

COUNSEL

WILLIAM MACDONALD: A TRUE DISCIPLE

HOME CALL FOR CLARK MCCLELLAND

LOVE FOR THE LOST: INSPRIATION FROM THE PAST

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST: THE MAN FOR ALL SEASONS

MARANATHA (1 COR. 16:20-24)

SHALL NEVER PERISH

BEHOLD THE LAMB!

WHAT A NAME

SEEN OF ANGELS

January—February 2008



Shall Never Perish

An excerpt from *Once In Christ – In Christ Forever*

One of the most conclusive statements on the eternal security of the believer is John 10:27-29. Anyone who reads it can be excused for believing that a person who is born again is eternally secure. In fact, it is difficult to see how anyone could reach a different conclusion. Let's examine the passage phrase by phrase and enjoy the assurance it gives.

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand" (John 10:27-29).

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me."

This is a declarative statement. It tells us who the sheep of Christ are. They are people who hear His Word. They respond to His voice in the gospel and are saved.

He knows them. He recognizes them as His own. He distinguishes them from non-believers and from false professors. He can tell where there is genuine faith when none of us might suspect it, as in the case of Lot (2 Pet. 2:7) and of Samson (Heb. 11:32).

They follow Him. This is not a condition. He does not say that they are his sheep if they follow him or as long as they follow Him. Rather, this is what characterizes the true believer. He characteristically follows Christ (see John 10:4-5). I say

"characteristically" because nobody does it perfectly. We are all "prone to wander...prone to leave the God [we] love." But the Shepherd assumes the responsibility of restoring the wandering sheep.

"I give them eternal life." Again we have an unconditional promise, no strings attached. Eternal life is a gift. A gift with conditions is no gift at all! Anyone who has committed himself or herself to the Lord Jesus Christ for their soul's salvation can know, on the authority of the Word of God, that they have eternal life.

"They shall never perish." Think for a moment of the consequences if one sheep of Christ ever perished. Christ would then have gone back on His promise! He would no longer be God. The Trinity would cease. The Bible would be undependable. We would still be in our sins. It can't happen, because fulfillment of the promise depends on Christ alone and not on His sheep.

"Neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand." Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, guarantees that His sheep are held in His hand and that no one can remove them by force.

Arminians argue, "No one else can pluck them away, but a believer himself can do it." This is bizarre — that a true Christian has more power than anyone else in the universe. No one — and that includes the sheep — can remove himself from the Shepherd's strong grip.

"My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all." To further emphasize the security of the Christian, Jesus states that true believers are the Father's gift to the Son. If one believer could pluck himself out of Christ's hand, then it is conceivable that all His sheep could do it. They not only could; they probably would. In that case, God's gift to His Son would disappear. What kind of a gift would that be? Certainly it would be unworthy of the Father.

No, the Father is greater than all; that is greater than all other powers in the universe, and certainly greater than the strength of a sheep. The "all" includes the sheep.

"No one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand." In view of such marvelous assurance, it is perverse that people should believe that a true sheep of Christ deciding that he doesn't want to be a sheep any longer could thus remove himself from his Father's hand.

The argument will not stand. The words "no one" are absolute. They do not allow for any exception. The inspired text doesn't say "no one except a sheep of Christ himself" — and neither should we.



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William MacDonald

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To present truth in words easy to be understood; to bring the Word of God to bear on the confusion of thought that exists in many places today regarding the Person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ, His assembly, His purposes, His people, their privileges and responsibilities Godward and manward. To give a variety of ministry by edification, exhortation, and comfort (1 Cor. 14:3).

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William MacDonald:

Approximately 500 people gathered at a memorial service for our late brother William MacDonald at the Fairhaven Bible Chapel in San Leandro, California on January 12, 2008. It is estimated that thousands more watched via the internet. He had passed into the presence of the Lord on Christmas Day, December 25, 2007 as a result of kidney failure and complications of recent surgery.

William MacDonald was born on January 7, 1917, in Leominster, Massachusetts, USA. His family moved to the Isle of Lewis in Scotland not long after he was born. During his time in Scotland a miraculous event occurred. He tells it in his own words in comments

on Psalm 91 in the Believer's Bible Commentary:

Psalm 91: My Psalm
 In 1922, in the Western Highlands, a five-year-old lad was dying of diphtheria. A mucous membrane was forming across his throat, and breathing was becoming increasingly difficult. His Christian mother turns her back so she would not see him take his last breath. At that very moment there was a knock at the door. It was her brother-in-law from an adjoining village. He said, "I've just come tell you that you don't have to worry about the child. He is going to recover, and one day God is going to save his soul." She was distracted and incredulous: "Whatever makes you say that?" Then he explained he had been sitting at his fire reading Psalm 91 when God distinctly spoke to him through the last three verses:

Because on me he set his love,
 I'll save and set him free;
 Because my great name he hath known,

