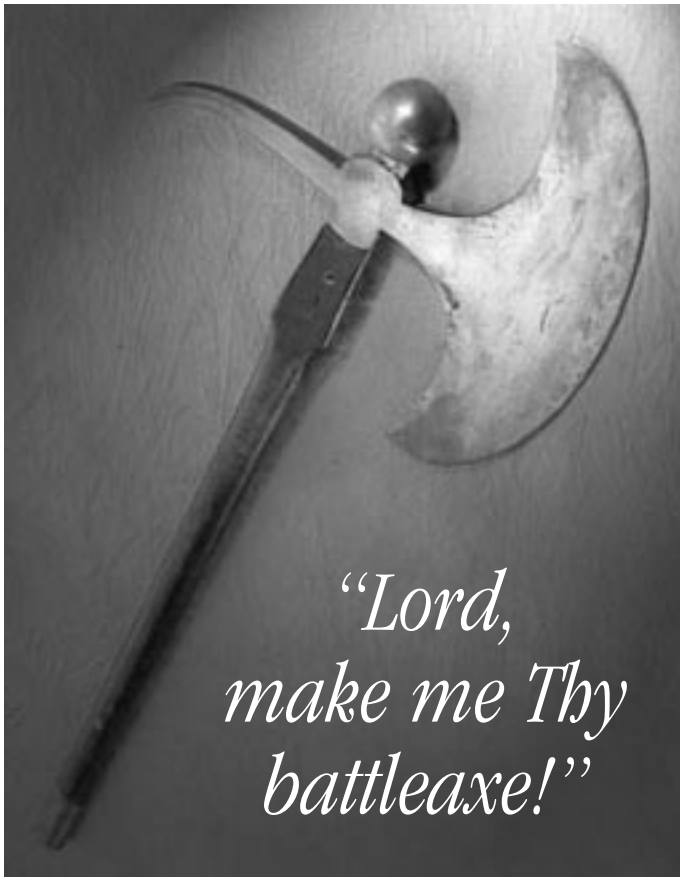

Be Still.

THOUGHTS AND READINGS FOR MEDITATION 54

KNOWN IN HELL

from *Why Revival Tarries* by Leonard Ravenhill



*“Lord,
make me Thy
battleaxe!”*

*“A hot iron, though blunt, will pierce
sooner than a cold one, though sharper.”*

JOHN FLAVEL

**“Thou art my battle axe and weapons of war:
for with thee will I break in pieces the nations,
and with thee will I destroy kingdoms.”**
Jeremiah 51:20

Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth
shalt be bound in heaven.

— Jesus

Your adversary the devil, . . . resist, steadfast in the faith.

— Peter

Submit . . . to God.

Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

— James

The more God's people reckon with the devil in their
praying, the more they will taste of the liberty of the
Spirit in dealing with the issues of life.

— F. J. Perryman

Lord, even demons are subject unto us in Thy name.

— *The Seventy*

Should all the hosts of death

And powers of hell unknown

Put their most dreadful forms

Of rage or malice on,

I shall be safe; for Christ displays

SUPERIOR POWER and guardian grace.

— Isaac Watts

Some preachers master their subject; some subjects master the preacher; once in a while one meets a preacher who is both master of, and also mastered by his subject. The Apostle Paul, I am sure, was in that category. Look at Paul in Ephesus (Acts 19). Seven men were attempting to use a religious formula over a Gadara-type of victim. But slinging theological terms or even Bible verses at devil-possessed men is as ineffective as snowballing Gibraltar in the hope of removing it. One man, demon-controlled, was an easy match for these seven silly sycophants. While the seven sons of Sceva fled into the streets, shirtless and shamed, the man filled with an unholy spirit increased his wardrobe with seven suits. And so, the seven wounded, fearful men told their own tale, for God turned their folly to the glory of Christ, so that His name was greatly feared

and magnified. Spiritists were converted; Jews and Greeks were saved; at a public bonfire, cult books to the value of fifty thousand pieces were burned. Surely that was making the wrath of man to praise Him! Listen, too, to the testimony of the demon, "Jesus I know, AND PAUL I KNOW, but who are you?" (Acts 19:15). This is the highest praise that earth or hell affords—to be classified by the enemy as one with Jesus.

