



THE *grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.* (2 Cor 13:14)

This is the benedictory benediction taken from the traditional Book of Common Prayer at the end of both Morning and Evening Prayer

This hymn is the work of Harry Emerson Fosdick in 1930. Fosdick was a Baptist minister who deserves no accolades from traditional, Bible believing Christians, and this particular hymn may be his only redeeming quality. He was one of the first among the modern, liberal ministers who was involved in the Fundamentalist-Modernist ministerial controversy of the 1920's & '30's. The music provided in the 1940 Hymnal is *MANNHEIM* by the German composer, Friedrich Filitz; but my favorite tune for the hymn for spiritual compatibility is *RÉGENT SQUARE* by Henry Thomas Smart in 1866.

God of Grace and God of Glory

God of grace and God of glory,
on thy people pour thy power;
crown the ancient church's story;
bring its bud to glorious flower.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
for the facing of this hour,
for the facing of this hour.

Lo! the hosts of evil round us,
scorn thy Christ, assail his ways!
From the fears that long have bound us,
free our hearts to love and praise.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
for the living of these days,
for the living of these days.

Cure thy children's warring madness,
bend our pride to thy control;
shame our wanton, selfish gladness,
rich in things and poor in soul.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
lest we miss thy kingdom's goal,
lest we miss thy kingdom's goal.

Set our feet on lofty places;
gird our lives that they may be
armoured with all Christlike graces,
pledged to set all captives free.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
that we fail not them nor thee,
that we fail not them nor thee!

1. God of grace and God of glory, on thy people pour thy power; crown the ancient church's story; bring its bud to glorious flower. Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, for the facing of this hour, for the facing of this hour. It is amazing to my understanding that a man of such marginal conviction as Fosdick could write such a grace-centered hymn as this, but I suppose a stopped clock is right twice a day. Grace is truly the central theme of this hymn. The grace of God, and that nature of grace inherited by His elect, has been compared to salt in several particulars. Grace, like salt, is searching. If rubbed into meat, it will permeate all the way to the bone. Grace, like salt, is a purging compound that will draw out the blood and remove putrefying properties. Grace seasons our characters as does salt season our foods. It is the grace of God that allows us to function in the daily life of this earthly walk. The grace of God will lead His saints in the way of that glory that is promised to those who follow in the Light of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Surprisingly, Fosdick pleads the faith of the ancient church, and not the apostate modern, as an example of faithful service. When we remember that the ancient church is built upon the blood of martyrs willing to offer their all on the altar of faith, this quality is surely missing in the modern church. It may take more courage to stand upon biblical truth today than in ancient times since we might find ourselves alone by doing so today – as a Voice Crying in the Wilderness.

2. Lo! the hosts of evil round us, scorn thy Christ, assail his ways! From the fears that long have bound us, free our hearts to love and praise. Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, for the living of these days, for the living of these days. I am not nearly as concerned of the evil and wickedness in the world as I am of that which exists in the compromising churches of our day. The world is not subject to redemption, but the church is redeemable if it remains faithful to God. If the pillars of the faith are weakened in the Church, where can the people turn for succor and inspiration? *If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?* (Psalm 11:3) Indeed, we need wisdom, and courage to match, for these perilous times. At many points, the doctrinal walls of the church have crumbled, not as a result of the enemy without, but the traitor within.. As a result, there is little difference between the stranger without and the believers seeking shelter behind those ramparts. The birds (demons) have come to dwell in the overspreading branches of the Mustard Tree.

3. Cure thy children's warring madness, bend our pride to thy control; shame our wanton, selfish gladness, rich in things and poor in soul. Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, lest we miss thy kingdom's goal, lest we miss thy kingdom's goal. For the first four hundred years of the Reformation, the Church dwelt in relative spiritual and doctrinal security. Then came the rise of Arminianism and distortion of those doctrinal

truths for which our Reformers were martyred. Strange utterances in worship which neither the hearers nor those who uttered them understood. Though God is never the Author of confusion, unknown tongues, contrasting starkly with those of Acts 2, were advocated as a sign of some imagined greater spirituality. A presumed 'second baptism' became a sign of a prideful guarantee of a higher calling, ignoring the Apostle's counsel, *4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism* (Eph 4:4-5) Worship became less reverent and more man-centered than Christ-centered. Entertainment became the highlight of worship instead of strong preaching and Bible teaching. Classical, doctrine reinforcing hymns were replaced with light and frivolous mantras. The wisdom Fosdick prayed for escaped both Fosdick and the modern church.

4. Set our feet on lofty places; gird our lives that they may be armoured with all Christlike graces, pledged to set all captives free. Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, that we fail not them nor thee, that we fail not them nor thee! 'Christlike graces' indeed! *Physician heal thyself*. The very freedom to which this verse appeals is the freedom lost along with truth and biblical doctrine that the modern church has rejected, part and parcel. *And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*. (John 8:32) It is the Rock of our Salvation upon which our feet must be firmly planted, fed by the Bread of Heaven which is the Word of God.. The world desires always to be hopeful and positive often where there is no reason for a positive attitude. Let us remember that only the Fourth and Fifth Commandments are positive – all the others are negative. A good brother in the ministry commented this morning that his listeners had asked him to be more positive. The same was asked of me following my consecration as a bishop. I was told, We all know that homosexuality and abortion are sins, but could we not restrain from outright condemnation of those two sins so that the church can grow? I think everyone that knows me knows the answer to that question. There are far too many negatives in our modern church to ignore. We must climb from our trenches and advance the colors to the enemy's stronghold. Is your church doing this?