

Articles and Sermons :: "Mind not High Things" ~ George H. Warnock

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We can understand how a man gifted with wisdom would write about great and lofty things; but God would show us that men of wisdom are concerned also about little things. It reminds us of Paul's admonition: "Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate," (Romans 12:16).

Much reference is made in Scripture to both the Cedar and the Hyssop; but whereas the Cedar speaks of stature and honour and glory, the Hyssop always relates to sacrifice... and therefore to humility, weakness and contrition of heart. Other than this I knew nothing about the plant itself. But after having been impressed to minister on the "hyssop" relative to its weakness and sacrificial character, I felt to put it in writing; and I have since looked up a number of reference books concerning it. I found it grows in dry places, out in the full sun. It is particularly suited to a rockery, and this may be inferred in the statement that it "springeth out of the wall"--perhaps a terraced rock wall. It is low-growing, up to about 2 feet. It is native to Egypt. It has strong wiry stems, with bunches of flowers and leaves. Produces small bluish-purple flowers, and has a sweet fragrance. It is a bitter herb, belonging to the mint family, and was once used for medicinal purposes. It seemed to grow plentifully in Egypt, for on the Passover night it was readily obtainable to every Israelitish family, who would use it for the sprinkling of the blood. It was used for various sacrificial purposes in the Levitical order, and therefore must have grown extensively in the wilderness also. It is always associated with "sacrifice"... so that even at Calvary, when the supreme Sacrifice was being offered, mention is again made of the lowly "hyssop."

Solomon, a great and Wise man, was impressed to write about the weak, insignificant "hyssop." Great men are always small enough to take note of little things. They are concerned about the weak. Jesus stood still at the cry of a blind beggar. True greatness reveals itself in areas of meekness, mercy, compassion and forgiveness. The world considers a meek man to be a weak man. But God considers the meek to be strong. They shall inherit the earth; because in their meekness and weakness, their confidence is not in themselves but in Another. The weak must assume an attitude of defensiveness; but the strong are prepared to let the Truth defend itself. So when the weak assume positions of power and authority, as is often the case, they must use that power and authority to bolster their own inadequacy. The meek are strong, because they are prepared to commit their cause into the hands of God who judgeth righteously.

As I ministered about the hyssop I could not help but think of our own little fellowship. It seems so fragile. What is it that keeps us gathering together week after week? Just a handful of us... but we will travel 30, 50, 70 or a 100 miles a week just to gather with a handful of people in someone's home. But when you come to know God's ways a little, what does it matter whether there be 20 or 30 people, or 1,000? God can use 20 as well as 2,000... 1 as well as 10,000. It doesn't really matter, as long as we are faithful; and as long as God is directing us in this way. But how strange this may sound to those who have not known God's ways?

How long will we continue to gather in this manner? We certainly do not know; for we have no plans to fulfill of our own. And we are reminded that the precious "hyssop" having served its purpose was thrown away! Precious as it is in the eyes of the Lord, it was made for sacrifice. And every sacrifice that delights the heart of God requires it. God has therefore put it within the reach of all. It grows there at our feet, lightly esteemed by most... but prepared of the Lord for sacrifice... a certain kind of sacrifice: the sacrifice of a broken spirit and a contrite heart. It is not something beyond our reach. The elders of Israel had no problem finding it... apparently it was right outside their doors, and when the blood had to be sprinkled on the doorposts, the hyssop was readily obtained. When the last Passover Lamb was offered, hyssop was there too, and readily obtainable. When Jesus cried "I thirst," a soldier bunched some hyssop together and lifted it to Jesus' mouth with a sponge full of sour wine. He must use hyssop to fulfill the Scriptures, and God had provided it even on Mount Calvary! Then it was discarded... it had served its purpose.

But what waste? And to what purpose is this waste?

"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it" (Matthew 16:24, 25).

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