But how did Paul get that way? Why did demons know Paul? had they beaten him too, or had he beaten them? Consider for a moment this man Paul. God and Paul were on intimate terms. Revelations were granted him. His servants were angels; at his finger tips were earthquakes. His Spirit-powered words shattered the fetters from the soul of a spirit-bound girl, whom men had snared as a fortuneteller. In Corinth, this mighty man Paul drained a part of the Slough of Despond, and there on the devil's doorstep established a church. Later, he snatched souls from under the nose of Caesar, right from Caesar's own household. And before kings Paul was at home, for he said, "I count myself happy King Agrippa!" Paul also stormed the intellectual capital of the world (Mars Hill) with resurrection truth and thereby routed their learned. While Paul lived, hell had no peace.

But what was Paul's armoury? Where did he edge his blade? Paul more than once uses the phrase "I am persuaded," and therein lay his secret. Revealed truth held him like a vise. The Word, like the Lord, was immutable. Paul's anchor was cast in the depths of God's faithfulness. His battleaxe was the Word of the Lord, his strength was faith in that Word. So the Spirit alerted Paul to the coming strategy of the devil. Paul was not ignorant of his devices; therefore hell suffered. Even when men willed to assassinate Paul, an informer uncovered the plot, and men and demons were foiled.

Spirituality that saves men from hell and keeps men from vulgar sins is wonderful, but, I believe, elementary. When Paul went to the Cross, the miracle of conversion and regeneration took place; but later when he got on the Cross, the greater miracle of identification took place. That I believe is the masterly argument of the Apostle—to be dead and alive at the same time. "Ye are dead," Paul wrote the Galatians. Suppose we try this on ourselves first. Are we *dead*?—*dead* to blame or praise? *dead* to fashion

and human opinion? *dead* so that we have no itch for recognition? *dead* so that we do not squirm if another gets praised for a thing that we engineered? Oh sweet, sublime, satisfying experience of the indwelling Christ by the Spirit! We, too, can sing with Wesley:

Dead to the world and all its toys!
Its idle pomp and fading joys!
Jesus, my glory be!

Yes, Paul was *dead*. Then he added, "Nevertheless *I live*, yet not *I*." Christianity is the only religion in the world where a man's God comes and lives *inside* of him. Paul no longer wrested with flesh (neither his own nor any other man's); he wrested "against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world." Does that shed any light on why this demon said, "*And Paul I know*"? Paul had been wrestling against the demon powers. (In these modern days, this art of binding and loosing that Paul knew is almost forgotten or else ignored. On the last lap of his earthly pilgrimage, he declared, "I have fought a good fight." Demons could have said amen to that statement, for they suffered more from Paul than Paul suffered from them. Yes, Paul was *known in hell*.)

Another anchor that held this soul undaunted was the wrath of a holy God upon sin. "Knowing the terror of the Lord he persuaded men" (II Cor. 5:11). Paul accounted men as *lost*! The other night a saw a picture thrown onto a scree; but in its blurred state it had no meaning. Then the operator's hand reached out and focussed the slide. What a difference! Even so, we Christians need the Divine Hand to sharpen the picture of the lostness of men to our eternity-dimmed eyes. Because Paul loved His Lord with perfect love, he also hated sin with perfect hatred. Thus he saw men not only prodigals but also rebels—not just drifters from righteousness but conspirators in wickedness, who *must* be pardoned *or* punished. With the fierceness of Love's intensest blaze, he burned at the injustice of men subordinate to demon power. His watchword was "This one thing I do." He had no side issues, no books to sell. He had no ambitions—and so had nothing to be jealous about. He had no reputation—and so had nothing to fight about. He had no possessions—and so had nothing to worry about. He had no "rights"—so therefore he could suffer no wrong. he was already broken—so no one could break him. He was "dead"—so

no one could kill him. He was less than the least—so who could humble him? He had suffered the loss of all things—so none could defraud him. Does this throw any light on why the demon said, "Paul I know"? Over this God-intoxicated man, hell suffered headaches.

Yet another anchor to the spirit of this saint was the efficacy of the blood of Jesus, and so the ability of Christ to save *fully*. "ALL have sinned and come short of the glory of God." yes! But Christ is *able to save* to the uttermost ALL who come unto God by Him. Oh that the world might know the all-atoning Lamb! With Paul there was no limited atonement. Zealot he was and wanted to be. In the light of an eternal hell what were the perishing things of clay? And in our present day what are honours among men? or what are the schemes of hell? *Right now* men are LOST, as well as after they die. *Right now* men are being swept into the vortex of a sewer of iniquity which ultimately leads to an ETERNAL HELL. is this true? Paul was convinced that it was. Then, "Oh arm of the Lord, awake; put on strength" (Isa. 51:9). "Make me Thy battle axe and Thy weapons of war," I hear Paul say.

