

Pressing On!

Philippians 3:12-14

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PRESSING ON! (DL: MA 1367-98)
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The Schemer's Busy Still at Scheming;

Jim vH

Almighty God Js Busy Still Redeeming!

When Iran was still Persia, in the days of the Biblical Queen Esther, there was this infamous Prime Minister Haman. He had his elaborate scheme ready to eliminate all the Jews from all of the Empire. How does that compare with today's Iran? Under the Ayatollah, its present government is openly vowing to wipe Israel off the map. Apart from the Qur'an, they may well be inspired by Haman; possibly by Hitler too. Both came close to accomplishing Satan's brain child.

Hitler exterminated some 6,000,000 Jews. Now the Ayatollah has a nation of 6,000,000 Jews on his doorstep, and he and his men are feverishly scheming to get their hands on nuclear arms, and on the missiles to deliver them - apparently with the blessing of Presidents Obama and Putin.

Draw your own conclusions. Mordecai suggested to Esther that she had "come to the kingdom for such a time as this". Wouldn't he tell today's believers much the same? Our prayer and witness will avail much at "such a time as this".

Talking about Satan and about the Jews - it is not often realized that the master-schemer, immediately after the great Reformation of the 16th century, managed to waylay our very own reformers.


Jewish history, through many centuries, had been tragic. How much had they suffered at the hands of 'Christians', be they Roman Catholic or Orthodox! Then to cap it, both Luther and Calvin came out with their "replacement theology". Israel had supposedly been 'replaced' by the Church, and had no longer any part in the promises of God - it had no future. As a nation, Israel had been completely and terminally sidelined for ever...

We might call it the reformers' 'Athaliah-syndrome' (in line with our main story), unless you prefer 'Ayatollah-syndrome'. Satan was busily doing his anti-Messiah scheming through the very people that God was using for blessing! The so-called 'replacement theology', still popular with many theologians even now, eventually gave ground to the Nazis four centuries later for their systematic genocide of Abraham's children.

The reformers, as 'men-of-the-Bible', were sadly and inexplicably shortsighted in respect to what God had been doing and was still doing, and had so clearly promised to keep on doing, in regards to the Children of Abraham. He never did transfer the promises, that were specifically for Israel - his ethnic and geographical nation - to the present Ekklesia, God's spiritual nation. The promises/prophesies focus on the nation of Israel - securely settled in its land - with its Messiah reigning over the entire world from Jerusalem. Here is one of the more than 150 such promises about Israel as a nation, most of which are explicit and extensive:

"I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries where I have driven them, and bring them back to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. I will set up shepherds over them who will feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, nor shall they be lacking", says the LORD.

"Behold, the days are coming", says the LORD "that I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; now this is his name by which He will be called: 'THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS!'"

"Therefore, behold, the days are coming", says the LORD, "that they shall no longer say, 'As the LORD lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt', but, 'As the LORD lives who brought up and led the descendants of the house of Israel from the north country and from all the countries where I had driven them'. And they shall dwell in their own land" (Jeremiah 23). 

What Could Have Happened to 2 Thessalonians 2:3?

The verse, generally best known in the NT, in which we find the ‘apostasy’ word, is 2 Thessalonians 2:3. It usually runs like this (depending on which version you use): “Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way. For that day will not come unless the apostasy comes first and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction”.

‘Apostasy’ is a transliteration from the original Greek. Bible translators usually just leave it like that in this particular verse, without translating it. But some do translate it; for example, as ‘falling away’, ‘rebellion’ or ‘revolt’. All that should come as a surprise, when it is realized that the Greek word simply means ‘**departure**’. It is used as such in places like Matthew 7:23; Luke 2:37; 4:13; 13:27, and others.

So what could have happened to 2 Thessalonians 2:3? Simply that some of the first Bible translators had a preconceived idea about the ‘apostasy’ word. They felt it meant ‘unfaithfulness to’, or ‘falling away from’, one’s ‘religion’. Consequently, as the translators opted for leaving it untranslated, and so just transliterated it, their readers too began to (mis)understand this word in the same way.

