

Pepper 'n Salt by Vance Havner (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987)
(54 Quotes selected by Doug Nichols)

1. Precious Memories and Blessings

Among all the things that happen to us in our earthly pilgrimage, certain precious memories linger-recollections that remain by reason of the blessing they brought and the lesson they taught.

When I was a country pastor, I kept hearing about a former shepherd of my flock, one Josiah Elliot, who preached there back in the horse-and-buggy days. What a grip that man had on the hearts of the people! I became very anxious to know something of the source of his mighty influence. Other pastors of greater scholarly and social attainments had followed him, but I heard most about Josiah Elliott.

One day I went back on the creek where my farmer friend, John Brown, was plowing and asked him where lay the secret of the old preacher's power. John reflected for a moment, as he was wont to do, and then remarked simply: "He just loved us." I strolled back home along the pasture lane that afternoon while from the cypress swamp the wood thrush chimed his vespers to the end of a perfect day. In my heart there rang the old, old words we are slow to learn: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal" (I Corinthians 13:1). Josiah Elliot lived in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians.

Would God it were the dwelling-place of us all! [Page 13]

2. We Have Everything We Need

We will always have all we need, to do all that God wants us to do, as long as He wants us to do it. [Page 23]

3. We Need a Dedicated Minority

We need a dedicated minority who, like the apostles of old, are willing to be called the scum of the earth and a spectacle to the world for the scandal of the cross [Page 26]

4. Say Yes To God

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). You have to say "yes" to God first before you can effectively say "no" to the devil. [Page 28]

5. Making the Gospel Available

The fact that the gospel is not popular is all the more reason for preaching it. The very fact that men cannot endure sound doctrine is all the more reason for seeing that they get it. It is not our responsibility to make it acceptable; it is our duty to make it available. [Page 29]

6. The Saints Are Not Desperate

The tragedy of today is that the situation is desperate but the saints are not. [Page 29]

7. Birds of a Feather Flock Together

When I see a bird that looks like a duck, quacks like duck, has webbed feet like a duck, paddles in the water like a duck, and prefers the company of the ducks, it is hard for me to resist the conclusion that it must be a duck! “Birds of a feather flock together” and where you feel at home is most likely where you belong. When Peter was released from jail, he headed for a prayer meeting. We gravitate to what lures us most and eventually we show up where we belong. “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren” (I John 3:14). If we don’t love the brethren, we belong to the other crowd. [Page 30]

8. Ministering Through Notes

Some minister from notes and some don’t. They have argued about it for centuries. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. Two Welsh preachers were on their way to a meeting. One noticed that the other carried written outlines. “Ah,” he remonstrated, “you cannot carry fire on paper.” “True,” replied his companion, “but you can use paper to start a fire!” [Page 33]

9. The Glory of God

THE GLORY OF GOD

It is manifested in creation (PSALM 19:1) It is revealed in man (I Corinthians 11:7)

We have all come short of it (Romans 3:23)

It is perfectly revealed in Christ (II Corinthians 4:6) By faith we see it (John 11:40)

It is gradually revealed in the Christian (II Corinthians 3:18) [Page 37]

10. Nothing Important Has Changed

There is no sense in getting into a dither just because we have split the atom and are photographing Mars. The sky is still blue, the grass green. The birds sing the same songs (no jazz notes have been added, thank the Lord!). The Bible is still God's Word and Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. *Nothing import has changed.* [Page 39]

11. Power of the Spirit

The Quakers got their name from the fact that they trembled under the power of the Spirit. At least their faith shook them! Too many of us today are shaky *about* what we believe but not shaken *by* what we believe. [Page 40]

12. My Name in His Book

"...they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Revelation 21:27); "...his name shall be in their foreheads" (22:4). My name in His book! His name on my brow!] [Page 40]

13. A Prophet by Providence

Amos was not a prophet by *profession* ("I was no prophet . . ." -7:14) nor by *parentage* (" . . .neither was I a prophet's son"-v. 14); he was a prophet by *providence* (" . . .the Lord took me"-v. 15). What better credentials does any man need? [Page 41]

14. Extend Your Spiritual Coastline

There are not many like Jabez who ask God to enlarge their coast. In the comfortable age, it is easier to expand your physical waistline than to extend your spiritual coastline! [Page 42] (underline added by Mr. Nichols)

