

THE SHINING LIGHT

Shining Forth in Truth for the Blind

Spring 2012, Issue 2

Welcome, friends to this edition of The Shining Light. The Shining Light is a quarterly publication produced by Gospel Light Foundation for the Blind. It is available in Braille, Microsoft Word, and cassette. Gospel Light exists to bring Christ-centered, Biblically sound materials available to those who are blind or partially sighted.

God continues to richly bless our ministry. We have some wonderful additions to our library that will richly bless you. We have also expanded The Shining Light magazine and hope it is an encouragement to all who read it.

REFLECTIONS FROM THE SCRIPTURES

By Smokey Nevins

Philippians 4:11-13. 11 Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. 12 I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. 13 I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

In these verses from Philippians, Paul reveals the secret of a happy life. The reason we often struggle enjoying a happy life is because we haven't discovered this secret enjoyed by Paul. Friends, you and I will never enjoy lasting happiness in the things we possess, the hobbies we take pleasure in, or the friends and loved ones we value so dearly. We will not enjoy lasting happiness based on our achievements, our status, or our knowledge. Our service for Christ is no guarantee to a consistently happy life.

The secret of a happy life is learning to be content in whatever circumstance we find ourselves. Only as we learn true contentment can we maintain true joy in the midst of trials and suffering. So what is true contentment? True contentment is that satisfaction, peace, and joy which God gives to those who love and trust Him. It is acquired when love for and dependence upon self are replaced with love for and dependence upon God.

In his book *The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment*, puritan author Jeremiah Burroughs provides an excellent definition of contentment. He writes: "Christian contentment is that sweet, inward, quiet, gracious frame of spirit, which freely submits to and delights in God's wise and fatherly disposal in every condition."

Just like Paul, we must learn to be content. This doesn't happen overnight, but is a lifelong learning process just like it was for the apostle Paul. Contentment was something Paul increasingly acquired as he learned to rest in the sufficiency of God's grace in all of life's circumstances.

One of the means by which we can increasingly enjoy contentment when times are hard and our heart is weighed down with burdens and cares, is to rest in God's precious promises for those who are His

children. These promises are reserved for those who have trusted Jesus Christ alone as Lord, God, King, and Savior.

Consider what precious promises God has given to His children. He promises us wisdom from above, peace in our hearts, forgiveness of sin, and His presence in times of trouble. He promises to answer our prayers in a way that is best for us and to provide grace to help in time of need. He promises eternal life which no one can take away and eternal bliss with Him in heaven forever.

What wonderful promises these are. But, to be strengthened by them, we must hold fast to them throughout our lives, including when we are struggling with discontentment. Author A. W. Pink writes "The comfort of our soul does not depend upon outward provisions so much as on our appropriation and enjoyment of what is contained in the divine promises. If we rested more on them, we would crave less of this world's goods."

Here are 12 promises from the word of God that can provide the believer with much contentment. Meditate upon them, commit them to memory, and cling to them when you are tempted to be discontent. Listen to the words of famous preacher J. C. Ryle: "You and I have trouble and sorrow before us. It needs no prophetic eye to see that. Sickesses, deaths, partings, separations, disappointments are sure to come. What is to sustain us in the days of darkness, which are many? Nothing is so able to do it as texts out of the Bible."

Here are the 12 promises mentioned above. There are many more, but these are a few rich treasures from the Bible. They are numbered and titled according to their subject. Hold them fast, hide them in your heart, and enjoy greater contentment.

1. Eternal Life 1John 5:13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.
2. Forgiveness 1John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
3. Peace Philippians 4:6-7. 6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
4. Wisdom James 1:5 But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.
5. Provision Philippians 4:19 And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.
6. Protection and Preservation Isaiah 41:10 'Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'

7. Ever Present Help Hebrews 13:5-6. 5 Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU," 6 so that we confidently say, "THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?"

8. Answered Prayer 1John 5:14-15 14 This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.

9. Loving Providence Romans 8:28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

10. Heaven John 14:2-3 2 "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. 3 "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also."

11. Eternal Peace Revelation 21:4 and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."

12. Eternal Glory Rev. 22:3-5. 3 There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; 4 they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. 5 And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever.

MINISTRY UPDATES

We are purchasing an upgrade to our Duxbury software. It is what enables us to turn computer text to Braille. This new program will convert our letters and information directly from our regular program (Microsoft Word) to embossed Braille. This will make it less time consuming and easier.

Lilianna still plans to attend the American Council of the Blind Conference and Convention in Louisville, Kentucky, July 6–14. Please pray that we will have the finances for this trip and be able to print the materials to distribute to the blind about our ministry. We will also be getting registrations for students wanting to take our Bible correspondence course lessons in Braille, by computer, or large print; and borrow from our audio lending library.