Paul again mentions ‘apostasy’ in the following epistle. He writes: ‘**In later times some will depart from the faith**’ (1 Timothy 4:1). But, lo and behold, here we get the proper translation into English of the ‘apostasy’ word (‘depart’). Note that Paul writes about a departure ‘**from the faith**’. but, of course, that is not what he does in 2 Thessalonians 2:3. There it is not a question of a departure-from-the-faith. What is he writing about to the Thessalonian saints? He is writing about a different kind of departure, not ‘from-the-faith’, but from earth! That was what he had been writing to them about in his former letter, when he gave them the wonderful details of the rapture (see 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18), and then again right before he uses the ‘apostasy’ word (see 2 Thess. 2:1-3).

We must emphasize the importance, especially in the case of 2 Thessalonians 2:3, of realizing that the English word ‘apostasy’ does not now, in our modern day and age, properly convey what it was meant to convey in the first century in Greek. The modern meaning is an acquired meaning. It is not what the Thessalonians understood Paul to tell them. They understood it in the context in which he was writing to them, i.e.: ‘concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and **our being gathered to Him**’ (2:1). In other words, to them it was about the rapture of the redeemed Ekklesia - the Christians’ sudden departure from earth. That sudden disappearance of the entire Ekklesia, according to Paul, would be immediately followed by the manifestation of the Man of Sin, which in turn would usher in the 7-year period of Great Tribulation.

Only reading it like that, as it was meant to be, will give the proper sense to verses 6-8. The sudden departure of the Ekklesia is what Paul and his readers understood to be the removal of any restraint that might still be holding back the Antichrist in his manifestation. His ‘mystery’, Paul says, is already at work, but not yet his ‘manifestation’. In other words, for the full manifestation to the world, of the Antichrist, the Man of Sin, the God-imposed ‘restraint’ on him will have to be lifted first, and that is the Church, the Ekklesia. It is inhabited by the Holy Spirit, who exercises that restraint as the ‘salt-

of-the-earth’. Up till now, the ‘salt’ is still restraining a total putrefaction of the world - then, suddenly, as the Ekklesia is removed, there will be nothing standing in the Antichrist’s way - he will manifest himself fully and freely as the great Savior of the world. These verses, **2:6-8**, make that clear.

Interestingly, William Tyndale, got it right! That great translation pioneer of the early 16th century, at age 42, paid as a martyr for his loyal and loving service of translating the Bible into English from the original languages. He put 2 Thessalonians 2:3 this way: ‘**Let no man deceive you by any means, for the Lord cometh not, except there come a departing first**, and that that sinful man be opened, the son of perdition’.

A modern version, with the convenience of modern resources and expertise, renders the verse like this: ‘Let no one deceive you in any way. For it will not be, unless **the departure** comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of destruction’ (*World English Bible - emphasis added*).

We might add that what is almost always read into 2 Thessalonians 2:3 - a general Christian apostasy in the end time - is in reality a doomsday scenario that is not born out by the rest of the New Testament. Yes, the verse quoted before (1 Ti. 4:1) prophesies that there will be apostasy: ‘**in later times some** will depart from the faith’. Notice though that this is not about ‘the **last** time’, just about ‘later times’ and about ‘some’ who depart from the faith. In fact there is remarkable consensus among the New Testament authors, and our Lord, about the ‘falling away’ among his followers - not in the end times, but rather in their own life times. The Lord’s teaching in Matthew 7 and 13 on this subject, is followed up by the dire warnings of Paul, James, Peter, John and Jude. Note too how Paul puts the Ephesian elders on notice in Acts 20.

Then, what started during the apostles’ life time, took root soon after, when the ‘falling away’ grew out of all proportion, just like the mustard tree in Matthew 13. Remember how Jesus drew attention to all the birds that would then be nestling among its branches? ‘Birds’ here typify demons (see the first parable, and Rev. 18:2). Demons feel very much at home among Christianity’s ‘branches’, never mind that Christianity’s origins lie in the ‘faith-like-a-mustard-seed’. Once it became the Empire’s official religion in the 4th century, the rampant ‘falling away’ led to a thousand years of ‘Dark Ages’! Then, after the God-given Reformation of the 16th century, when much new life sprang up everywhere, the ‘falling away’ continued again, and it will go on right until the end. The weeds continue to grow among the wheat, observed by some, but undetected by most. In the Great Departure of the Saints however, it will become perfectly, and dramatically, clear who are the ones that have ‘fallen away’. They have not departed with the others. Being no more than name Christians, they are left behind. In his parable of the ten virgins (Mt. 25), Jesus says that five of them, the foolish ones, simply ‘kept up appearances’; they had their oil lamps, but the oil was missing... They could not enter with the five wise ones who did have oil and whose lamps were burning. They never even saw the Bridegroom, not even when He told them: ‘I don’t know you!’