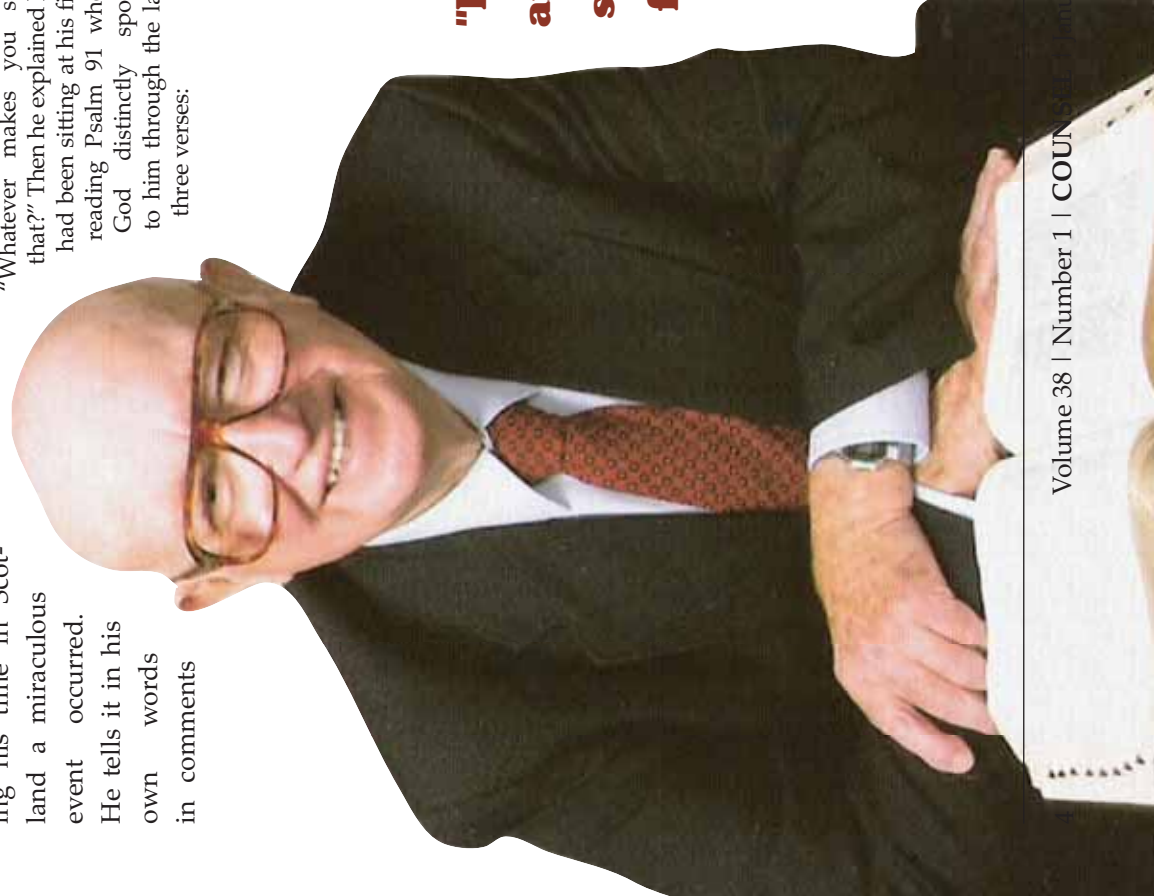
I will set him on high.
 He'll call on me, I'll answer him;
 I will be with him still,
 In trouble to deliver him,
 And honour him I will.

With length of days unto his mind
 I will him satisfy;
 I also my salvation
 Will cause his eyes to see.
 —from The Scottish Psalms
 In Metre.

I was that boy. God delivered me from death that night; He saved my soul thirteen years later, and He has satisfied me with long life. So you will understand why I refer to Psalm 91 as my Psalm.

It is not without significance that the 91st Psalm was used of God in William MacDonald's life and he died in his 91st year.

William MacDonald trusted the Lord as his Saviour at the age of 18. He studied at Tufts University and



**"If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for him."
 — C.T. Studd**

later earned a master's degree in business administration from Harvard University. For two years he worked as an investment analyst

A True Disciple

for the Bank of Boston. At the outbreak of World War II he enlisted in the United States Navy. During that time he was stationed in Oakland, California. While in the navy he had several opportunities for evangelism and Bible teaching. It was also during that time that he was deeply impressed by reading the life of C. I. Studd. This statement by C. I. Studd gripped him: "If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for him." This was used of the Lord to bring William MacDonald into full time service.

From 1947 to 1965 William MacDonald taught at Emmaus Bible School (now Emmaus Bible College) in Oak Park, Illinois, USA and served as the school's president from 1959 to 1965. For the next 8 years he traveled extensively around the world teaching the Word of God and then returned to the Oakland area of California in San Leandro to establish the Discipleship Interim Training Program with his long time friend and colleague Jean Gibson. This program ran from 1973 to 1995 and trained dozens of young men in Christian service.

Since 1995 he was active in itinerant preaching at conferences while continuing to write extensively. He has 84 books published. Two of the most well known are the *Believer's Bible Commentary*—a commentary on every book of the Bible and *True Discipleship*—a call to live in practical obedience according to the Lord's terms of discipleship.

William MacDonald was a man who lived what he preached. A humble self-effacing man, gracious in every way, a man of prayer and faithful to the Lord. Whether he was called 'Mr. MacDonald', 'William MacDonald', 'Bill' or by the children 'Uncle Bill' it was evident by listening to those who knew him at home that he was loved and highly esteemed.

The written ministry of William MacDonald continues. In addition to his 84 books published in English, several other books have been printed in many languages of the world. Mr. Andreas Lindner, responsible for the copyrights writes:



"Mr. MacDonald's *Believer's Bible Commentary*

is published in 21 languages, including Urdu and Malayalam. Several other languages (like Tamil and Telugu) are in preparation.

The Commentary has been published in these languages:



NT: Albanian, Arabic, Bulgarian, Burmese, Chinese (two editions - Simple and Classic), Croatian, French, German, Hungarian, Japanese, Korean, Malayalam, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, Turkish, Urdu and Vietnamese.

OT: Albanian, Chinese (two editions - Simple and Classic), German, Korean, Polish, Romanian, Spanish, Turkish and Urdu.

"Because on me
he set his love,
I'll save and
set him free;
Because my
great name
he hath known,

I will set him
on high.
He'll call on me,
I'll answer him;
I will be with
him still,
In trouble to
deliver him,
And honour him
I will.

With length
of days unto
his mind
I will him satisfy;
I also my salvation
Will cause his
eyes to see."

—from **The Scottish
Psalms In Metre**



In the United States Navy

We lost Vietnam to the Communists, but now the Gospel is flourishing there. The underground church is persecuted and open training of the workers is not possible. We think it is thrilling that the NT Commentary is available in Vietnamese for our suffering brothers.

Albania was called the only atheistic country in the world. The dictator forced the people to worship him as the Eternal One, and he claimed to have gotten rid of religion. He fell in a revolution, the Gospel was spread and the fast growing church needed teaching. The OT and NT Commentary is available in Albanian and is given to many pastors and elders.

The assembly movement in Cuba is really growing in the last decade. Several thousand copies of the NT Commentary in Spanish were imported for the assemblies and were also given to all the other evangelical churches. Cuba needs a revolution, a revolution of love!

In the south of Germany and Austria there was almost no Gospel witness left after the counter reformation. It was a white spot on the map as far as the gospel was concerned. Through the travels of William Macdonald with OM, through missionaries he trained and through his personal ministry and his books he was a great blessing to dozens of new assemblies in these areas. He was instrumental to help start a training program for church leaders and elders in Austria. Most of his books have been translated into German.