Another anchor for Paul was the blessed assurance that "to be absent from the body was to be present with the Lord" (II Cor. 5:8). Out of life into life! At the thought of *eternity*, language is beggared and imagination staggered. Paul could "write off" stripes, imprisonments, fastings, weariness, and painfulness as "light affliction"—recompensed by the fact "so shall we ever be with the Lord." All the "shot and shell" of demons was wasted against Paul. Do you wonder now that one of them said, "And Paul I know"?

The final truth as an anchor to Paul's soul was "WE MUST ALL APPEAR before the judgment seat of Christ" (II Cor. 5:10). Living with eternity's values in view took the sting out of this oncoming test too. Living "right," here on earth (I do not mean just living righteously, but living after the pattern set in the Holy Word) takes care of the hereafter. Paul was so conformed to the image of the Son that he could say, "What things ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do" (Phil. 4:9). To copy copies is not normally safe, but it is safe to copy Paul, for he was *fully* surrendered, wholly sanctified, yea, "complete in Christ."

Do you still wonder why a demon said, "And Paul I know"? ★

DEAD OR ALIVE?

From 5-5-55 by Maurice Smith

You love something more than Me.' This was the word the Lord spoke to me as I waited quietly before Him after the meeting. The speaker had expressed views that were terribly radical; he seemed to be saying that he had arrived and that he was now a full-grown son of God, by faith. While I believed in people growing up into what I would call 'sonship' (that is, becoming fully responsible so that God could give unlimited power into their hands), this man did not impress me. He was certainly completely unflappable, but there was a negativeness that worried me, as though it was all likely to drop off in an unguarded moment. There was some truth in what he was saying, of that I was sure; but my Inner Witness would not give any assent to the claims being made. During the question time I remember taking up some things with him pretty strongly. I discovered that he did not really need forgiveness now as he did not sin and I noticed several in the audience were getting very red under the collar. They were what I would call good orthodox evangelicals. They needed constant cleansing through the blood which Jesus shed for sin, they said, and every night they asked for forgiveness from all they had done wrong during the day. The speaker said, 'It must be a miserable existence,' and I could see his point, for these dear people were so obviously *sin-conscious*. They seemed absolutely certain that they were going to continue in sin for as long as they lived; they had accepted defeat, or so it seemed.

The speaker and his contestants were on two ends of a see-saw, and my spirit, which would not really witness to either of them, seemed to be sitting in the middle. For the first time I began to realise how self-righteous one can be over being a groveling sinner in constant need of forgiveness; a sort of false humility—'See what an awful chap I am.' Surely we ought to be able to rise to a greater height than this? Surely we do not need to sin and get forgiveness, sin and get forgiveness, in this interminable way? There must be a higher pathway, I reasoned, and so I cried to God for revelation, that He would answer my problem for me. My wife went on home while I stayed behind to seek more light.

As we talked, I cried out loud, 'God, show me the truth, for I am confused.' He answered, 'You love something more than Me.' What had that got to do with it? I had not fully realised then that, very often, revelation (true light) come in the school of experience. That is, the matter is not

just one of information, it is not academic; but true light does something to a person. The Bible calls it the Light of Life. To have an encounter with the Truth means that we are never the same again; it is not a matter of learning something but of literally yielding ground to God. Life from God only come out of death, for He is the God of resurrection and when everything is in death, or at an end, it is then that He gives His Light, or Life. He is constantly meeting a need and taking us farther along the road.

What was it that I loved more than God? What step had I to take in order that He might shed more precious light along my pathway? As best I knew how, I had offered myself and my family, my time and money. Were they not acceptable? As far as I knew everything was at His feet although I realised that I still had a long way to go in the matter of willingly and happily paring with everything at the moment of separation. Everything belonged to Him anyway, for I did not own anything in the

*'You're dead,'
said the Lord.*

ultimate sense. Oh, there was reality beating in my heart, I can tell you; I really did want to know if there was anything holding me back from going right through to the end. Then He told me; it was like a bolt out of the blue, for I had no idea of the nature of my reservation until it was exposed. *'It is the love of your brethren.'* Immediately I was hurt and I knew that a raw spot had been touched. 'Oh no, Lord, not that,' I cried. We had been together undisturbed for over a decade and I had not found what I wanted in any of the denominational churches; now the fellowship of kindred hearts seemed to be everything to me. 'Please, don't touch that or I shall have nothing left.'

