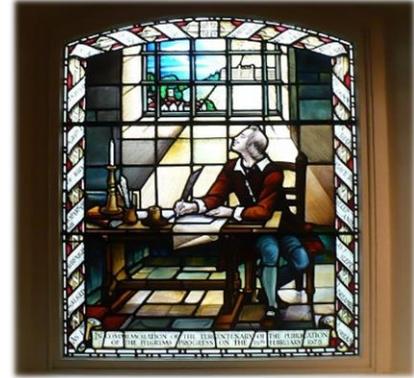


May 27, 2020

## Good afternoon, Everybody.

Why is it so strangely quiet today? It must have something to do with the overcast; perhaps lots of vapor in the low cloud ceiling this morning? I don't know. But it's all unusually still outside my study windows.



### *Sirs, Be of Good Cheer*

Since referring to Mrs. Howard Taylor's *The Triumph of John and Betty Stam* a few weeks ago, I've gone looking for other titles by her. For some reason, none of us thought to pick up the mail yesterday, so it wasn't until early this morning when I walked down to the end of the drive for the newspaper that I opened the mailbox and discovered that one of my recent orders had arrived from Australia yesterday afternoon. It's a little 64-page booklet entitled *Sirs, Be of Good Courage*. It's based, of course, on Paul's words to his shipmates as he foretold to them that though their vessel would be *cast upon a certain island*, not a single life would be lost (Acts 27:22-26). *Sirs, Be of Good Courage*.

After breakfast this morning I opened the book and began to thumb through the first chapter. Turns out that Mrs. Taylor published this in 1941, at the time that a great many Allied vessels were being torpedoed by German submarines in the North Atlantic. In the opening chapter she relates the experience of a young China Inland Missions missionary, Eva McCarthy, in the moments immediately following the shock of their steamer being struck.

*Or course, all the lights went out. Realizing it was foolish to stay on deck, I went back to shelter, and then saw the flash of a shell which tore into the section where I had just been standing—and the whole hatch went up. Never thinking that we would be rescued, I stood quietly a few moments and commended my spirit to the Lord. . . . I had to go down two decks to get my lifebelt. The ship was listing badly, and for all we knew we might be sinking at any moment.*

A few emergency lights blinked on, enabling her to find a few things below deck, including blankets for use in the open lifeboats being lowered by the crew.

*Then there was nothing to do but wait. I looked at the crowd at our boat station and felt sure we could not all be rescued. So I stayed at the back, where a Christian ought to stand, and walked up and down singing quietly, "Jesus, Lover of My Soul"-such a comfort! When I came to "Hide me, O my Savior, hide," I seemed to get a direct answer: "Your life is hid with Christ in God."*

*This lived with me through all that followed. At the words, "Till the storm of life be passed," I looked over the darkening sea and thought, "Well, this is my last storm."*

By God's mercies, it turned out that there was room in the lifeboat even for those, who like her, had either chosen or been forced to linger near the end of the line. When at last she was lowered down she was able to gather three little children into her arms to help a young Scottish mother.

*Once clear of the sinking ship, I began to think there was a glimmer of hope. We were not overcrowded and the sea was fairly quiet, but it was the Atlantic, and we were tossed around like a cockleshell. The little ones gave terrified wails—never shall I forget those children and the heart-broken mother! It was cold, and most of us were more seasick than I knew it was possible to be.*

Eventually, after six hours in the darkness in an open boat, they were picked up by a Norwegian vessel that had sighted their SOS.

Eva McCarthy went on to serve as a teacher in the Toronto Bible Institute.

The part of her story that just really tore at my soul this morning is in the words that I'm sure you noticed too: *I looked at the crowd at our boat station and felt*

*sure we could not all be rescued. So I stayed at the back, where a Christian ought to stand.*

Would I have, *stayed at the back, where a Christian ought to stand?*

I don't know whether it's original with him or not, but the illustration of putting a teabag into hot water will always be associated in my mind with Jim Berg, because years ago I first heard it in a challenge that he gave somewhere. The point of it, of course, is that it isn't until you dunk the bag into really **hot** water that you find out what's really in it.

Emergencies and crises are hot water. It's not until the moment that we're thrown into them that we discover just how much genuine **Christian** is actually in us.

Scott Greene, one of my freshman roommates at Bob Jones University, became my closest friend (until I met Linda, of course; smile). Close friends are able to get after each other without it damaging their relationship. We were both learning a little bit of how self-seeking we could be when we wanted our own way. We began to label it as, *being a Jacob*. "You're *being a Jacob*," we'd say to each other sometimes when the flesh was seeping out. (What a great thing to have such friends. I hope you have at least one (smile).)

Self-seeking. Self-serving. *Selfishness*. What a terrible thing; what a horrible thing. I absolutely *hate* it in myself! *O to be freed from myself, dear Lord.*

I was haunted yesterday by the words I included in the pastoral letter, from Charles Erdman's conclusion after reading Mrs. Taylor's, *Bordon of Yale*.

*Apart from Christ, there is no explanation of such a life.*

And now this morning, completely unsought and unexpected, I find in the mailbox,

*I looked at the crowd at our boat station and felt sure we could not all be rescued. So I stayed at the back, where a Christian ought to stand.*

*Let nothing be done* through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus (Philippians 2:3-5).

I wish so much that whatever the hot water today, I'd find much less *Jacob* and much more *Christian* in myself.

Praying for Myself Today,

Pastor Minnick