The Iron curtain was torn apart in the early 1990's, missionaries moved in to reach out with the Gospel and train the locals. The Commentary was translated into Russian, Croatian, Romanian and Bulgarian. The believers bible commentary is the only available Commentary on the whole Bible in Poland.



True Discipleship has been translated into 45 languages.

These are Albanian, Arabic, Armenian, Assamese, Bengali, Bulgarian, Burmese, Chinese, Croatian, Czech, Dutch, Faroese, Farsi (Iran; Persian), Finnish, French, German, Greek, Gujarati, Hindi, Hungarian, Icelandic, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Kannada, Korean, Maharashtra, Malayalam, Marati, Nepali, Oriya, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Romanian, Russian, Sinhala, Spanish, Swahili, Swedish, Tagalog (Philippines), Tamil, Telugu, Turkish, Urdu, and right now there are plans to translate it into Kmehr, the language of Cambodia."



Teaching at Emmaus



In His Apartment

Those wishing to contribute to the publishing work of the writings of William MacDonalnd may do so by sending their gifts to

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Please indicate your gift is for the Believer's Bible Commentary Translation Fund.

For more information about the ongoing translation work of the writings of William MacDonalnd, visit the website:

[www:William-MacDonald.org](http://www.William-MacDonald.org)

Brian Gunning
St. Catharines, Ontario

SEEN OF ANGELS

(1 Timothy 3:16)

They watched...
before time began
heard the great salvation plan
how God would reach down to man
and send His Son.

They watched...
as one of their own
made a visit to a virgin's home
told her of the Promised One
that she would bare—God's Son

They watched...
as the Babe was born
in not a palace, just a barn
they shook their heads in disbelief
that the visitors were just shepherds and sheep

They watched...
as this child grew
He was the Messiah, but just a few knew
as He taught, did miracles, and healed
His full glory was not revealed

They watched...
as one dreadful day
God's lovely Son was led away
to endure mocking, beatings, scorn
then to wear the crown of thorns

They watched...
Him nailed upon the tree
so forsaken for you and me
after He dismissed His own spirit—AND DIED
saw the blood flow from His side

They watched...
as He was laid in the tomb
kept watching, through day one and two
then on that glorious third day
the heavy stone was rolled away

They watched...
as He rose again
their joy they hardly could contain
their position took within and without
as they spoke to His followers and gave them hope

They watched...
for that great day
when He shall reign for aye and aye
all enemies beneath His feet
all praise to Him—oh! So complete!

*Betty Ann Booth
Port Hope, Ontario*

Love for the Lost: Inspiration from the past

The articles on the title subject, have been gleaned from addresses which the author gave at the Rise up and Love Conference 2005. It is felt that there is a need to repeat the essence of these messages along with supplementary material, in view of the growing indifference to the gospel, not only in the world, but also among our assemblies. 'Love for the Lost' teaches us that preach-

ing, while the gift of the evangelist is being downgraded or made redundant. There are many things that have contributed to this sad situation. In some cases, the rising tide of hyper-Calvinism has dried the tears that once were shed for the lost, and taken the passion out of prayers for their salvation. In addition, time and talent that could be directed to gospel work, is being spent in the pur-

we learn that the story of love for the lost found its beginning in the counsel chambers of deity, long before time began. This is something that is beyond the capacity of our finite minds to understand or explain, but it is something that is clearly taught in Scripture, that the Godhead was involved in the plan of redemption for the entire world of poor sinful rebels, without exception, before we had a being. The poet captured this stupendous thought when he wrote:

A monument of grace,
A sinner saved by blood,
The streams of love I trace,
Up the fountain God,
And in His sovereign
counsels see,
Eternal thoughts of love to me.

The great spiritual movements of the past, and in particular in the Acts, found their main-spring in a deep, deep love for the lost that overcame all hostility, social and religious barriers, to bring people to Christ.

ing the gospel has little to do with the mind, but much to do with the heart. Sadly, the passion that once marked the preaching of the gospel in the past has largely disappeared. We listen to dry-eyed sermons, which—to borrow a phrase from our late brother Boyd Nicholson—“are as clear as moonlight, and just about as cold.” We can speak about hell, although that is also becoming a rarity these days, without a tear in our eye at the prospect of a soul being consigned to the wrath of God for all of eternity. Worse still, many assemblies are abandoning their corporate gospel responsibilities in favour of more doctrine and teach-

suit of worldly things while souls are dying around us and going to hell. It is hoped that these articles will result in a restoration of the passion for the gospel that is so much needed these days.

INSPIRATION FROM THE PAST:

THE ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE:

When the first gospel message was preached by Peter on the Day of Pentecost, he put an entirely new perspective on the events surrounding the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus. He said “*Him [Christ] being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God*” (Acts 2:23). Here

THE EXAMPLE OF THE LORD JESUS:

There can be no greater example of love for the lost than that which is found in the story of the life and death of the Lord Jesus.

HIS SELF-ABNEGATION:

Philippians 2:5-8 gives us a fresh perspective on the incarnation of the Lord Jesus. From Godhead glory He came, the one Isaiah saw “*high and lifted up.*” We now learn how “*He made Himself of no reputation.*” Scholars tell us that the phrase “*no reputation,*” carries with it the thought of “*emptying Himself,*” but let’s take the text at face value—that he made Himself of no reputation. The Lord Jesus chose to be born in a stable. He also chose to be born into a family

that was so poor that when the time came for Mary to offer the offering for cleansing following a birth as specified in Leviticus, they could only afford the least of the sacrifices—a pair of turtle doves. His legal guardian, Joseph, was a carpenter, and the Lord Jesus spent 30 years

How willing are we to forego present glory, and to travel great distances to reach the lost as He did?

following the trade. Why? Because he wished to be accessible to the humblest of men, and to make His salvation available to the poor.

He Himself told us *“The Son of Man is come to seek and to save, that which is lost.”* It ought to humble our hearts and melt our eyes to tears to think that the Lord of glory would undertake such a stoop because He loved poor sinners like you and me. A hymn comes to mind from childhood days that we sang from the old *Redemption Hymnbook* back in Scotland. It said:

Was it for me, For me alone,
The Saviour left His
glorious Throne,
The dazzling splendours of
the sky,
Was it for me, He came to die.