The world seemed to be standing still while I counted the cost. Just supposing that God gave me light that my friends would not receive? But that could make no difference to fellowship, I reasoned, for we had always said we were together because we shared the same life. Still the Voice persisted, 'Suppose I give you light that causes your closest Christian friends to turn away from you?' I found myself replying, 'If it's true light, from You, I want it, even if no other man in the whole wide

world will receive it.'

This preparedness to 'go it alone', if necessary, gave God the ground to reveal a Biblical truth to me, and it did not seem to have any connection with the matter we had been considering. Such are His ways at times, for He knows our *need* and is meeting this continually. He knew my need was to stop striving in my own strength against sin. He wanted to bring me to rest. The light came in the form of two surprising words . . . 'You're dead,' said the Lord.

Immediately a verse from Romans 7 planted itself firmly in my mind and light came flooding into my soul. 'But if what I would not, that I do . . . *it is no more I that do it*, but sin which dwelleth in me.' It brought instant release and it seemingly had nothing to do with what the man had been preaching; but it was as though a hundredweight of coal had dropped off my back. I was one with John Bunyan as he stood at the cross and his burden fell away; I was free, chains had fallen away from me in a moment.

There was no great grasp of theological truth; all I knew was that I no longer had to try to be a good Christian. I no longer had to struggle to keep the law of God, for I really was 'in Christ' and when He died I had died and as He was raised so was I; immediately I saw where I had previously missed the way.

At conversion I had been set free from the strain of trying to keep the *Old Testament* law. The Ten Commandments had floored me; that is why I had cast myself on Jesus Christ as my Saviour and proceeded to walk freely in the Spirit, enjoying the liberty of the Christian life. Gradually I had then begun to learn a *New Testament* set of laws which I was equally unable to fulfil; but had been trying to ever since. By my own natural determination I had been trying to fulfil the New Testament imperatives. Instead of perfect freedom, my Christian life had been one of trying because my conscience kept telling me that I ought to be better. There had been an absence of deep rest!

Oh, what an emancipation! I bounded home to my wife; it was now very late and she was in bed. 'I'm dead, I'm dead,' echoed around the bedroom. She obviously wondered what it was all about, for I had never looked so much alive! My wife reminded me that I had been preaching this truth for ten years. What was so different? I tried to explain that now I *knew* I was dead. For years I had been telling myself it was true; but it had not really worked. Now it would be easy to 'reckon' it continually, whatever the circumstances, because I was working from a different foundation.

'I'd like to run down the streets of town and tell everyone,' I said on waking next

morning. We realised together, lying there in bed, that these were exactly the words which Watchman Nee had said when he had the same revelation. Only with him it was Shanghai and it had taken him seven years to see it, but with me it had taken eleven years since conversion.

I was free, really free, from my old accusing self and had found a release which was evident to many. It was not long before I was in trouble.

“Don’t you realise that you have responsibility?” ‘You’re so dead, you’ll be no use to anybody.’ Why was everyone so opposed to this revelation? I did all I could to make it plain, but I did not succeed. Something had happened; that is all I really knew. The strain had gone out of my Christianity and I felt able to relax. For years I had kept my own hands firmly on the wheel lest there be a smash. Now I was like the co-driver and it was all so different.

It was the loneliest year I have known. Out in the work of God, with my home base feeling that I was off the rails. Several times I got confused by the pressure that was put upon me and tried to explain, but each time the theologians seemed to win the day. They pointed out to me that ‘positionally’ what I said was true, but that ‘experimentally’ the old Maurice Smith was still very much alive and they could see plenty of him! The Word of God, I pointed out, used no such terms and the effort of constantly trying to bridge the gap between my position (so called) and my experience had been a heart-breaking business down the years. I said that the ‘old me’ was dead and that as I continued to walk ‘as alive from the dead’, then I would less and less fulfil the lusts that were in my flesh. I was not a scholar enough to explain to them the difference between my ‘old man’ that was dead and ‘my flesh’ which they could see, and anyway, to be truthful, it did not seem that they were very anxious to enjoy what was such a thrill to me!

It was constantly alleged that I had arrived (!) and that I was preaching something called ‘sinless perfection’, and that very soon I would be living in obvious sin and calling it by less offensive names. But, in fact, sin had become even more obnoxious

to me. Could I sin deliberately that grace may abound? God forbid! Or as J. B. Phillips puts it, ‘What a ghastly thought!’ The whole trouble was that I had seen I was dead, that I had revelation, and I knew that if I quietly accepted what was true of me ‘in Christ’, then my experience would come trotting along behind in obedience.