15. We Are Not Of the World

Dr. G. Campell Morgan wrote: "The world hates Christian people, that is, if it sees Christ in them. The measure in which the world agrees with us and says we are a fine type of Christian, we are so entirely broad, is the the measure in which we are unlike Christ." Our Lord made it plain that because we are not of the world, therefore the world hates us (John 15:19). There is a notion going around these days that we should hobnob with Sodom and get chummy with Gomorrah in order to influence them for good. God's people are strangers and pilgrims in this world and the world hates them, as it did their Lord, because they testify of it that its works are evil (John

7:7). This ungodly generation is more likely to break our necks than fall on our necks in love and appreciation. [Page 43]

16. Simple Dependable Integrity

My father was the sort whose word was his bond. He had simple, dependable integrity. He used to say that debt, dirt, and devil were all related. [Page 45]

17. Translation Has Little Influence on Understanding

Don't be a "new-translation addict." Some dear souls feel that they could really understand the Bible if they could get hold of one more new version. Sometimes translations help a little, but it is amazing what some old-timers got out of it before the fad set in. The Holy Spirit made alive what no new shading of Hebrew or Greek can reveal. A fresh experience with the Lord of the Emmaus Road will open the scriptures to a weary disciple better than any new translator's key. [Page 45]

18. Look to the Master

The impotent man at the pool of Bethesda was waiting for a *moving* of the waters. How this ailing world today looks to *movements*, political and social, to alleviate its sick and sad condition! Furthermore, that man waited for a *man*: "I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool. . ." (John 5:7) How ailing humanity looks today to this messiah and that, this false Christ and that, for its deliverance! All the while, there stood by the cripple the *Master* asking "Wilt thou be made whole?" (John 5:6). This world is one vast pool of Bethesda with its impotent millions looking to movements and men but not to the Master.] page 46

19. Good Cannot Coexist With Evil

A well-known politician used to say, "If you want to get along, go along." This is the day of go-alongism. The free world is trying to go along with Communism. We call it "peaceful coexistence." Faith is trying to go along with the world. The new nature tries to go along with the old. But Christians cannot go along with each other. The one place where go-alongism should succeed is where it fails. [Pages 48,49]

20. Jesus Doesn't Jump on Bandwagons

Men tried to enlist Jesus Christ in their projects and get His endorsement of their pet notions when He was on earth. One wanted Him to divide an inheritance. Others sought His views on taxation and marriage relationships in the world to come. Jesus refused to ride any bandwagons. Today all sorts of reforms seek to fly His flag and advertise His support. The New Testament championed no "views" on

Roman imperialism, slavery, the status of women in society, or social reforms. The gospel gets the slums out of people and then the people out of the slums. Evils disappear, in individuals and their environment, as a consequence, as a by-product of changed hearts. [Page 49]

21. Christians Bear a Spiritual Cross

The reproach Christ and our cross-bearing do not mean the common troubles to which all flesh is heir. Some think they are bearing their cross every time they have a headache. Almost everybody has headaches and you can usually stop them with an aspirin tablet. Your cross means the trouble you wouldn't have if you were not a Christian. [Pages 52] (underline added by Mr. Nichols)

22. We Need God

Our efficiency without God's sufficiency is only a deficiency. [Page 53]

23. Address Needs of Human Hearts

The man on the street never heard of existentialism, for instance, and couldn't care less. It's about time we quit answering questions nobody is asking and spoke to the plain needs of human hearts. [Page 54]

24. Watch and Pray

We ought to watch and pray because of the shortness of the time, the seriousness of the hour, and the shallowness of our nature. [Page 57]

25. What the Bible says about Preaching

[What am I to preach? "Preach the Word."

When am I to Preach? "In season, out of season."

How am I to preach? "Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and doctrine." [Page 57]

26. The Search for Truth

In my early Christian experience I set out to read the Bible, taking the promises at face value, believing the Scriptures as I found them without benefit of foot notes or commentaries. I began with Genesis and was claiming everything for myself when I was dampened but I did not want to lay hold of anything that did not belong to me, so I moved into the New Testament and began to appropriate the blessings of the Sermon on the Mount when again I was interrupted and duly notified that all those

things belonged to the Kingdom Age. Not wanting to trespass on the Kingdom Age, whatever that was, I started over in the Acts and was daring to claim some if not all the fruits of Pentecost when I was again reminded that the Acts covered a transitional period and that we were not to press those matters too literally! By then, I did not know which promises were mine nor could I stand with confidence on any passage of Scripture lest some divider of the Word might come along like a policeman to order me off private property. In desperation I said, “Lord, I’ve heard of a man without a country, and I’m becoming a Christian without a Bible. Give me a verse I can claim for my own.” He answered with one I have stood upon ever since: “. . .let God be true, but every man a liar . . .” (Romans 3:4)! [Pages 58, 59]

