffeur asked the clerk to come out, for the lady was too weak to get out of the car and come in. When the clerk went out to the car, the lady said, “I’m Mrs. Adams. I’m the lady who has been sending you five dollars every week for the past two years for flowers for my son’s grave.”

The young man looked at her sad, thin face and then said, “Lady, I’m sorry you kept sending that money every week.”

“Sorry?” replied Mrs. Adams.
“Yes. You see, ma’am, the flowers don’t last long out there, and besides nobody sees them.”

“Do you realize what you are saying?” she asked.

“Yes, ma’am, I realize what I am saying. You see, I belong to a visiting society. We visit the sick every week in the hospitals and the insane asylums. Those people dearly love to see flowers and to touch them and smell them. Lady, those are living people in places like that.”

Mrs. Adams ordered her chauffeur to drive off. The clerk watched them depart and returned to his work. Several months later he was surprised one day with another visit from Mrs. Adams, and doubly surprised because this time she was driving her own car. She got out of the car, came in, and said with a pleasant smile, “Young man, you were right. I’ve been delivering flowers to the sick myself since I was here. It does make them happy, doesn’t it? And it makes me happy, too. The doctors don’t know what’s making me well, but I do. I’ve found something worth living for!”

“God, help me keep my eyes upon the stars,
But also keep my feet upon the ground.
I want to help to heal the mental scars
I find in fellow humans all around.
Frustrating fear leaves many minds intense;
I want to point them to Thy tranquil skies.
So give to me the gift of common sense,
And please, God, keep a twinkle in my eyes!”—By Adlai Albert Esteb, These Times, May 1961.

A majestic tree fell in its prime—fell on a calm evening when there was scarcely a breath of air stirring. It had withstood a century of storms, and now was broken off by a zephyr. The secret was disclosed in its falling. A boy’s hatchet had been stuck into it when it was a tender sapling. The wound had been grown over and hidden away, but it had never healed. There at the heart of the tree it stayed, a spot of decay, ever eating a little farther and deeper into the trunk, until at last the tree was rotted through, and it fell of its own weight when it seemed to be at its best.

So do many lives fall when they seem to be at their strongest, because some sin or fault of youth has left its wounding and its consequent weakness at the heart. For many years it is hidden, and life goes on in strength. At last, however, its sad work is done, and at his prime the man falls.—By J. R. Miller, Signs of the Times, January 24, 1900.

Quote: “Kindness is the music of good-will to men, and on this harp the smallest fingers may play heaven’s sweetest tunes on earth.”—By Elihu Burritt, Signs of the Times, May 15, 1899.

A big silver dollar, a little red cent,
Rolling along together went,
Rolling along the smooth sidewalk
When the dollar remarked—for a dollar can talk—
“You poor little cent, you cheap little mite,
I’m bigger and more than twice as bright;
I’m worth more than you a hundredfold
And written on me in letters bold
Is a motto drawn from a pious creed,
‘In God we trust,’ for all to read.”

“Yes, I know,” said the cent; “I’m a cheap little mite,
And I know I’m not big nor good nor bright.
And yet,” said the cent, with a meek little sigh,
“You don’t go to church as often as I.”—Author Unknown, These Times, May 1961.