

## The Power of Praise

Stanley J. Voke

The Christian life should be characterized by continual praise. "I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live," said the Psalmist. "I will sing praise unto my God while I have my being." "My meditation of Him shall be sweet, I will be glad in the Lord."

Praise is the soul's adoration of God, the appreciation of all that God has done for us, the response of love to His mercy, kindness and judgments. "Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness and His wonderful works to the children of men." But men do not praise Him. They ignore Him at the best, murmur often and think nothing of blaspheming His name in the most flagrant manner.

Praise fixes the heart upon God alone. We have then no thought for our troubles, for we are looking on Him, and our eyes are lightened as we meditate on His perfection and let our whole soul go out to Him. Praise always glorifies God. It is the expression of a heart that, having tasted the sweetness of God, brings out into full view His nature and works, so that God is seen by others and is given the glory.

Praise is, in a sense, nobler than prayer. Prayer is often tainted with selfishness; praise never. Prayer expresses our own weakness and need. Praise sets forth the splendour of God. The unbeliever, the heathen, the godless will pray after a sort, when they are in trouble; even the devils supplicated the Son of God, but none of these could ever praise. Praise is the occupation of angels, the glorious heritage of the saints, the gazing of the godly upon their God, the outflow and song of the redeemed soul, the constant exercise of the spirit-filled Christian. It is only possible to those who know the Lord, and is the barometer of presence of praise in your soul.

Now the remarkable thing about praise is that it has power. We do not often realize this, but it is true. The heart that is praising is the heart that is right towards God, and when hearts are right, then God's power breaks out all around.

Satan is a defeated foe. Jesus, enthroned will soon be manifested in glory, and whenever God's people are found living in the victory of Calvary, sounding the trumpets of praise, triumphing in their Lord, Satan's armies flee in confusion.

"The hosts of darkness fear  
When this sweet chant they hear:  
May Jesus Christ be praised!"

Faith is the victory which overcometh; faith that knows God to be with us; faith that is confident of His ability to fight the battle, and rout the foe. Such faith always gives birth to singing and praise, whatever the situation appears to be. And praise always means deliverance.

One Sunday morning a young man sat in a well-known London church among the saints who worshipped there. His heart was cold and unresponsive to God. Then they began to sing—

"When all thy mercies, O my God,  
My rising soul surveys."

It seemed in that hymn that God brought be-

fore him the whole panorama of his life, from early infancy to eternity that was to be. It was mercy, mercy all the way, and before the hymn was ended his heart was broken, praise was pouring from his soul, and the house was filled with Divine Glory. It is always like this. When the hardness is melted by the sense of God's love, and we praise, then Glory comes in.

The book of Acts is full of praise. The Christians speak the wonderful works of God, eat their meat with gladness, praising God, and are filled with joy in the Holy Ghost. The most remarkable example is found in Acts 17. Paul and Silas were in prison, their backs bleeding from the Roman scourging, their feet fast in stocks. It was dark and the air was oppressive with the fetid atmosphere of a Philippian jail. Yet, at midnight in those very

### THANKSGIVING

Dear Lord, we come with thankful hearts;

Another year has flown,  
And looking back upon its days

Thy hand we gladly own.

We see in every bitter trial

A purpose wise and true,

Acknowledging it strengthened us

And faith was deepened, too.

A purpose wise has shaped our lives

And mingled joy with pain,

And though we love the sunshine bright

We thank Thee, too, for rain.

We thank Thee for this beautiful world,

For home and love and friends;

We thank Thee that this free man's land

Still liberty defends.

We thank Thee, Lord, that in our homes

We still may teach Thy truth,

And still into Thy temple lead

The eager feet of youth.

That opportunities are ours

To serve and lead and teach;

That still we may by word and deed

Thy glorious message preach.

We thank Thee, Lord, for saving grace,

For sanctifying power,

A home above that beckons us

In life's most trying hour.

We cannot count our blessings up,

Our cup is running o'er,

And still, dear Lord, with lavish hand

Each day Thy blessings pour.

—Eva D. Landis

conditions they praised the Lord, and the prisoners heard them. I wonder what they sang. Was it "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear, the Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid"? Or was it "Bless the Lord oh my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy Name"?

Whatever it was, they sang in the stocks in the night, until God moved on their behalf with earthquake, and when fear fell upon the jailor it was to the praising prisoners he went with the burning cry, "What must I do to be saved?" Later he, too, was found rejoicing, with all his house and the Philippian church was born in praise. No wonder Paul wrote to them in after years: "Rejoice in the Lord, and again I say rejoice." He and they had proved beyond doubt the power of praise.—Living Waters.

## Sacrifices of Acknowledgment

By Willard H. Taylor

By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

(Heb. 13:15-16).

The fever of inspiration is about to die; the writer has poured out his message to his kinsmen, the Jewish Christians. In these last few lines of his epistle some practical instructions for Christian living concern him. But there comes one more great flash of truth which gives birth to the memorable verse, "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." The sacrifice to Christ! Incomparable and complete! Immediately, the divine writer pleads with his people to go out to Jesus "beyond the boundaries of the camp, proudly bearing His 'disgrace'" (Phillips). Then in the dying light of this magnificent outburst of revelation he exhorts the followers of Jesus to offer two sacrifices in return: first, the sacrifice of praise and thanks (verse 15); and second, the sacrifice of charity or sharing (verse 16).

One masterful exegete of the Holy Writ has said that we cannot offer any sacrifices for our sins; Christ alone can do that. He made the great sacrifice of atonement; our sacrifices are only "sacrifices of acknowledgment." One sacrifice is the fruit of our lips; the other, the fruit of our hands. By such we show our gratitude to God for the sacrifice of His Son, Christ Jesus, for us.

To be sure, what a man says with his lips does not always indicate his intention or the nature of his inner being. However, it is true that the words of a man are a fair register of his character. That Christian who readily enters into the service of worship with a spirit of adoration and praise, who "prays without ceasing," and who keeps his eyes open for opportunities to witness of His Saviour, can be trusted as a true follower. More than that, he has a genuinely thankful heart. Such "fruit of the lips" is not intermittent, but continual—daily, year in and year out, not just at Thanksgiving time. When the heart has been touched by the cleansing power of the life of Christ, the lips become avenues of articulate acknowledgment—not to men, but to God, whose love, eternal, merciful, and redemptive, motivated the sacrifice of His Son for the salvation of sinners.

But the sacrifice of praise is not enough; another sacrifice must be made, whereby we show that we are true partakers of Christ and are truly thankful—the sacrifice of charity or sharing, the fruit of our hands. The Biblical writer insists that we must not forget to do good and to share the good things in our hands. Words are not enough! Never! Deeds of goodness for God's cause must follow! What if God had only continued to promise redemption to men, as He did in the Old Covenant, but had not gone on to enact the deed at Calvary? He promised the sacrifice; He also made it. Words

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**"IT IS A GOOD THING TO GIVE THANKS UNTO THE LORD"**

The King's Highway