January 2015 *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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Once when the Union soldiers were retreating from the valley of Virginia, they burnt a bridge over the Shenandoah. Stonewall Jackson, who wanted to pursue them, sent for his old bridge-builder. “Sir,” he said, “you must keep men at work all day and all night, and finish that bridge by tomorrow morning. My engineer shall give you a plan.” Old Miles saluted and withdrew.

    Early the next morning the general sent for Miles again. “Well, sir,” said Jackson, “did the engineer give you the plan for the bridge?”

    “General,” said the old man slowly, “the bridge is done; “I don’t know whether the picture is or not.”

    Now that is the kind of bridge-builders we want in the church, men and women who go right ahead with their own work, no matter what their neighbors are doing.—By Spurgeon, *Signs of the Times*, January 11, 1899.

Quote: “True goodness, like the glowworm, shines most when no eyes save those of
Heaven are upon it.”—Unknown, *Signs of the Times*, February 20, 1893.

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When one of the bridges that now connect Manhattan with Long Island was being built, the workmen, seeking to lay the base of a supporting tower in the bottom of the East River, discovered that years before a stone-laden scow had sunk at that spot and was deeply embedded in the mud.

Divers were sent down who managed to pass chains around the scow, and these were attached to tugs which tried to raise it; but in vain. One of the engineers conceived the plan of mooring two canal barges at low tide directly above the scow, fastening the chains to them and waiting for the help of the Atlantic Ocean.

When the tide rose, flooding up the bay from the great deep, slowly but surely it lifted the scow and left the bridge builders free to lay their foundation.

How much like life. We cannot lift ourselves by our bootstraps. It is only when the tide of the power of God flows into our lives that we can be raised to newness of life.—By Henry Sloane Coffin, *These Times*, December 1958.

Quote: “What this country needs is another holiday—a day set aside to celebrate having survived the others.”—Unknown, *These Times*.

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John Hutton of Glasgow had just announced his text as guest preacher when he noticed a parishioner settling down to sleep for the duration of the sermon. Pointing his finger and in a peremptory voice, Hutton thundered: “Man, let us begin even—both awake. If you fall asleep while I am preaching, you win. If you stay awake, I win. But let us begin even.” Whatever else, the incident does remind us of the fact that it takes at least two to make a sermon.—By James T. Cleland, *These Times*, December 1973.

Quote: “Christ is not valued at all unless He be valued above all.”—By St. Augustine, *These Times*, November 1960.

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The word “chapel” comes from a word which once meant “cloak.” How it attained its present meaning is the inspiring story of a devoted man, Martin, bishop of Tours. Living in France during the fourth century, Martin was compelled, through the influence of his father, to serve in the Roman army. But, no admirer of war and conquest, he became a convert to Christianity.

One bitterly cold afternoon while with his regiment in Amiens, the young soldier met a ragged, shivering beggar squatting near the city gate. Deeply moved by the man’s plight, Martin removed his heavy cloak and cut it in half with his sword. Gently he wrapped one half of the cloak about the grateful beggar. The other half he put around himself.

When Martin finally obtained his release from the army, he put into practice the simple virtues of Christ, ministering to the sick and needy, and becoming renowned for his works of charity. Of considerable eminence in the church of the fourth century, founder of what is considered the earliest monastic institution in Gaul, and later, bishop of Tours, Martin died around the year 400.

But the people of France refused to let the memory of such a man pass away. He was designated “St. Martin of Tours”—the patron saint of France. His cloak was preserved as a sacred relic and placed on display in a holy sanctuary. In France the word for cloak is
“cappella.” So the sanctuary where Martin’s cloak was housed was also called a “cappella.” Those who cared for the cloak were referred to as the “cappellani.” These terms were later modified to “Chapele” and “Chapelain,” respectively. In English the words went through still another spelling change to become “chapel” and “chaplain.” Thus each time we speak of a chapel, we are referring to the unselfish deeds of St. Martin of Tours.—By Alfred K. Allan, *These Times*, April 1957.


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One day on the golf course I learned a very useful lesson. Trees were forever popping up between where my ball lay and the green. These trees made both a physical and mental hazard and cost me many strokes. One day a little caddy said, “Mister, don’t pay any attention to those trees. Eighty-five percent of the tops of trees is space. Shoot as if the trees weren’t there.”

I can testify that this was good advice. I wonder if 85 percent of our fears are not groundless?—By A. W. Beasley, *These Times*, January 1958.

Quote: “We have learned to fly through the air like birds, and to swim under the sea like fish. All that remains is to learn to walk the earth like humans.”—From Wesleyan Christian Advocate, *These Times*, December 1960.

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The devil has a great many servants; they are all busy and active ones. They ride in the railway trains, they sail on the steamboats, they swarm along the highways of the country and the thoroughfares of the cities, they do business in the busy marts, they are everywhere and in all places. Some are so vile looking that one instinctively turns from them in disgust; but some are so sociable, insinuating, and plausible, that they almost
deceive at times the very elect. Among the latter classes are to be found the devil’s four servants. Here are their names:

“There’s no danger.” That is one.
“Only this once.” That is another.
“Everybody does so.” That is the third.
“By-and-by.” That is the fourth.

When tempted from the path of strict rectitude, and “There is no danger” urges you on, say, “Get thee behind me, Satan!”

Whenever tempted to give the Sabbath up to pleasure, or to do a little labor in the workshop or counting room, and “Only this once” or “Everybody does so” whispers at your elbow, do not listen for a moment to the dangerous counsel.

All four are cheats and liars. They mean to deceive and cheat you out of Heaven.

“Behold,” says God, “now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.” He has no promise for “by-and-by.”—From Christian at Work, Signs of the Times, March 25, 1886.

Quote: “Good books, like good friends, are few and chosen. The more select, the more enjoyable.”—By A. Bronson Alcott, Signs of the Times, July 18, 1892.

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“My Saviour Knows . . .”

I do not know what next may come
Across my pilgrim way,
I do not know tomorrow’s road
Or see beyond today;
But this I know—my Saviour knows
The path I cannot see,
And I can trust His wounded hand
To guide and care for me.

I do not know what may await
Or what the morrow brings,
But with the glad salute of faith
I hail its opening wings;
For this I know—that in my Lord
Shall all my needs be met,
And I can trust the heart of Him
Who has not failed me yet!—By E. Margaret Clarkson, These Times.

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