

Reading: Psalm 71

*“Since my youth, O God, You have taught me;  
I will declare Your marvellous deeds in all the days to come” (Psa 71:17)*

Mr. Caleb at 85, referring to an incident that happened fortyfive years before, testified, “I am as strong this day as I was on the day that Moses sent me; just as my strength was then, so now is my strength for war, both for going out and for coming in” (Josh 14:11). This confession he made exactly on his 85th birthday (v 10c). For his birthday he desired not a sponge cake but a steep mountain (v 12)! All this was because he refused to join the pessimistic majority (Num 13:30-33). Overcautiousness is typical of old age whereas young people are known for venturing and taking risks. Risking is a companion of faith.

It is said, “We spend the first half of our lives trying to understand the older generation, and the second half trying to understand the younger generation!” In the early 1970s, during the formative years of the Blessing Youth Mission in India, we used to send teams of college students during Summer Vacation to hills and jungles to see pioneering missionary work firsthand. One such team visited Kolli Hills in Tamilnadu where Mother Brand (1879-1975), the godly mother of the famous leprologist Dr. Paul Brand (1914-2003), was labouring for the Gospel after the death of her husband. The time our youngsters spent with this dear lady, who was too old to even walk normally, revolutionized them thoroughly and some of them took up fulltime missionary career.



Years ago an old professor took me aside after I preached in an evening service and told me, “Stanley, I’m glad God has taken you in His hand. Let simple living and high thinking be your aim.” Perhaps but for this timely counsel, I would have been siphoned into the materialminded ministerial stream that runs full these days. The conversation with George Verwer, the Founder of Operation Mobilisation, one evening gave me an unforgettable warning to discern between leadership that is self-assumed and God-appointed. The few hours I spent with the saintly prophet Leonard Ravenhill (1907-1994) in his humble home intensified my burden for revival more than all his revival classics that I have read. I can go on listing the indelible impressions that God’s seasoned men have left on my heart.

*Sir, Madam, Uncle, Aunty,  
salutes to you on behalf of youngsters!*

**A Hymn of Prayer of the Aged**

1. O God our Help in ages past,  
    Our hope for years to come,  
Our shelter from the stormy blast,  
    And our eternal Home!
2. Under the shadow of Thy throne  
    Thy saints have dwelt secure;  
Sufficient is Thine arm alone,  
    And our defence is sure.
3. Before the hills in order stood,  
    Or earth received her frame,  
From everlasting Thou art God,  
    To endless years the same.
4. A thousand ages in Thy sight  
    Are like an evening gone;  
Short as the watch that ends the night  
    Before the rising sun.
5. Time, like an ever-rolling stream,  
    Bears all its sons away;  
They fly, forgotten as a dream  
    Dies at the opening day.
6. O God, our Help in ages past,  
    Our hope for years to come,  
Be Thou our guard while life shall last,  
    And our eternal Home!

— Isaac Watts, 1674-1748

“Listen to Me, you who have been upheld by Me from birth, who have been carried from womb: Even to your old age, I am He, and even to gray hairs I will carry you! I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you” (*Isaiah 46:3,4*).

“The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree. Those planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bear fruit in old age; they shall be fresh and flourishing, to declare that the Lord is upright; He is my Rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him” (*Psalms 92:12-15*).