July 2013 Signs of the Times Newsletter

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

It is told of Hannah More that she had a good way of managing talebearers. It is said that whenever she was told anything derogatory to another, her invariable reply was, “Come, we will go and ask if this be true.” The effect was sometimes ludicrously painful. The talebearer was taken aback, stammered out a qualification, or begged that no notice might be taken of the statement. But the good lady was inexorable; off she to the scandalmonger to the scandalized, to make inquiry and compare accounts. It is not likely that anybody ever a second time ventured to repeat a gossipy story to Hannah More. One would think her method of treatment would be a sure cure for scandal.—Harper’s Bazar, Signs of the Times, April 9, 1894.

Quote: “Many believe an hour spent in church will pay the interest on a week of sin.”—Unknown, Signs of the Times, April 12, 1883.

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One outstanding character who has been prominent in religious affairs as a man of consecration is Hudson Taylor. Once while traveling in China he came to a river and hired a boatman to ferry him across. Immediately after he had done this, a Chinese gentleman, in silks and satins, reached the river. Not observing Mr. Taylor, he asked the boatman to rent the boat to him. The boatman refused, saying that he had just engaged the boat to the foreigner. At this the Chinese gentleman looked at Mr. Taylor, and, without a word, dealt him a heavy blow between the eyes with his fist. Mr. Taylor was stunned, and staggered back. But presently he recovered himself, and, looking up, saw his assailant standing between him and the river’s brink.

In an instant Mr. Taylor raised his hands to give the man a push into the stream. But in an instant more, he dropped his arms to his sides. Mr. Taylor then said to the gentleman: “You see I could have pushed you into the stream. But the Jesus whom I serve would not let me do this. You were wrong in striking me, for the boat was mine. And since it is mine, I invite you to share it with me and to go with me across the river.”

The Chinese gentleman dropped his head in shame, and without a word, he stepped into the boat to accept the hospitality thus graciously offered. Mr. Taylor was a man of naturally quick temper, but evidently for him to live was Christ.

Because of the life that Hudson Taylor lived, others were influenced to live a life of consecration to the Lord. The story is told of a well-to-do man in whose home Mr. Taylor stayed for a week. This man was so impressed by his consecration that he prayed: “Lord, if Thou wilt make me something like that little man, I will give Thee everything I’ve got.” And the Lord took him at his word. From that time onward his consecration deepened.

One day the man influenced by Mr. Taylor said to his wife, “My dear, don’t you think we can do with a less-expensive house than this so that we may reduce our living expenses and give more money to the Lord?” He then proposed that they should sell the property, build a cheaper house, and give what might thus be gained to foreign missions. Happily, he had a wife who was a true helpmeet to him, and she heartily agreed to the proposal. The old property was sold, the new house was built, and the sum gained was given to God for His cause abroad.

About two years later he spoke again to his wife on the wise: “Dear, I feel bad about this house. The architect got me in for more money than I intended to spend on it. What do you say to selling it? I have a lot on an adjacent street, and we can build there a cheaper house than this, and then we can give the difference to foreign missions.” This
man’s wife was not a woman who liked changes. She loved the Lord, however, and again she gave a ready assent to the proposal. The first transaction was repeated. A plainer, cheaper house was built, and all that was made by the change was given to missions.

Meanwhile, this man’s business continued to prosper. In fact, everything he touched seemed to turn to gold. But his personal and family expenses, by his deliberate choice, were constantly being reduced. He lived more and more simply. He gave and gave, more and more, to God’s cause at home and abroad. This continued until his death. This man was, by nature, one who loved money. It had a fascination for him, both in making it and in spending it. But greediness was taken out of his life. His heart was where his treasure was, and his treasure was in heaven. In other words, he was able to say, “For me to live is Christ.”—By Stanley C. Harris, *Our Times*, March 1949.

Quote: “It often costs more to revenge injuries than to bear them.”—Unknown, *Signs of the Times*, January 18, 1883.

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If you have ever read biographies of George Mueller, you know that his track record for understanding the Lord’s guidance was impressive. For the first 20 years of his life Mueller was a reprobate. After his conversion, he began a ministry that was to last more than 50 years, running orphanages for the street urchins of Bristol. He never had a public relations man. He never advertised his needs. Whenever he needed money, food, or clothes for his orphans, he told no one, but went to his closet and prayed. During his lifetime, George Mueller received millions of dollars solely in answer to prayer.

