Sweet Patience, come:
Not from a lone and earthly source,
Waiting, till things shall have their course,
Not in a dull and sullen calm,
But as the breath of heavenly balm,
Bidding my weary heart submit
To bear whatever God sees fit:
       Sweet Patience, come!

"Hymns of the Church Militant"

Recently during early morning devotions, I read the verse "Sweet Patience Come." Its message spoke to me particularly since so many of my patients, as well as, family members and myself also are ever in need of sweet patience. Among the circle of loved ones, there are continual needs and as one observes the unfolding of the years, patient continuance in well doing (Romans 2:7 KJV) is a most requisite virtue to be desired. Somehow all things have their course and as life goes on the end becomes apparent—often not as we have desired—but as God wills.

"Without a vision, the people perish," (Proverbs 29:18) intrigues me. The statement is that the vision is most important—but nothing is said about the accomplishment of the vision. My life has been a life of great dreams and accomplishments, not as great as the accomplishments of many fellow travelers on the road of life but satisfying to me. Intriguingly, there are still unfilled visions lying ahead—visions shared by my family and members of our little part of the holy fellowship of faithful people. They have their dreams also and as we share and hope together we do not perish.
God's Word gives an admonition regarding impatience. - (Psalm 106:12 - 15 Amp.)

"Then (Israel) believed His words—relying on them they sang His praise.

But they hastily forgot His works; they did not wait for His plans to develop

But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted and tried to restrain God in the desert.

And He gave them their request but sent leanness into their soul and disease and death."

Leanness of soul is a penalty for persistent impatience and failing to trust God. For many in society today there is fatness of body but leanness of soul and doubtless—profound leanness of spirit. Contrast the product of a soul and spirit full of Christ bringing forth the marvelous works of Bach and the raucoius sounds of modern rock music and its evil lyrics. The love and joyous sounds of Christmas reflect the basic joy of God's people in the accomplishments of life and the products of their fruitful patience. Let us pray at Christmas tide for the gift of patience — a true product of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Let us also pray that the Church militant will rise again to stand against the onslaught of those of lean soul and spirit in and out of the church.

In 1960 I was privileged to speak in an Anglican Church in Toronto whose Rector was Tom Harpur. Tom is the present religion editor of the Toronto Star. During that memorable service years ago at St. Margaret's In The Pines, God poured out His Holy Spirit particularly when we sang a song (until then unknown to me) "Who Is On The Lord's Side?" As the years go by, the question that morning song and service raised in my soul continues to ring forth from time to time. Yes, Lord— I want to be on Your side—whatever comes. I need sweet patience if present visions are never accomplished. I need your Holy Spirit more and more to give me that patience and other products of Your Spirit in my life as well as the Holy Spirit's gifts.

Finally, reflecting upon The Church Militant, I looked at various Anglican Books of Common Prayer in my possession going back to our English edition of 1762 and a 1795 edition of the American Prayer Book. In all but recent editions, is found the statement, "Let us pray for the whole state of Christ's Church Militant here in earth." One wonders why this statement has been changed and the church militant deleted. Perhaps the modifiers sensing a loss of vision in the church, coupled with profound leanness of soul and spirit, generally realized that there is no longer a "Christ's Church Militant" on earth. It is perhaps a church somnolent, a church impotent, a church recalcitrant or at best—a church ambivalent—but hardly a church militant. Instead of "Silent Night, Holy Night" or "O Little Town Of Bethlehem," we may sing in our schools "Rudolph The Red Nosed Reindeer" or "Santa Claus Is Coming To Town." The creche is not allowed in front of city hall—or even a Christmas tree. Christmas spirit is often replaced by spiritus frumenti and commercialism has replaced sacrificial giving characteristic of former years. Regardless of all these negative evidences of a church militant non-existent in most communities, there continues to rise in the heart of modern man the power and the joy which always kindles again at Christmas. May Christ bring forth in our hearts this joyous season, His love, His Power and His sweet patience.

Dear Jesus, help me in this season in which we remember your earthly birth to run my race with patience and to declare for myself and for my house, standing beneath Thy cross, my love for you and my true thanksgiving.

[Signature]

We send assurances of our continuing prayers to the Jack Thomson family following the homegoing of our beloved Jack Thomson of Keswick, Ontario.

Kay and I enjoyed tremendously our visit to Halifax and the wonderful CMF Roberts family.

PHYSICIANS PLEASE TAKE NOTE: The tapes from the 1985 CMF of Canada Conference are available. Please contact:
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