‘Sin no longer had dominion over me’ and there was no need for me to sin at all, as long as I remained where I was. Abiding in the Vine was the place for me, and I decided to stay where I was, to ‘walk in the Spirit’ and not to ‘fulfil the lust of the flesh.’ No more trying for me. I saw that the sin I was *accountable* for was when I had been tempted and had yielded, drawn out, if you like, of my resting place in Christ. If I stayed where I was then there was no need for this to happen.

I dawned on me that going on with God was as simple as receiving Him, and that by my previous self-effort, I had removed myself from the realm of Grace—where the ability of God worked for me—back into the realm of law-keeping. I read, and re-read, the book of Galatians and realised that Paul could have written every word of that letter direct to me.

In spite of all the opposition from those so dear to me, I sailed through that year at an altitude of several thousand feet. There were battles enough; but always this great truth saw me through: ‘The battle is not mine, it is the Lord’s.’ I was at rest. I had found out how to live the Christian life without worry.

Whatever people said about my now evading the ‘daily working of the Cross,’ I knew that for the first time in my life I was embracing suffering willingly. Now I wanted to ‘take up my cross’ joyfully, instead of putting up with something that God was doing to me. After so many years I realised that the pathway we have been called to tread is only possible in the strength of Christ. We need to know ‘the power of His resurrection’ before we can enter into ‘the fellowship of His sufferings’. Why are people so afraid of perfection? Jesus said we should be perfect. I only wish Christians were as afraid of imperfection as they are of perfection.

Well, go on; ask it! Have I sinned since that day of mighty revelation? I’m afraid so, but not nearly so much. Instead of trying always not to sin, I now know I need not ever sin again, if I just stay where I am in Christ. The accuser makes many attempts to draw me out of my resting place, but by the wonderful grace of God we grow wise to his methods, though sometimes we get hurt as we learn. When the enemy has scored a point he makes an awful fuss about it; but we act on the principle of instant confession, instant cleansing and instant restoration. Norman Grubb describes it very well when he likens the business to an infantryman getting in past our line of defence. When the line is pierced he shouts as loud as he can, ‘You’re not dead!’ but we know he is wrong. So we quickly throw the infantryman out again. So we live in a world of ‘no condemnation’ as we walk in the Spirit, as we constantly relax in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Real freedom is freedom from oneself and one’s own dictates. I found that Jesus Christ made the all-inclusive bid for freedom when He walked up that hill amid jeering and spitting—and He won! Not one selfish thought, not one word that lacked the fullness of love; He had triumphed in whatever state He was! Not for Himself, but for all men everywhere for all time that victory extends, and I have come into the good of it. In spite of a world splitting at the seams, rent with violence and hatred, still His true disciples find His great peace flooding their lives as they learn to rest in Him. They are filled with genuine hope in a situation that, to the trembling hearts around, seems hopeless.

There are more experiences ahead, for the Christian life is one of experience, not of dogma and church ritual. It is a New Life, not a way of life. Nevertheless, the great impression of the steps of freedom I have just related will never leave me; that I know. Freed from the power of an evil spirit; freed from dependence on this world; freed from the worry of trying to keep holy—what next, Lord? I cannot turn back, for ‘You have the words of eternal life’ and I must follow to the end. •

• Dependent on God •

Over the last two centuries, the evangelical church has been undermined by wrong views on the subject of holiness. There are those who believe that we can be free from sin by having an experience in which we die to self and fully surrender our lives to Jesus, enabling us to live life on a higher level. This is an erroneous interpretation of Romans 6:6-7 and is not true to the New Testament teaching on holiness.

The well known evangelist, John Chapman, tells of his experience and contact with this teaching. He says that, ‘because of a wrong

view of Romans 6 and being dead to sin, I was led to believe that I could know continuous victory over sin in my life by *exercising faith in the fact* that I had died to sin. The result was devastating indeed. I rocketed into sin faster and faster than ever, because I was not resisting, fleeing or fighting as I should have been.’

We have to fight against sin. We have to resist sin. It is a continual battle to fight against our evil nature. It is only through the power of the Holy Spirit who has been given to us at our conversion that God gives us the strength we need. Sin is not inevitable but we ought to realise that we cannot withstand it on our own. We are dependent on God.

— Barry Dudding, 1st Century Answers to 21st Century Questions