One time Mueller was on a ship out in the Atlantic, headed for Bristol. Fog came in,
and the captain of the ship who later told the story had been at his post for three days, guiding the ship at a snail’s pace. Mueller approached him and said, “Captain, I need to be in Bristol on Saturday.”

“There’s no way you’ll be in Bristol on Saturday,” the captain replied. “Can’t you see this fog?”

Mueller replied, “My eyes are not on the fog, but on the living God. Captain, will you go below with me and pray that God will remove the fog?”

The captain followed Mueller below, and they knelt together. Mueller said a simple prayer that a Sunday School boy might have prayed. “Dear Jesus, You know about the appointment that You made for me in Bristol on Saturday, so please take the fog away. Amen.”

The captain was going to try to manufacture some kind of prayer, but Mueller stopped him. “In the first place, you don’t believe God can do it,” he said, “and in the second place, I believe He’s already done it. If you will go back up to the bridge, you will find that the fog is gone.”

The captain went outside and discovered that the fog was indeed gone, just as Mueller had said. They were in Bristol on Saturday.—By Morris Venden, *Signs of the Times*, October 1988.

Quote: “Life is a grindstone. Whether it grinds a man down or polishes him depends upon the kind of stuff he is made of.”—Unknown, *These Times*, August 1965.

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“Mother, why don’t my sweet peas come up? Why don’t they?”

“Perhaps the seeds were too old. Let us dig some of them up, and see if we can find out what the trouble is.”

For three weeks, since she had first dropped the seeds into the ground, my little daughter had watched her sweet-pea bed.

We took a trowel, and went to the garden. Down, down we dug, two, three, four inches
into the moist earth, and pulled out a seed. It had sprouted, and a poor little threadlike stem had started struggling up toward the light; but there was no life in it.

“I must have planted them too deep, mother.”

“Yes, dear, you buried the poor little things, instead of planting them.”

“What shall we do?”

We prepared the soil again, and bought another package of seeds. This time we covered them with less than an inch of earth. In about a week, leaves began to peep through the ground. Soon our row was complete.

One day I studied some wonderful things out of a wonderful book, and then buried them deep in my heart. They were of no further use to the world, for nobody knew they were there except myself.

When I came to search for them, they were dead.—By Ella M. Robinson, Signs of the Times, July 24, 1934.

Quote: “Life is too short not to make it great.”—Disraeli, These Times, July 1965.

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In the early frontier days of one of our far Western towns, a man sitting in his office heard the yelling of men and the screams of women. He also heard the clattering hoofs of a runaway horse. Although he was a brilliant attorney, he was also an experienced horseman. Rushing out of his office he saw the maddened creature tearing down the street. The man in the cart was calling frantically for help. At the risk of his own life, this lawyer flung himself at the head of that horse and grasped the dangling reins. He was dragged along the road, but he brought the horse to a standstill and saved the man’s life. The one he rescued was, of course, deeply grateful.

Years afterward a prisoner was on trial for his life. As the weeks went by, the condemned man seemed overconfident—almost disdainful of the proceedings. Then the last day came and the jury brought in the verdict—“Guilty!” The judge turned to the prisoner and asked if there was anything he would like to say. Realizing that this was his last opportunity, he made an impassioned appeal to the judge, saying, “Don’t you know me? I thought you would recognize me. Do you remember how, many years ago, you caught a runaway horse and saved a man’s life?"

“Yes, I do,” said the judge.

“Well, I am that man. Judge, you saved me then; save me now!”

But the judge in solemn tones replied, “That day I was your savior; today I am your judge, and the jury has brought the verdict.”

Quote: “There is always enough light to get home.”--By Charles G. Bellah, *Signs of the Times*, May 6, 1930.

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Don’t Quit

When things go wrong, as they sometimes will,
When the road you’re trudging seems all uphill,
When the funds are low and the debts are high,
And you want to smile, but you have to sigh,
When care is pressing you down a bit,
Rest, if you must—but don’t you quit.

Life is funny with its twists and turns,
As everyone of us sometimes learns
And many a failure turns about
When he might have won had he stuck it out;
Don’t give up, though the pace seems slow—
You might succeed with another blow.

Success is failure turned inside out—
The silver tint of the clouds of doubt—
And you never can tell how close you are,
It may be near when it seems afar;
So stick to the fight when you’re hardest hit—
It’s when things seem worse that you mustn’t quit.—Author Unknown, *These Times*, July 1967.

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Compiled by Dale Galusha. Please pass this newsletter on to others.
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