The irony of the ‘apostasy’ word is that now, in its acquired meaning, we are bound to apply it to the five foolish virgins, whereas in its real and original meaning it should be wonderfully applied to the 5 wise virgins - they ‘**departed**’ to be with the Bridegroom.

(Jim vH., with acknowledgements to Kenneth Wuest, of Moody Bible Institute, for putting ‘apostasy’ in its place). 

The City of the Cursed

Part Two

Jim van H.

In Paul's time, just like in any other time, all people were *"by nature children of wrath"*. As he writes to the Ephesian Christians about the "course of this world", you might take it to be the 'curse' of this world: *"You were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others..."*

In our own 'post-modern' times, two very, very old trends, symptoms of the universal mutiny pictured in Psalm 2 - when all moral restraint is cast off - stand out as perhaps never before. They are being increasingly 'normalized' and 'legalized', and to such an extent that even an article like this might get the author into trouble... I am referring, first, to the mothers who are having their precious babies killed, many millions of them every year, before these have had a chance to be born; and, second, to that specific aspect of the curse that was rampant in Sodom and Gomorrah: homosexual practice and gay 'marriage'. This too is well on its way to conquer whole sections, not only of Society in general, but of 'Christendom' in particular, in spite of what the New Testament clearly teaches on the subject (Ro. 1; 1 Co. 6; 2 P. 2; Jude).

There are, of course, many other aspects of the curse - all that's under God's wrath - but there is no room here to touch on these. What is most important is to see what God in his love, patience and power has done about the curse through the centuries, and what He is still doing today.

Jericho was under God's curse, as we saw last time. It is also true - and a Bible Christian is aware of it - that, in reality, God's curse is not isolated or restricted to one city or one country. By man's rebellion the curse came on the whole world. We are the heirs of our first parents (Gn. 3). Later, when the law was given at Sinai, it further established the fact: *"It is written, 'Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them'."* (Gal. 3:10). Later still, John, the apostle, confirmed: *"We know that... the whole world lies in the power of the evil one"* (1 John 5:19). Furthermore, as He spoke about the Judgment of the Nations, Jesus made it quite clear that the destination of the cursed is *"the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels"* (Mt. 25:41).

From Jericho to Jerusalem. But then we remember the wonderful exception among the cursed in Jericho! When there was repentance and faith in God's Word, the curse lifted. One young woman, Rahab, with her very dark reputation - a sinner like all the others - was snatched from the falling judgment to henceforth belong to God's people. Rahab later happily married Salmon - quite possibly one of the spies that had lodged with her. She was destined to become King David's great-great-grandmother! *Amazing grace!*

And then there was Hiel... Joshua in chapter 6 prophetically foresaw Jericho's rebuilding. It reminds us of the apostle Paul's prophecy to the Ephesian elders. These were men wonderfully saved from the curse on this world, and solidly converted, yet how keenly aware Paul was of new inroads of the curse among them: *"For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears"* (Acts 20).

Joshua too must have realized that Israel was about to start down a slippery slope - once his generation had passed. Five centuries later, the 'ten tribes', headed up by Ephraim (Joshua's tribe), had arrived at the very bottom of the slope: King Ahab and Queen Jezebel were reigning in Samaria. She was from Sidon, the daughter of Sidon's king. The city of Sidon was named after its founder, Canaan's eldest son. Noah in his time, speaking for God, had pronounced the curse on Canaan and his descendants. Now Jezebel, the Canaanite princess, not only worshiped Satan herself, with the cults of Baal and Moloch, but she got her husband and most of their subjects, Abraham's children, to do the same!

The ghastly and gruesome realities of the curse were only too evident. A temple, altars, images to Baal & Moloch (the baby-devouring god of fire), all was dedicated to the grotesque, implacable enemy of God's chosen people (1 Kings 16). It was in that very time when Hiel started to rebuild Jericho, the City of the Cursed. Like Ahab and Jezebel, he too reaped a fearful harvest. What is Satan after? His sights, for now, were above all on the House of David - from it the Messiah must spring! And his strategy through Jezebel was stunning and almost successful. She managed to get her daughter, Athaliah, married off into David's royal dynasty in Jerusalem. When,

at last, the right time came, Athaliah's husband (King Joram) died, and then their son (King Ahaziah) died as well. Somehow, Athaliah was left as the sole reigning monarch... Seizing the opportunity, she took it upon herself to kill off all the possible pretenders to the Throne of David, including her own sons and grandsons...