TESTIMONIES

Penny in Nebraska sent us an e-mail after we mentioned having excerpts from a book we were offering. This just goes to show how hungry believers get for the word of God, especially those who have less access to Biblical teaching. "I just received the magazine. I love it, and you. I would be thrilled to receive a loaner copy of Mr. Sibbes on a NLS cartridge. Would you be able to lend it to me? I didn't know anyone read Mr. Sibbes. He's so wonderful and practical. I can hardly wait. In Christ, P. G."

"Let this be known that at the present date of December 12, 2011, Gospel Light Foundation for the

Blind became part of my life with incredible results. Being blind can only weaken your flesh but God can strengthen your spirit because the true light has become part of you. Therefore I am happily back on my feet fulfilling God's ministry thanks to the grace of God and GLFB.

P.S. I developed great love and relationship for Barbara whose soft tone of voice generated strength and of the great ministry of Christ with her phone calling. Gospel Light continue to shine! Jesus Pambias"

PRAISES

From the state regional library we were able as an organization that ministers to the blind to obtain the same digital player free that the blind receive. That has been a great blessing in checking the digital recordings we have done on the cartridges. I, Barbara, have especially enjoyed using the digital player to listen to books in our library like The Knowledge of the Holy by A.W. Tozer and The Sovereignty of God by A.W. Pink.

We are thankful to have a lady in Florida that is updating our web site. It will have lists of our books and sermons available on NSL cartridges, tapes, and CD's. You can check it out at glfb.org

GREAT HYMNS OF THE FAITH

Nearer, My God, to Thee

By Sarah F. Adams

1. Nearer, my God, to Thee, Nearer to Thee! E'en tho' it be a cross That raiseth me; Still all my song shall be, Nearer, my God, to Thee, Nearer, my God, to Thee, Nearer to Thee.
2. Tho' like a wanderer, The sun gone down, Darkness be over me, My rest a stone; Yet in my dreams I'd be Nearer, my God, to Thee, Nearer, my God to Thee, Nearer to Thee.
3. There let the way appear Steps unto heaven; All that Thou sendest me, In mercy giv'n; Angels to beckon me Nearer, my God, to Thee, Nearer, my God, to Thee, Nearer to Thee.

In England there was a woman whose name was Sarah Flower Adams. Mrs. Adams wrote a great many beautiful poems and hymns. She was not a very strong woman and she had had very much sorrow. Her own dear mother had died when she was just a little girl, and a sister whom she had loved very dearly had been sick for a long, long time. Mrs. Adams used to pray to God a very great deal, and asked Him to help her bear her burdens (she called them crosses sometimes). One day she just began to think that each cross made her feel a little closer to God, so she wrote the wonderful verse 1.

Mrs. Adams said sometimes it seemed to her that the sun was gone down and everything was dark, but that, if she would stop to think, God was always near her. She thought about the story of Jacob, how he had taken the stone for his pillow, and then of the dream when he had seen the ladder; of the stone that he had put up for a place to worship God. All of these things came to her mind, and she made them into the other verses of the hymn.

This is the song our good President McKinley loved so well; and, the few times that he spoke after he had been shot, he used the line of this song, "Nearer, My God, to Thee," and the words were on his lips when he died. It was a great favorite, also of Presidents Roosevelt and Harding.

Many, many times away out on the ocean, when troublous storms gather, this song is used as a prayer for God's help. When the great ocean liner "Titanic" was sinking, and everybody was in terror, the band stayed at its post and played, "Nearer, My God, to Thee," and everybody felt stronger. (Taken from the book, Junior Hymn Stories, Copyright, 1926.)

NEW ADDITIONS TO LIBRARY

We have been greatly blessed with a number of wonderful additions to the Gospel Light Library. These books, sermons, and our memory verse packet are rich treasures that we highly recommend both for your reading pleasure and as a means of strengthening you in your knowledge of Christian doctrine and your devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ. Our new resources are the fruit of extended hours of reading by volunteers, the ministry of Chapel Library, and the kind permissions of the Navigators.

The Spurgeon Library: Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892) is one of the most beloved and respected preachers in history. He was born at Kelvedon, a small town in Essex, England. Converted at 16, he preached his first sermon later that year. At 19 he was called to pastor the New Park Street Chapel in London, which later became the Metropolitan Tabernacle seating more than 6,000. Today he is history's most widely read preacher (apart from those found in Scripture). He is often referred to as the prince of preachers.

Thanks to the kindness of Chapel Library, Gospel Light has added 93 of Spurgeon's sermons to what we have called the Spurgeon Library. These sermons were professionally read by Charles Koelsch and were originally recorded for a radio program called "The Prince of Preachers." We have other works by Spurgeon recorded by other volunteer readers which will be included as part of The Spurgeon Library.