We cannot read such passages without being deeply challenged. Too often we are so protective of status before men, that we miss following the example of our Lord who took such a lowly place. How willing are we to forego present glory, and to travel great distances to reach the lost as He did? The Lord is our supreme example in all of this. Is our love for the lost greater than

love of ourselves and our own glory in this world? This is a challenge that touches us all.

HIS MISSION:

Immediately following His victory over Satan in the wilderness, the Lord went to the synagogue in

HIS COMPASSION:

In the Synoptic Gospels the word *“compassion”* is mentioned fourteen times. This was indeed the trademark of the Lord’s ministry—He was marked by a deep love for the lost. Other translations translate the word ‘compassion’ variously such as *“He was overcome with pity.”* Or *“His heart broke for them,”* or *“He was deeply moved.”* Mr. W. E. Vine translates it this way: “to have feelings of distress through the ills of others,” or “to be moved to one’s inwards.” Need we say, that unless we are “moved to our inwards,” about the lost, nothing will be accomplished. The great-spiritual movements of the past, and in particular in the Acts, found their main-spring in a deep, deep love for the lost that overcame all hostility, social and religious barriers, to bring people to Christ. How is our compassion? When did we last weep over a soul who is lost?

THE EXAMPLE OF THE APOSTLE PAUL:

An outstanding example of “love for the lost” is to be seen in the great apostle Paul. Here was a “religious fanatic” who took fiendish delight in pursuing Christians to far off places

The passion that once marked the preaching of the gospel in the past has largely disappeared.

ment.’ He knew why He had come, and what He must accomplish. He was focused. Could we challenge our hearts and ask ourselves if we have a clear understanding of our mission in this world?

Is our objective in life the same as that of the Lord Jesus – the salvation of the lost?

to apprehend them, torture them and have them executed. Makes one think. Do we think Osama bin Laden and his like could be saved? If there is one ray of hope for such it is to be found in the apostle Paul. The message is—Never give up on anybody, however fierce their opposition and antagonism. God over-

took Saul of Tarsus, and he became the most dedicated of missionaries that the world has ever seen.

When he was saved, the Lord said to Ananias *“He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings and the children of Israel; for I will shew him how many great things he must suffer for my name’s sake.”* Hardly an inspiring start for a missionary, to be told about *“great things he must suffer,”* and indeed he did. On his first missionary journey, he was stoned in Lystra—the city where Timothy was saved—dragged out of the city, and left for dead. Read 2 Corinthi-

gain.” Once he had reached that pinnacle of service and devotion, nothing or nobody could ever hurt or hinder him again.

ENCOURAGEMENT FROM RECENT DAYS:

The evangelical community, and in particular the assemblies as we know them, have had their share of illustrious men and women who followed in the footsteps of the early pioneers. Men such as David Livingstone who opened up Africa, and who were prepared to suffer and even die because of their love for the lost. Men known to our generation, such as Da-

“Go ye into all the world and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you always unto the end of the age.” May God stir up hearts today to respond to the call for love of the lost.

CONCLUSION:

In drawing this article to a close—what should be our next steps? We have read about the eternal source of love for the Lost. We have watched the Lord Jesus descend from the heights of glory, making Himself of no reputation until ultimately He gave His life on behalf of the undeserving and ungrateful on the cross of Calvary. We have watched the apostle follow in the steps of the Lord Jesus and we have seen Him abandon all earthly glory in exchange for suffering and privation because of his love for the lost. We have traced the path of more recent men who were gripped by love for the lost, and who spent years buried in isolation and privation, suffering the inconveniences of dis-ease and sometimes death to reach heathen tribes. What of us? Does *“the love of Christ constrain us?”* Are we prepared for inconvenience, deprivation, suffering, being a nobody in this world’s scheme of things, because of love for the lost? May the Lord touch every heart, and as the age draws to a close, fill us with evangelical zeal and fervour, that we might see a mighty harvest of lost souls brought in from the fields of sin, and fitted for realms of glory.

Is our love for the lost greater than love of ourselves and our own glory in this world?

ans 11:23-30 for a summary of the sufferings he endured in order that he might be able to spread the gospel. One has the feeling that given the increasing hostility of society against Christianity these days, that we might soon see a return to the kind of conditions that Paul faced and suffered for Christ. How many of us are ready for it?

Before leaving this section, what was it that drove Paul forward to the point where eventually he was martyred under Nero. It was love that drove him on and forward—love for the lost. The apostle had seen the example of his Lord and he records in Philippians 2 *“Let this mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus”* and he ends that section by telling us *“that He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”* Paul believed that and took Christ as his guide and pattern. He could say *“For me to live is Christ and to die is*

vid Long and T. E. Wilson and many others come to mind, as those who followed in the apostle’s footsteps facing unknown dangers from men, demons and disease in a country that civilization had never reached. We salute the memory of such pioneers amongst us and the vision they had to preach the gospel.

How do we stand in the twenty-first century? If one should scan the pages of the Echoes and CMMML Missionary Prayer Handbooks, one would notice page after page of sisters who are carrying on a work where men are needed but not responding. Are no men being called? Or are the attractions of a safe environment and a lucrative career keeping some from responding? Only the individual can answer these questions.

The commission given by the Lord on the eve of His departure to heaven has never been rescinded:

William Burnett
Oakville, ON

What a Name

O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth! —Psalm 8:1

Elohim

Creator, Maker of all things. You were there at the beginning, the first day of the earth was witnessed by You. From Your fingers came the beauty of this world, from Your hand the splendor of our planet.

El Elyon

God Most High, King of the universe. You rule all creatures, even the tiniest organisms obey Your call. From the elephant to the amoeba, all creatures are in awe of You.

El Roi

God Who Sees, our Protector. The slightest sin does not escape Your eye. We will not be harmed if it is not Your will. You see our righteous deeds and sinful acts, no action on our part goes unseen by You.

El Shaddai

All-Sufficient One, Everything. With You, we would be nothing, the world would be empty if You did not care. You are everything we need, the source of our life.

Adonai

The Lord, Our King, Ruler, and Savior. Praise You throughout the whole earth. Praise Your mercy, Your protection, Your love, Your power. Let every creature be in awe of You.

