August 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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John Bunyan, in his earlier days, had great temptation to sin. He became especially weak in the matter of using vile language. One day, at a Sunday ballgame, he became angered at some trivial thing, and on the way home began to use many oaths. As he passed a notoriously wicked woman of the village, she immediately began to chide him by saying she had seldom heard such evil language as he was using at that time.

When he reached home, John began to think of the state he was in, that this wicked woman, notorious for her own improper speech, should be the one to chide him for his manner of talking. Throwing himself down before God, he pleaded for help and strength to overcome this evil tendency. God granted his plea for cleansing, for in the days that followed his language so improved that today he is known for the purity and nobility of expression that is found in Pilgrim’s Progress, and which is exceeded, probably, only by that of the King James translation of the Holy Bible.—By Paul C. Cardey, Signs of the Times, May 9, 1939.

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Henry Thoreau, a nineteenth century writer and philosopher, visited a farmer plowing his field with a team of oxen. As the two walked behind the plow, they talked about the kind of diet best suited to build strong bodies.

The farmer said, “You cannot live on vegetable foods solely, for they furnish nothing to build bones with.”

Thoreau mused, “All the while he walks he is walking behind his oxen which with vegetable-made bones jerked him and his plow along.”—By Mervyn Hardinge, *Signs of the Times*, November 1987.

Quote: "Cheerful people, the doctors say, resist disease better than the glum ones. In other words, the 'surly bird catches the germ!' “—By D. Van Gundy Jones, *These Times*, July 1968.

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NEW from Pacific Press—*A Time to Forgive* by Darold Bigger. What do you do when your daughter’s been murdered—been stabbed to death—and now is lying cold and stiff in a morgue hundreds of miles away? *A Time to Forgive* is the tragic story of Shannon Bigger’s murder and her family’s journey to forgiveness. Dr. Bigger lets us see, up close and personal, his struggle to forgive, and the breakthrough that gave life meaning and value again. Don’t miss this amazing story of tragedy and hope. Order online!

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An English publication offered a prize for the best definition of a friend, and among the thousands of answers received were the following:

“One who multiplies joys, divides grief, and whose honesty is inviolable.”

“One who understands our silence.”
“A volume of sympathy bound in cloth.”
“A watch which beats true for all time and never runs down.”

And here is the definition that won the prize—“A friend is the one who comes in when the whole world has gone out.”

Even as David thanked God for Jonathan and praised him in well-remembered lines, so have we abundant reasons to thank God today for friends and to resolve to keep these friendships in constant repair.—By Edgar DeWitt Jones, These Times, February 1958.

Quote: “Goodwill is the awareness that all people, like little children, need love most when they deserve it least.”—By Harold E. Kohn, These Times, January 1968.

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At the lowest moment of his despair, William Cowper rode over London looking for the river into which he had planned to plunge. Fog was so thick that night that he rode in the horse-drawn cab for an hour or more. Life had run into the short rows of meaninglessness, futility, and hopelessness.

To end it all seemed the better part of valor and wisdom. But where was the river? Rebuking the cabbie for taking so long to find the river bank, Cowper thrust open the door of his cab. Upon doing so, he discovered that instead of being near the river, he was right back at his own doorstep!

That did it. Smitten by such a singular coincidence, he rushed to his room, took a quill and paper, and penned the lines that have cheered millions who have come to the brink of disaster.

“God moves in a mysterious way
   His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
   And rides upon the storm.”—by Roy O. McClain, These Times, December 1962.

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You are never alone when you are giving all you have to the cause of righteousness. Workers in an English factory were amazed to discover one day that their king was working alongside them at a lathe and had been, for some time, without being recognized.

When the news spread it sent a thrill throughout the entire plant. “The king is working with us,” everybody said.

Every Christian has a right to believe that. Our efforts in behalf of right are not the only efforts that are being invested in the enterprise. God’s efforts are also going in alongside ours. He supplements our labors, supplying what we lack. It’s a partnership we’re in. Jesus once said, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.”—By Roy L. Smith, *Signs of the Times*, November 2, 1954.

Quote: “If we feel neither fear nor love, we are on a level with the brutes; if we have fear and not love, we are slaves; if we have love and some fear, we have passed into the region of friendship; if fear is gone, and love only remains, we have reached intimacy, identity.”—By Maltbie D. Babcock, *Signs of the Times*, February 5, 1929.

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An interesting heart story is told of a devout business man whose wife was suddenly taken away, leaving him with an only daughter as the head of his home. In their mutual sorrow and loneliness, they formed the habit of spending an hour together each evening, the daughter sitting upon a hassock at her father’s feet while they talked together of the experiences of the day.

As Christmas time approached, the daughter wished to do something or to make some little thing with her own hands that would, in its own way, tell her father something of her love and her sympathy in his loneliness.

Time was pressing in her busy life of extra responsibilities, and gradually she began to cut short the time of evening communion with her father, explaining that she was very, very busy. At last the evening hour was dropped for a season altogether, and the father
wondered, for he had come to rely very much upon the evening privilege with his beloved daughter.

On Christmas Eve, the daughter came, her face aglow with joy, bringing a beautiful pair of slippers, every stitch of the work having been wrought by her own hands. The father received the gift with pleasure. He asked if she had done it all herself. He told her how much he would appreciate the slippers, how comfortable they would be during the long evenings, and how much he appreciated her thoughtfulness in thus planning for his Christmas. But, laying his hand upon her head, he said, “One thing, my daughter, you must always remember: Nothing that you can do for me will take the place of that sacred hour you have spent with me.”

Nowadays much stress is laid upon activity for Christ and work for the advancement of His kingdom. These should be done, but not to the neglect of that quiet hour spent each day with God and His Word.—By Edwin R. Palmer, *Signs of the Times*, February 12, 1929.

Quote: “A man’s heart has only enough life in it to pursue one object fully. Ye must not give half your love to Christ, and the other half to the world. No man can serve God and mammon.”—By Spurgeon, *Signs of the Times*, January 23, 1923.

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In the summer of 1896 two friends and a guide went on a hunting trip in the woods of Maine. One was an astronomer, the other a geology professor. And the guide was a rock-ribbed Republican who was greatly troubled about the possibility that William Jennings Bryan might be elected President that November. He, along with most of his fellow citizens in the state of Maine, wondered what would happen to the country if a Democrat, a Democrat like Bryan, should get into the White House!

One evening around the campfire the astronomer and the geology professor were talking shop. They talked about the wonders of our earth. And they talked about the great distances in the sky—light years—billions of miles. The guide had never heard that kind of talk before and was greatly impressed.

Finally they got up to go to bed. And as the guide kicked the fire out, he mumbled, “Well, I guess it won’t matter too much if Bryan is elected!”

It does something to our priorities, doesn’t it?
And we shall find that the better we know Christ, the less we shall be disturbed by the little problems, the unimportant questions, the petty annoyances of everyday life.—By George Vandeman, These Times, December 1979.

Quote: “There is no surprise more magical than the surprise of being loved. It is God’s finger on man’s shoulder.”—By Charles Morgan, These Times, April 1964.

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12 Ways to Be Perfectly Miserable

1. Think about yourself.
2. Talk about yourself.
3. Listen greedily to what people say about you.
4. Expect to be appreciated.
5. Be sensitive to slights.
7. Trust nobody but yourself.
8. Demand agreement with your own views on everything.
9. Sulk if people are not grateful to you for favors shown them.
10. Be on the lookout for a good time for yourself.
11. Shirk your duties if possible.
12. Do as little as possible for others.—Unknown, These Times, October 1964.

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