The Spurgeon Library is a treasure chest of Christ-exalting sermons which will refresh and strengthen your heart and draw you closer to Christ. The superb reading of Charles Koelsch makes the new addition even more enjoyable. Call or e-mail us today and receive a free cassette of one of Spurgeon's sermons. Also, if you want to read Spurgeon sermons online, visit the Spurgeon Archives at

<http://www.spurgeon.org/index/rindex.htm>

The Knowledge of the Holy: The attributes of God and their meaning in the Christian Life by A. W. Tozer. This is an inspiring classic on the person and character of God. In a spirit of reverence, author A. W. Tozer considers the attributes of God through the lense of Scripture. His thoughtful study reveals a majestic, holy, sovereign, loving, and gracious God worthy of adoration and praise.

Tozer opens his book with these words: "What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us. The history of mankind will probably show that no person has ever risen above its religion, and man's spiritual history will positively demonstrate that no religion has ever been greater than its idea of God. Worship is pure or base as the worshiper entertains high or low thoughts of God. For this reason the gravest question before the Church is always God Himself, and the most portentous fact about any man is not what he at a given time may say or do, but what he in his deep heart conceives God to be like."

This beloved classic will be treasured by anyone committed to the Christian faith. It is thoughtfully read by Matt Wolfe and each chapter opens and closes with instrumental music. If you read it using our tape library, you should be aware that some of the cassettes contain fewer chapters than others with some parts of the tapes left blank. However, the book is recorded in its entirety and is very well read. For internet users, the text of The Knowledge of The Holy is located at http://www.heavendwellers.com/hdt_knowledge_of_the_holy.htm

The Christian Life: A Doctrinal Introduction by Sinclair B. Ferguson. Christian doctrine matters for Christian living. The clearer and deeper our understanding of the great doctrines of the Christian faith, the more we will understand who we are in Christ and what He desires of us as His children. That which God desires most of us who have trusted Christ as Lord and Savior is our worship. As we see more clearly His great work of salvation, the more our hearts and mouths will be filled with His praises.

The Christian Life expounds such key biblical themes as grace, faith, repentance, new birth and assurance with great clarity. "Christian doctrines are life-shaping," explains the author, because "they show us the God we worship". Sinclair Ferguson has given the church one of the clearest explanation of the gospel and what it means to be a Christian. This book is clearly read by Amy Nevins and is available both on cassette and digital cartridge.

The NAVIGATORS TOPICAL MEMORY SYSTEM

If you want to memorize Scripture, but aren't sure what to memorize or where to start, this system is exactly what you need to begin hiding God's Word in your heart. It is now available in Braille thanks to the kind permission of the publisher.

The Topical Memory System contains 60 passages from Scripture which are divided into five major sections or topics. Each topic contains 12 passages. Most passages are a single verse. Within each topic, verses are further divided into pairs which address various subjects that relate to the main topic. For example, the first main topic in the memory system is called LIVE THE NEW LIFE. Within this section, two verses are devoted to keeping Christ at the center of our Christian life, two are devoted to the word of God, two are devoted to prayer, etc.

The Topical Memory System is a very helpful tool in systematically memorizing Scripture in an organized way. Prayerfully use it as one means of hiding God's word in your heart. Praise the Lord that this helpful memory system is now available to Braille readers. The verses are taken from the English Standard Version of the Bible which is one of the better translations. A special word of thanks to Jeremy Treis for preparing the Navigators verses in a format that is easy to use by Braille readers. He's an awesome Christian brother who is great with computer software.

RECOMMENDED READING

Of all the books contained in the Gospel Light library, we can recommend none more highly than John Bunyan's Pilgrims Progress. John Bunyan (1628-1688) was a preacher and Puritan author. John Bunyan had very little schooling, but he was mighty in the Scriptures. Pilgrim's Progress is a great work of Christian literature. Originally composed in the 17th century, this spiritual allegory has blessed, comforted, instructed, and challenged innumerable readers for over 300 years.

Part I of the book tells of "Christian" and his journey to the "Celestial City." Part II tells of the journey of Christian's wife Christiana and their children to this Celestial City. The two parts work together as a unified whole to describe the life, struggles, and joys of a follower of Jesus Christ. Pilgrim's Progress not only instructs readers with spiritual allegories; it entertains them as well through Bunyan's creative story telling. We highly recommend this enjoyable and instructive book to all of our listeners.

LETTERS

"Dear Mrs. Keathley, I just wanted to write and tell you how I enjoyed the Braille magazine this time. Smokey Nevins had a wonderful message that is just perfect for this time of year. I teach Sunday school two Sundays a month. This is something I want to take and share with my class and also others at my church. I would like to have the two Christmas messages in the digital format. God is certainly blessing all of the work of your ministry." D.B.

FROM THE EDITOR

We hope you enjoyed reading this issue of the Shining Light as much as we have enjoyed putting it together. I, Barbara, have a totally blind friend in Pennsylvania that is looking for a Christian lady that could live in with her to help and drive for her. If you know of someone interested, please contact me.

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