Jehovah

Self-Existent One, Needless. You were never created and shall never die. You need nothing to live. It is beyond our comprehension that You have been here forever.

Jehovah-Jireh

The Lord Will Provide. You notice our every need and give it to us. You are caring enough to give us breath and to let us live.

Jehovah-Nissi

The Lord My Banner. Your banner of love waves over us. You are a banner of victory, shouting to the world that You have won.

Jehovah-Shalom

The Lord is Peace. Your peace fills us with joy. You are so unlike Satan, who brings war and terror to the world. You love peace and love to give it to us.

Jehovah-Raah

The Lord My Shepherd, You are the Great Shepherd to us, little foolish lambs. You pick us up when danger is near. When we go astray, You patiently lead us back to Your path. You make sure we have food and water, and You watch over us day and night.

Jehovah-Rapha

The Lord that Heals. You are able to cure every disease that exists on the earth. You care about someone who has a cold the same amount as someone who has AIDS or SARS. You love to nurse and care for Your children. Health is a gift from You.

Jehovah-Shammah

The Lord is There. No matter where we are, Your Presence is there with us. You are as close to someone in China as someone in California. You care about all of the billions of people on the earth. Oh praise Your holy name!

"O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth!" (Ps. 8:9).

Haley Barinowski (age 9)
N. Augusta, South Carolina

Behold the Lamb!

The instructions for offering the burnt offering are given in Leviticus

The offering must be “a male without blemish” (Lev. 1:3, references are from the NKJV). The person who brought the offering “shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering and it shall be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him” (Lev. 1:4).

The offering was then killed and its blood sprinkled around the altar. Then it was skinned and butchered. Its inner organs were carefully inspected for it must be without a blemish and the whole was burned upon the altar, “a sweet aroma to the Lord” (Lev. 1:9).

All animal sacrifices are obsolete since the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. “By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Heb. 10:10). But we can learn lessons about worship from the sacrificial system of old. The whole ritual centered around the offering.

One must bring the offering voluntarily and claim it for his own, putting his hand upon its head. The priest assisted but the offering itself was the center of attention. The throat was cut and the blood flowed, a violent, bloody death. Then the bull or lamb was skinned, cut open and carefully inspected. The whole focus was on the sacrifice.

When believers gather to worship the Lord in the Lord’s Supper, as He requested, the whole focus is on the Lamb of God. Each of us by faith lays his hand upon

our Lord, claiming Him for our atonement. There is a table set with a loaf and cup, simplicity in itself. No preacher or choir are in front to distract. There is an intense occupation with the Lamb. To remember is to focus one’s thoughts. Thoughts are focused on His death, bloody, violent, humiliating. But there is also the mystery of His soul being made an offering for sin, causing Him to cry out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken Me?” We can only bow in awe and reverence and worship. The beauty of His life and person are recalled, spotless, without blemish.

In thought we stand before the empty tomb and exult in His triumphant resurrection. We remember with anticipation that He is coming back. Praise God! To worship is to focus on God the Father (Rev. 4) and on the Lamb (Rev. 5). It is to put aside the cares and the anxieties of the world and to be occupied with heaven itself. It is to enjoy afresh “the calm of sins forgiven” and to bask in the Father’s love.

“And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain....” (Rev.

5:6). The Lamb is the center of attention in heaven itself.

Lord, teach us to worship!

Donald L. Norbie
Greeley, Colorado





Home Call for Clark McClelland

Our esteemed Brother Clark McClelland went home on September 15th 2007. He was born on July 4th 1916 in Orillia, Ontario. Clark was saved at the age of 14, on the 1st day of January 1930. He was encouraged to go into the Lord's work full time by David Kirk of Hamilton Ontario, and was com-

ately known as Uncle Clark to the children. For several years he was Director at Camp Berea.

He made two trips to Russia (in the mid 90's) and took his grandson Kirk McClelland with him. Many boxes of Bibles were distributed and the Word of God proclaimed. Clark also took his son Fletcher to Egypt.

many days and weeks of keeping the Lord's servants, and His beloved people in her home.

In September 2004 Clark was invited to visit several assemblies in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, Canada. His itinerary was cut short after Nova Scotia when he suffered a severe heart attack in St. John, New Brunswick. After some months of recovery he was again able to minister the Word of God and so happy to preach the gospel until the very day of his home call.

Clark was a great man of prayer and will be missed by all who knew him. For him to live was Christ (Phil. 1:21). At his funeral all of his children and grandchildren rose up and called him blessed.

Clark McClelland served as a committee member for Counsel Magazine for several years going back to the days of the original editor, Mr. Robert McClurkin.

He was a man who always took the lowly place, as the Lord Jesus Christ, who he so faithfully served.

mended in 1945. Clark felt called by God to move to Westbrook, Maine in 1951 where the believers met at Bethany Hall. There was a need for a new building, which Clark helped to build and was finished in 1958.

Clark was a gifted Bible teacher, but he was especially happy and most eager to have gospel meetings. This was his greatest joy. He was in journeyings often in many parts of the United States, and many gospel efforts across Ontario, and the Atlantic provinces in Canada. He was very active for many summers in Bible school work and affection-

He certainly has left his family with a worldwide vision for the gospel.

Clark will be remembered as a fine gentleman in the homes where he stayed. He was a man who always took the lowly place, as the Lord Jesus Christ, who he so faithfully served.

In 1996 Clark and Jean moved to Pittsboro Christian Village where he was used in the preaching of the Word of God and was an elder in the assembly. In December 2003 his beloved wife Jean went home after 61 years of blessed marriage. Jean was well known and loved for her

Chuck Grob
Shirley Patterson
Norman Wilkerson Sr.



The Lord Jesus Christ: The Man for All Seasons

Modern man faces a bewildering array of difficulties. Economic uncertainty, soaring crime rates, devastating wars, and conflicts within families all threaten to overwhelm people. Because Christians live on this fallen planet and are not yet morally perfect, they are not exempt from these problems. Thankfully in facing the crises of life, we have an ever-present Saviour, who is capable of dealing with any situation. In the truest sense of the phrase our Lord Jesus is the Man for all seasons.