So how about God's precious Messianic promises?

Had Jezebel and Athaliah managed to make them null and void? It certainly looked like it, and Athaliah, under Satan's "blessing", continued to reign unimpeded on David's throne for six more years. The Prince of this world was giving the lie to all that God had told Abraham - his promises so often and so emphatically repeated.

Satan may be formidable, but God is faithful!

A tiny tot was God's answer to the crisis! One of Athaliah's daughters, Jehosheba, married to the Highpriest, was able to spirit Ahaziah's youngest - Joash of one year old - away from the massacre and into the temple, where he remained hidden for those six years. Then he was brought out and solemnly crowned! When Athaliah found out, she nearly exploded, but with all her raging, she could neither stop her grandson of seven replacing her on the throne, nor, indeed, save herself from summary execution... With her, the very last member of Ahab and Jezebel's extended family had been uprooted (2 K. 11).

In case you ever wondered about the missing generations in Messiah's genealogy in Matthew 1, it was precisely this particular curse, pronounced on Ahab and all his family, by both Elijah and Elisha, that had the effect of banning three successive kings from the genealogy, Ahaziah, Joash and Amaziah. They were descendants, not only of David, but through Athaliah also of Ahab and Jezebel. God's sovereign plan - bringing his Messiah into the world in the fullness of time - must not have the slightest association with Ahab and Jezebel. The Day of Redemption must dawn in all its brightness for a world lost in the darkness of its curse.

God's Blessing takes on the Curse. Some thirty years after Hiel had rebuilt Jericho - the City of the Cursed - lo and behold, we find there is an active group of the Lord's prophets based there. And, in 2 Kings 2, Elisha, God's miracle-working prophet, spends time with them. He is told about a particular aspect of the curse - the water is no good!

That had happened before in Israel's history. At Marah in the wilderness, Moses was told to throw a "tree" into the bitter waters, and they were made sweet. That "tree" is a type of the cross of Christ, see Galatians 3:13: "*Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us, for it is written, Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree*". The curse on this world, and its blight and bitterness, was on the One hanging on the 'tree' of Calvary. Once "the cross" and all it stands for is applied to a life embittered by the curse of sin, that awful bitterness gives way to sweet love, deep peace, great joy!

Israel, after Marah, was led on to Elim where the twelve fountains and the seventy palmtrees give us a good idea of abundance and fullness. In the New Testament also we find this progression. In John 4, the Samaritan woman, whose life only knew 'dead water', was given 'living water' by the Savior. Then in John 7, to all who are thirsty for **him**, He offers '**streams** of living water'; and that means a marvelous overflow. The living water is welling up, not only **in** the ones who drink, but also **through** them for many others!

So, centuries after Moses at Marah, what is it Elisha does in Jericho regarding the bitter waters? If Moses threw in the tree, Elisha calls for salt, and when he throws it into the water's source, the waters are healed - the curse has been overcome, at least this particular effect of it. Once again we find a wonderful progression - doesn't Jesus say that his disciples are the "**salt of the earth**"? He himself is the only one who overcame the curse, totally and absolutely, doing away with it on Calvary's 'tree'. But then his disciples are given the Great Commission to 'make disciples', to be God's "salt of the earth" - his anti-corruption force in a world of corruption; his salvation and blessing, his anti-curse, where all is saturated with the curse. In this dark and murky world, Jesus says: "**You are the light of the world!**" (Mt. 5).

"God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform." There is another mention of the city that Hiel rebuilt, and, in conclusion, we must refer to it. Jesus himself, the "Blessed One", radiates blessing in the midst of the accursed. This is so **1)** as He approaches Jericho, then **2)** on his way through the city, and **3)** as He exits. Wonderful miracles happen, greater than Elisha's. Two or three blind beggars receive new eyes. One chief publican, Zacchaeus, receives a new heart (Lk. 18-19; Mr. 10; Mt. 20). But then, what happened to all the other hundreds of citizens who saw him and heard him? Did they prefer the curse? Did their dark hearts shut out the Light of the world as He illuminated them also?