The High Cost of Discipleship

The Lord's letter to the beleaguered saints in Smyrna showcases His multifaceted character. They were facing hard times. The name of the city itself hints at their afflictions. John Gill describes it in this manner:

"Smyrna signifies 'myrrh', which being bitter of taste, is ex-

pressive of the bitter afflictions, and persecutions, and deaths, the people of God in this interval endured; and yet, as myrrh is of a sweet smell, so were those saints, in their sufferings for Christ, exceeding grateful and well pleasing to him."¹

The city was a pleasant place for most people to live, vying with Ephesus and Pergamum for the distinction of "first city of Asia." Its lovely situation is described thus:

"...Smyrna was a center for science and medicine...and renowned for its fine wine, its beautiful buildings, and its wealth."²

The ancient geographer Strabo affirmed that it was the finest city

in that region during his time.³ It was also a literary mecca, having produced gifted writers – most famously, Homer the celebrated poet who created the epic *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. An ancient writer, Apollonius of Tyana, contrasted the beauty of Smyrna's buildings with human character, exhorting the citizenry to pay more attention to the latter:

"... [Smyrna] is the most beautiful of all cities under the sun, and makes the sea its own, and holds the fountains of Zephyrus, yet it is a greater charm to wear a crown of men than a crown of porticoes and pictures and gold beyond the standard of mankind: for buildings are seen only in their own place, but men are seen everywhere and spoken about everywhere and make their city as vast as

¹ John Gill, *Commentary on the Bible*, electronic edition, www.e-sword.net

² D. E. Aune, *Word Biblical Commentary: Revelation 1-5:14*, Vol. 52A, Word Biblical Commentary. (Word, Incorporated: Dallas, 2002) CD-ROM edition.

³ "The Princeton Encyclopedia of Classical Sites," (eds. Richard Stillwell, William L. MacDonald, Marian Holland McAllister); <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus%3atext%3a1999%2e04%2e0006&query=id%3dsmyrna#id,smyrna>.

the range of countries which they can visit.”⁴

Nevertheless, for the church this glorious city was a dangerous place of many hardships.

Christ assures them “*I know thy... tribulation, and poverty...*” (Rev. 2:9). Tribulation indicates “a pressing or pressure.”⁵ On top of the ordinary stresses of life, these believers encountered opposition for their identification with the Lord Jesus. What-ever problems they wrestled with they could console themselves with the thought that the Lord knows. As one Bible student notes: “Every trial is measured by the heart of infinite love in a hand of infinite care!”⁶

Should Thy mercy send me
Sorrow, toil, and woe;

Or should pain attend me
On my path below;

Grant that I may never Fail Thy
hand to see;

Grant that I may ever Cast my
care on Thee

—James Montgomery. *In the hour of trial.*

Christ’s reference to their “poverty” indicates that material privation was their common lot. Perhaps they were like the Christians in the book of Hebrews: “...you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated.

For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one” (Heb. 10:32-34, ESV). Persecution and

penury are common bedfellows. As John Stott points out: “...It does not always pay to be a Christian. Nor is honesty by any means always the best policy, if material gain is your ambition. Poverty has often been part of the cost of Christian discipleship.”⁷

Rich man, poor man

In spite of their circumstances, Christ appraises the impoverished believers’ true spiritual net worth, saying “...you are rich” (v. 9). Walter Scott relates their actual affluence: “Truly the church is rich, whatever its poverty on earth may be. Endowed with the love and riches of Christ, which are enduring and placed beyond the possibility of loss or corruption, we may well triumph in Him who knows not only our tribulations and poverty, but knowing all, pronounces us

19:24.) Paul cautions against seeking wealth, warning that “...those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs” (1 Tim. 6:9-10, ESV). Earthly things can distract from eternal riches and create a mistaken sense of security.

On the other hand James says: “Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?” (Jas. 2:5-7). Of course, poverty does not ensure

“Truly the church is rich, whatever its poverty on earth may be. Endowed with the love and riches of Christ, which are enduring and placed beyond the possibility of loss or corruption, we may well triumph in Him who knows not only our tribulations and poverty, but knowing all, pronounces us ‘rich’.”

‘rich’.”⁸ Material wealth is often a hindrance to spirituality. Our Lord declares the difficulty of the rich entering the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 7 John R. W. Stott, *What Christ Thinks of the Church*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958), p. 39.

8 Walter Scott, *Exposition of the Revelation of Jesus Christ*. (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1982) p. 67.

spirituality; nor do riches automatically preclude faith. The father of faith missions, Anthony Norris Groves, used his lucrative dental practice to help the indigent and support Christian work. His contemporary, George Muller, faithfully handled the equivalent of millions of dollars in assisting the nineteenth century orphans. Twentieth century

4 W.M. Ramsay, *Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia*, electronic edition, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/ramsay/letters.xxi.html>.

5 Joseph Thayer, *Greek Lexicon*, electronic edition, www.e-sword.net.

6 William R. Newell, *The Book of the Revelation*. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1935) p. 46.

Christian businessmen like R. G. LeTourneau used their wealth in the great tradition of successful believers like Lydia, who put her home and possessions at the disposal of the Lord (Acts 16:14-15.)⁹

Verbal assassination of character

The Lord also knows “*the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, but are not*” (v. 9). “Blasphemy” literally means “speaking harm” and carries the thought of “to slander, [or] defame...”¹⁰ The professing Jews of Smyrna employed their tongues against the believers, accusing them of all sorts of evil. The Lord sees through their invective, and knows

Still today Christians are mocked and slandered in the world. They can rest in the certainty that Christ suffered the same treatment and will one day sort between the lies and the truth (Matt. 12:36).

Many of the first century Jews rested on their natural descent from Abraham as their claim to divine favour. John the Baptist, the Lord Jesus, and the early apostles make it clear, however, that spiritual rebirth is the key to God’s mercy and blessing (Mat. 3:9; John 1:12-13; 8:33-59; Gal. 3-4, etc). They became opponents of the early church, believing that Jesus was a false Messiah (1 Thess. 2:14-16). In common with the

many Jews throughout the Roman empire received Jesus as their Messiah and Lord during the early centuries after our Lord’s crucifixion. Furthermore, one cannot read Acts 2-4 or Romans 9-11 without acknowledge that God wants Israel to be saved. The New Testament offers no support for the frequent acts of anti-Semitism that have been and are committed throughout Christendom. This notwithstanding, it is clear that those who should have bowed the knee to the promised Deliverer, instead rejected Him and fought His people.

Infernal testing in the crucible

In John’s day the church in Smyrna would be tested by the Devil himself. He would incarcerate some of them, subjecting them to torture; others would bear witness to their faith by giving up their lives. His character and tactics are revealed by his titles which are used in verses 9 and 10. Despite their profession of loyalty to God, the synagogue in Smyrna was actually Satan’s – literally “the Adversary” – who opposes all that pertains to the Lord. The term “devil” refers to him as a deceiving slanderer who falsely accuses the people of God.¹³ In Zechariah 3:1 he is standing at Joshua the high priest’s right hand “*to accuse him*” (NAS, ESV, NIV, etc.); this is what he delights to do. Thankfully, the Lord responds by rebuking the Evil One, asserting that defiled Joshua is clothed in righteous garments before God through the redemptive work of the Branch (Zech. 3:2-8). Similarly, a bystander in Smyrna might erroneously think that the

earlychristianwritings.com/text/martyrdom-poly carp-lightfoot.html.

¹³ For definitions see Thayer.

His anguished cry from the Cross “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” reveals the intense sorrow of being “made sin for us”

who His real followers are. As two Greek scholars remark:

“From the NT point of view, the real blasphemers are those who deny the messianic claims of Jesus, and therefore revile and mock at him like those by the cross who said, ‘*You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross*’...He who impugns the dignity of the one sent commits an offence against God himself.”¹¹

prevailing orthodox attitude, Saul of Tarsus persecuted the Christians, thinking that they were a spiritual cancer on the body of first century Judaism. It took a personal appeal from the glorified Christ to dispel his antipathy toward “the Way.” In the second century A.D., Jewish antagonism towards believers in Smyrna continued, as is evidenced by their role in the martyrdom of Polycarp. This aged Christian was burned at the stake for his faith in Christ in A.D. 155 or 156. Even though his execution took place on the sabbath, some of the local Jews rushed into the pagan stadium in order to bring bundles of wood to kindle the murderous fire.¹² Through God’s grace,

¹² See the 2nd century document “The Martyrdom of Polycarp 13:1” at <http://www.>

⁹ For information on R.G. LeTourneau see http://www.letu.edu/about_LU/museum/Museum_Online/index.html.

¹⁰ H. Währisch & C. Brown, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. Colin Brown, CD-Rom edition, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan).

¹¹ Ibid.

conflict between the Jews and their pagan allies on one side and the struggling church on the other was a mere disagreement between religions. It was actually a spiritual battle being waged between the Risen Christ and the Devil – an epic fight between supreme good and pernicious evil. As R.C. Trench summarizes it: "...these great fights of affliction through which they were called to pass, were the immediate work of the Devil."¹⁴

Our Lord's response to their coming testing was to exhort them to "*Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer*" (v. 10). With all of the difficulties that they were facing, one might ask why they should not fear? The answer lies in our Lord's variegated ability to meet every circumstance. He addresses Himself to this assailed church as "*the First and the Last*" (v. 8). Christ is the First, who always existed. Before the vaunted Roman empire, before the birth of their persecutors, before even Satan was created, the Lord Jesus was the great I am that I am (John 1:1-2; 8:58). He is also the Last. When time is no more, and the kingdoms of this world are a distant memory, the everlasting Christ will still be ruling over all. The persecuting Roman emperor Domitian was but a blip on the screen of time; the Lord Jesus is King forever.

Even though He is the eternal one, the Lord still condescended to become a man, "*for the suffering of death.*" (Heb. 2:9; see also Phil. 2:6-9). Thus, He knows what it is like to endure hardship and pain. He literally says that He "became dead." The Smyrnian Christians were facing physical death, but the

¹⁴ Vincent's *Word Studies*, electronic edition, www.e-sword.net.

Lord Jesus became "*a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief*" and experienced physical and spiritual death (Isa. 53:3). His anguished cry from the Cross "*My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?*" reveals the intense sorrow of being "*made sin for us*" (Mat. 27:46; 2 Cor. 5:21). Their

is in *Christ Jesus our Lord*" (Rom. 4:25; 8:39). For eternity, they would display the crown of life – not the laurel crowns offered in the Smyrnian games, nor even the majestic buildings that were described as a crown – but an eternal honour, displaying their incorruptible life.¹⁶

Though He died, yet He triumphed over death in the resurrection. In like manner, He promises deliverance to His people through the trial.

suffering—painful though it was—would never approach His experience. In the truest sense of the word, the Lord Jesus could empathize with them and with all suffering believers. He not only endured unimaginable pain, but also entered into His glory (Luke 24:26.) As He says in Rev. 2:8, He "*came to life*" (NKJV, RSV, ESV). Though He died, yet He triumphed over death in the resurrection. In like manner, He promises deliverance to His people through the trial. Suffering will inevitably lead to glory.

With a mighty triumph o'er His foes!

Their distress only lasts for a limited time ("*ten days*", v. 10), and whatever happens, they "*will not be hurt at all by the second death*" (v. 11, NIV; cf. Rev. 20:6, 14; 21:8).¹⁵

What is more, the Lord promises the overcomer "*the crown of life.*" His resurrection life can overcome any adversity. He "*rose again for their justification*" and nothing would "*separate [them] from the love of God which*

¹⁵ The phrase "not...at all" translates a double negative in the Greek, indicating "by no means" or "in no wise" (JND).

William Kelly eloquently writes of Christ's ministry in suffering:

"The Lord is like the tree of old which was cast into the waters of Marah. He went into the bitterest waters of death, which have thus been changed into sweetness and refreshing for us."¹⁷

Suffering saints find temporal and eternal comfort from the suffering Saviour who never abandons them. With the hymn writer they can say:

I need Thee, precious Saviour!
I need a friend like Thee:
A friend to soothe and comfort,
A friend to care for me;
I need Thy heart, Lord Jesus,
To feel each anxious care;
To bear my ev'ry burden, **18**
And all my sorrow share.

¹⁶ On the "buildings as a crown" metaphor, see endnote 4.

¹⁷ William Kelly, *Lectures on the Book of Revelation*. (Addison, IL: Bible Truth Publishers, 1984) p. 40.