Jericho had the reputation of being a 'pleasant' city. Its citizens had learned to live with the curse. You might say that the curse had become rather manageable to them, so why bother much about a Savior from the curse? Isn't that the attitude of most in this cursed world, enthralled and enticed as they are by all that the Prince of the power of the air throws at them? May our life and testimony, lived out before them, be like the salt, not only fighting corruption, but, incidentally, provoking thirst as well!

The very last page of the Bible tells us this:

"And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him"



Anamaría Grüninger

Beloved of the Lord - her Savior - and beloved of all who knew her, she was called up yonder, on April 19.

After 96 years on earth, and very many of these in faithful service to HIM, Anamaría is presently finding out how much blessed service is still awaiting her.

Apart from her Savior, it may be said that her great love was Paraguay. In 1953, after missionary training - received in her country of Switzerland - Anamaría was in Buenos Aires, Argentina, learning Spanish. In 1954, she sailed up the mighty Paraná River to Paraguay, disembarked in the town of Encarnación, and was henceforth to be known by all as

“LA SEÑORITA”. Now, 61 years later, a multitude of Paraguayans have laid her tired body to rest in Paraguayan soil, as they sang praises to her faithful Lord.

esoteric actions. But Paul re-affirms that the Christ they have accepted is real - and complete. They need nothing else. Christ is everything: and the simple action that began this new experience (receiving Christ) is all that they need to progress. **“As you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him!”**

He then goes on to explain the process they have gone through in believing in Christ. Christ is not only the fulness of God incarnate but He was crucified on their behalf. In so doing He destroyed

the powers of sin and death. By believing in Him, as baptism (a public ‘burial’ and ‘resurrection’) so clearly illustrates, they have totally finished with the old life - it has no hold on them now - they have entered fully into the new. The privilege that they enjoy is that they have received Christ and that He is more than sufficient for all that they need to live the new life.

As in Ephesians, that privilege is followed by a responsibility. Having been through the process of being “*born again*” they are to seek after those things that belong to the new life, to dwell in the realm of Christ. Remembering what their baptism represents, they are to actively stop those actions and attitudes that belong to the old life: things like, sexual immorality; wrath; slander; or dissemblance. Rather, they are to deliberately display those characteristic qualities that belong to the new life: things like, compassion; meekness, forgiveness; and, especially, love. In this new life the peace of God in their hearts should be the ruling principle, the word of Christ should be allowed to dwell in them abundantly, together they should teach each other how to live the new life, and encourage each other in it through singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, **“doing everything to the glory of God”**.

The context of this new - and exemplar - behavior is the home, with good relationships between husbands and wives, parents and children. And even in general situations, characteristics like, prayer, wise conduct, diligence, and gracious speech should be the dominant features of this “*more excellent way*”. They are not alone in this venture. There are other helpers, such as, Epaphras, Aristarchus, Mark and others, who share Paul’s concern for them. And there are other congregations they can share with.

What lessons do we learn from this letter? Similar ones to those contained in other letters, written to churches at this time, namely a reminder of the rich new life they have received, the outstanding riches and potential that are in Christ; and the responsibility to make full use of, and enjoy, all the blessings of that new life by living them out in practical everyday situations supported by each other.

Both their present and their future call for “looking up”!

Look Up! Lessons from ‘Colossians’

‘Colossians’ belongs to the set of letters that Paul wrote from Rome to a number of churches and individuals. It shares common themes with them. It echoes the call to walk worthy of the noble calling; it confirms the fact that Paul prays constantly for these churches and it also reemphasises the need to practise discipline in ‘putting off’ the old and ‘putting on’ the new.

It is also addressing a specific problem for the believers in Colossae - others had come in, bringing doubts and distractions, especially about the incarnation. Heresies abounded that posed Jesus as a spiritual being slightly out of reach and therefore out of touch for humanity. Paul’s rebuttal of that is strong. And in doing so, he provides for us some wonderful insights into the nature of salvation and its practical outworking.

What does he say in the letter? Whatever their problems, he acknowledges their spiritual status, and assures them of his appreciation and prayer. Their problems are ones of growth and progress. He wants them to look up and go on.

The letter opens with a grateful acknowledgement of the genuineness of their faith, love and hope. That came when they believed the message they heard - a message that was dynamic in its potential for growth.