¹⁸ Frederick Whitfield, "I need Thee, Precious Jesus," <http://cyberhymnal.org/hym/h/inneedtpj.htm>

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Maranatha (1 Cor. 16:20-24)

It was the Apostle Paul's custom to dictate his letters to a co-worker, and here at the close of 1 Corinthians he took the pen from his amanuensis and added a few words in his own handwriting, giving his characteristic greeting (v. 21). Immediately following his personal greeting is a word of warning (v. 22). "Anathema" is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew "harem," meaning "a thing devoted to destruction, the object of a curse" (cf. Rom. 9:3; Gal. 1:8-9; 1 Cor. 12:3). Actually,

"Maranatha" was evidently in common use among Christians at that time, since Paul's use of it here shows that his readers understood its meaning. The expression was thus a constant reminder of the fact of the Lord's return, and we would do well to revive its use among Christians today.

"Maranatha" has at least a seven-fold message for present-day believers. It is first of all:

AN EXPRESSION OF FAITH

"Maranatha" is an expression of faith in all the promises of our Lord Jesus Christ regarding His return and in all the more than 300 references to His Second Coming in the New Testament. As Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 1:20, "all the promises of

This is the "blessed" and "living hope" of the church, and every time we take the word "Maranatha" on our lips we are reminding ourselves and others of our confident hope in our Saviour's return.

"Anathema" in verse 22 should be followed by a period, since the term "Maranatha" is not a combined expression with it. "Maranatha" is a separate word, having been derived from two Aramaic words: "mara" meaning "Lord" and "atha" meaning "cometh." Thus "Maranatha" means "The Lord cometh," this translation suiting both the context and thrust of the letter.

God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us."

Your life and mine should be a living, dynamic demonstration of faith in all the promises of God, including those centering on Christ's return. The sincere use of "Maranatha" in our speech will be a declaration of that faith to all whom we meet, and as our Lord sees that faith in our hearts it will bring joy and pleasure to His heart.

Further, the use of the word "Maranatha" is

AN EXPRESSION OF HOPE

In his letter to Titus, Paul exhorts believers to be “*Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ*” (2:13). When Christians use the word “*Maranatha*,” we affirm our optimism in Christ, no matter how grim conditions may become on earth. We are not looking

To rejoice in the Lord is to look up and look forward in joyful anticipation of His return, for in that day there will be no failure and headache such as we experience now.

for physical death but for the imminent return of our Lord. An entire generation of believers will never experience physical death, for they will be “caught up” at the rapture. Both Enoch and Elijah are types or pictures of those believers who will be translated when Christ descends from heaven to the air, that is, to the atmosphere above the earth.

This is the “*blessed*” and “*living hope*” of the church, and every time we take the word “*Maranatha*” on our lips we are reminding ourselves and others of our confident hope in our Saviour’s return. And because of this “*blessed hope*,” when loved ones are taken from us we “*sorrow not, even as others who have no hope*” (1 Thess. 4:13).

Still further, “*Maranatha*” is

AN EXPRESSION OF LOVE

The fact that believers can genuinely rejoice in this sinful, sordid world is alone attributable to the person, pardon, peace, power and presence of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. In fact, we are commanded

to rejoice (1 Thess. 5:16; Phil. 4:4), something that is not always easy to do, particularly midst life’s sorrows and trials. Nevertheless, to rejoice in the Lord is to look up and look forward in joyful anticipation of His return, for in that day there will be no failure and headache such as we experience now.

We shall with unspeakable joy

17:17). The Word constantly reminds us of Christ’s return.

Added to all that we have thus far considered, “*Maranatha*” is

AN EXPRESSION OF CONCERN FOR OTHERS

In Hebrews 3:13 we are told to “*exhort one another daily*” (see also 10:25), “*exhort*” also meaning to “encourage.” Thus whenever we voice the word “*Maranatha*” we are reminding others of Christ’s imminent return and of the importance of being ready to meet Him. By use of this advent word believers lovingly encourage and admonish one another to watch and pray, and to live for Christ, remembering that some day we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ for divine evaluation of our service (see Rom. 14:12; 1 Cor. 3:11-1; 2 Cor. 5:10).

Finally, “*Maranatha*” is

AN EXPRESSION OF IMMEDIATE JUDGMENT

When Christians exclaim the word “*Maranatha*” they in essence declare a message of warning to the unsaved. The Lord is coming and sinners need to be ready to meet Him, or else suffer eternal judgment. As Paul stated in verse 22, it is a serious thing not to love the Lord Jesus Christ.

As to the effect of “*Maranatha*” on the early followers of Christ:

It was a word that fortified them.

It was a word that unified them.

It was a word that sanctified them.

It was a word that electrified them.

look upon our Saviour’s blessed face, whom having not as yet seen, we love (1 Pet. 1:8). In that day we shall be morally like Him, to see Him as He is, and to be forever with Him in the Father’s House. No longer will we have a sin nature to hinder us in our worship and praise. Also, there will be added joy upon receiving praise from His lips for whatever measure of faithful service has been rendered in this earthly scene.

Again, the use of “*Maranatha*” is

AN EXPRESSION OF PRACTICAL SANCTIFICATION

It was the Apostle John who wrote, “*And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself even as He is pure*” (1 Jn. 3:3). The believer’s expectation of the rapture is centered in Christ. The fact and realization of His imminent return serves to set us apart for Himself in this world, thereby to keep our lives pure from the many defiling influences around us. This, of course, in a practical way is experienced by reading, studying, and obeying God’s Word (John

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Leave God to Order

Leave God to order all thy ways,
And hope in Him whate'er betide;
Thou'lt find Him, in the evil days,
Thine all-sufficient Strength and Guide.
Who trust in God's unchanging love
Builds on the Rock that naught can move!

Only thy restless heart keep still,
And wait in cheerful hope, content
To take whate'er His gracious will,
His all-discerning love hath sent,
Nor doubt our inmost wants are known
To Him who chose us for His own.

He knows when joyful hours are best,
He sends them as He sees it meet,
When thou hast borne the fiery test,
And now art freed from all deceit,
He comes to thee all unaware,
And makes these own His loving care.

Sing, pray and swerve not from His ways;
But do thine own part faithfully.
Trust His rich promises of grace,
So shall they be fulfilled in thee.
God never yet forsook at need
The soul that trusted Him indeed.

—George Neumark
(Translated by Catherine Winkworth)