He prays that they may experience more of it. In their conversion experience they have been “*translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God’s Son*”. They are in a different realm: rescued, redeemed and regenerated to a new life. And the Supreme Being in this new life is none other than Christ, the full embodiment of God Himself. He is all they now and ever will need. Paul’s role is to nurture them in this new existence and remind them that their treasured privilege is “*Christ in you, the hope of glory!*”

However, they are in danger of being deluded by distracting arguments that Christ was not God incarnate, that spiritual reality comes by philosophical thinking and



I CAN SHOOT HIM

AFTERWARDS...

(Author unknown)

It happened on December 24, 1875.

Ira D. Sankey, the Gospel singer who often accompanied D. L. Moody, the Gospel preacher, was on that night traveling by steam boat up the Delaware river. Mr. Sankey was asked to sing and it was his intention, being December 24, to sing a carol of Christ's birth. But somehow he was driven to sing what some have referred to as the Shepherd's song. We know it as:

"Savior, like a Shepherd, lead us!"

When Sankey had finished singing, it seemed that every heart was touched.

Then, a few moments later, a fellow with a rough, weather beaten face came up to Mr. Sankey and, referring to the American Civil War, asked, "Sir, did you ever serve in the Union army?"

"Why, yes sir, I did, beginning spring of 1860."

"Sir, can you remember if you were on guard duty on a particular bright, moonlit night, in 1862?"

Surprised, Sankey said, "Why, yes I was; I remember that evening". "Well, I remember it too, said the stranger, but I was not in the Union army as you were. I was in the Confederate army. And on that night, I was well hidden in the bushes, and I had you in my sights. And I thought to myself, 'This man will never see the light of day.' My musket was aimed, my finger was on the trigger, you were seconds away from eternity, when all of a sudden, in that instant, you raised your eyes toward heaven, and you began to sing."

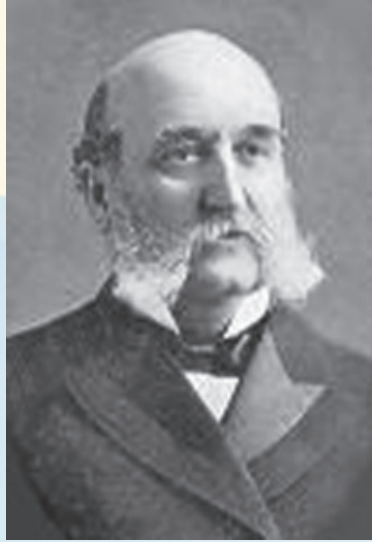
"I've always loved music and so I said to myself, 'I shall let him sing his song to the end; I can shoot him afterwards.' But the song you sang that night was the song I just heard you sing now. I heard the words perfectly. **'We are Thine, do thou befriend us, be the guardian of our way.'**"

"Those words stirred great memories in my heart. I began to think of my childhood and of my God-fearing mother. Many, many times she sang that song to me. But she died all too soon. Otherwise, maybe my life would have been different."

6

"So when you had finished singing that song, it was impossible for me to take aim at you again. I thought to myself, 'The Lord who is able to save that man from certain death must surely be a great and mighty God'. And my arm, of its own accord, fell limply at my side. Since that night I've wandered far."

"When I saw you, just now, standing there, and as on that other occasion, you began to sing, I recognized you. My heart was touched afresh with that song. Now I wish that you would help me find a cure for my sick soul!"



Deeply moved, Ira Sankey threw his arms around the man who had been his enemy in war, and who was surely ready to kill him, except for the Great Shepherd's intervention. And the two men knelt down and, as it were, went to the manger of Bethlehem and to the Christ of Calvary and to the empty tomb, and there the stranger came into the saving care of Jesus, the Great Shepherd of His sheep.


My friends, in a thousand ways that we may never know about— Jesus keeps, protects, and blesses His own to make us a blessing to others. Sankey was on guard duty that night, and because his life was one of being close to the Shepherd, a song burst forth unto JESUS.

Unknown to Sankey, in the bushes was a man with his musket aimed at his heart. Be careful to serve and praise God in the midst of everyday duty: you just never know who's watching and listening! It might save your life and their soul!

And know this: if a sovereign God allows someone to 'pull the trigger', and sorrow of some sort rips into your heart and your life—then too. guard your heart; stay close. The Lord gave; the Lord took away;

blessed be the name of the Lord. There are probably more people watching now than ever.

Morover, all around us are those to whom the triggers of trouble or sorrow have been pulled time and again..., and they are on the verge

of destruction..., and of an eternity without Christ... The Great Shepherd of the sheep is ready to use **us** to surround them with love and prayer—and lead them to the Christ of Calvary, the One who rose victoriously from the grave! With the terrible debt of sin paid, there is forgiveness and New Life for all! 

"What an amazing Christ! He never asks for our approval—only for faith that He is at work, when all is mystery. To put one's life in His hands, is not to be led astray!"

Missionary Watkin Roberts

Dear reader,

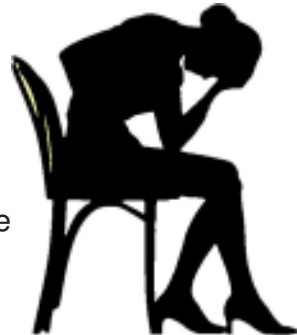
We think and we hope that you will enjoy this latest issue of **PRESSING ON!**

Like every other true Christian, you're in the "race", in the spiritual one. And you know that after a while it's easy to start dragging your feet, lose sight of the "finishing line", get side-tracked, faint, even turn back. **Pressing On!** is here to inform you, to encourage you and to challenge you about **counting on God's grace for all of the race...**

As Philippians 3 informs us, there's the **goal** and there's the **prize** that are set before us, but then Hebrews 10 tells us that the "**considering**", the "**stirring up**", the "**exhorting**" are the things **all** of us are involved in: "*Let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, **not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching***". It will be obvious to you that the 'considering, stirring up and exhorting' have everything to do with the "assembling". Jesus says that two or three in his name are sufficient for him to be very much present in the midst of them with all that He has to offer. It is absolutely basic for fruitful encouragement and challenge, that you and I plus other 'runners in the race' do so very humbly around HIM, looking to HIM and his open word. You too can be wonderfully used for your fellow "athletes". **Pressing On!** prepares and encourages the encouragers, and can prove to be a very worthwhile tool in your hands...

Picture yourself traveling round the planet, say from Canada, to Croatia, to Cameroon, to the Comoros, to Cambodia, to the Cook Islands, to Colombia or to Cuba. In every one of these countries you'll find true Christians. You may find some big groups, meeting in churches, and you'll find there are small groups, meeting in homes or wherever, even in prisons, but as you get to know them, you'll also find that among them a high percentage are feeling the effects of Satan's 3-D strategy - **Discouragement, Depression, or outright Defeat** - Christian "athletes" falling, or fallen, by the wayside. The crown laid up for them (2 Tim. 4:8) is receding and could be taken from them (Rev. 3:11).

*Discouraged
Depressed
Defeated*



Not in every country can such folks read English. In many of the 70 countries to which we send **Pressing On!**, English is not even the second language. However, there usually are individual Christians who know sufficient English to grasp the message. And some of these are receiving up to 30 or 40 copies for regular distribution.

We are fully persuaded that you too can become a most valuable encourager of the brethren! And we want you to plainly realize that **PRESSING ON!** is entirely at your disposal to help you, in other words, free of charge!

Please, consider the form below, pray over it, then fill out what applies and send it to us:

-
- I can be a regular distributor to Christian individuals, house church(es) or other Christians in **my** region. I need ___ free paper copies of future issues (even of this one too if available).
 - I have access to professional-quality production facilities. I only need a print-ready PDF copy to become a printer-distributor of **PRESSING ON!** in my region (at my own cost). I need info about the format to be printed.
 - Regardless of having the printed copy (copies) sent snailmail, I'd also like you to send me the **pdf** e-copy, so I can easily forward it by email to my Christian friends.
 - Separately I am sending you names, addresses and e-addresses of Christian friends who have confirmed they would like to be on your mailing list, either for email or snailmail.
 - If the Lord should make it clear I must contribute in some other way, I'll let you know, so you can tell me how to go about it.

YOUR INFO: Name _____

Address _____

Country _____ E-address _____ @ _____

Signature _____

- OUR INFO:**
1. Print this form, fill out what applies, sign it, then mail to:
Apartado 31, 29700 Vélez-Málaga, Spain. **Or:**
 2. Once printed and filled out, scan and email the form to:
pressingonstill@gmail.com

“And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward” - Mt. 10:42.