27. What to Do With Your Issues

If you have a doubtful issue in your life, something with a question mark after it, put it to this fourfold test-*The Test of Expediency* (I Corinthians 6:12): It may even be good, but is it good for me to do? *The Test of Enslavement* (I Corinthians 6:12 again): Does it make me a slave? *The Test of Edification* (I Corinthians 10:23): Does it build me up? *The Test of Example* (I Corinthians 8): Does it offend the weaker brother? If your problem clears these four hurdles, it should no longer be a problem. [Page 60]

28. Stand on Salvation

I do not have to understand all about the plan of salvation; I have only to stand on it. As one has put it: “I don’t understand all about electricity but I’m not going to sit around in the dark until I do!” [Page 62]

29. Defeat Changes to Victory

A Frenchman became a naturalized British citizen. “Yesterday,” he remarked, “Waterloo was a defeat but today it is a victory.” When one becomes a Christian, defeat changes to victory. [Page 63]

30. The Obligations of the Church

It is not the business of the preacher to fill the church. It is his business to fill the pulpit while the church members fill the church. [Page 64]

31. Christians Were Not Meant For Popularity

The Saviour was spoken against (Luke 2:34). His followers were spoken against (Acts 28:22). Christians will be spoken against (Matthew 5:11). The Savior, the sect, the saints-we were never meant to be popular. [Page 65]

32. The Source of Error Is Ignorance

Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God” (Matthew 22:29). The source of error is ignorance. The man who does not know the Scriptures nor the power of God is an ignoramus. In the days of Noah, “. . .they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage . . . and knew not” (Matthew 24:38,39). “. . .as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (Matthew 24:37). [Page 65] (underline added by Mr. Nichols)

33. Second Coming of Christ

Dr. A.J. Gordon was a preacher of the second coming of Christ. His son and biographer writes, “Advocacy of this doctrine cost him much. It seems to awaken suspicion and lead to estrangement-this great doctrine of hope.” Dr. Gordon himself said, “It is not wanted by a church with millionaire merchants and great universities. But, after all, it was for the assertion of this doctrine that Christ at the last was crucified” (Matthew 26:64). To this day certain churchmen resent the enthusiastic proclamation of it. To declare that our Lord may return at any moment may disturb their grandiose plans and programs. [Page 66] (underline added by Mr. Nichols)

34. The Challenge of Preaching Repentance

Said Joseph Parker: “The man whose message is „Repent“ sets himself against his age and will be battered mercilessly by the age whose moral tone he challenges. There is but one end for such a man. . .off with his head! You had better not preach repentance until you have pledged your head to heaven.” [Page 66]

35. A Good Outline Prevents Meandering

I have always used notes in preaching. After hearing some who glory in not using them, who wander all over creation, I decided long ago that a good outline would prevent such meandering. Jonathan Edwards read a sermon that will never be forgotten for its impact. An old Scottish lady who had greatly enjoyed a sermon was reminded that the preacher had read it. She replied that she wouldn't have cared if he had whistled it! [Page 68]

36. Originality Is Overrated

Don't worry about using second-hand material. One of our evangelists used to say, “When I started out preaching, I said I'd be original or nothing. I soon found out that I was both!” [Page 69]

37. Take Spiritual Stock and Inventory

We need spiritual trifocals these days. There is a three-way look which our Lord set forth in His discourse about the end of the age (Luke 21:25-36). The outlook is bad, with distress of nations, perplexity, men's hearts failing them for fear. The *uplook* is good, for our Lord is coming back. When we see the signs we are to look up and lift up our heads, not drop them in despair nor shake them in doleful lament. In light of all this we need to have an *inlook*, to take heed unto ourselves, to watch and pray, to take spiritual stock and inventory. You are in for plenty of trouble unless you are fitted with these trifocals! [Page 70]

38. The Main Ship is Lordship

It was a mountain preacher who followed a strange outline in his sermon on the text, "And there were also with him other little ships" (Mark 4:36). The main ship, he declared is *Lordship*. If that ship leads, all the others—*Church Membership, Worship, Discipleship, Fellowship*, and every other *ship*—will fall in line. It was unusual homiletics but tremendous truth! [Page 74]

39. The Lord Is Able To Deliver

King Darius leaned over the lion's den and asked Daniel, ". . . is thy God . . . able to deliver thee . . . ?" (Daniel 6:20). An uneasy world wonders today whether the Christians' God can save us in the hour of trial. Blessed is that man who, though sore beset, can answer, "Yes, He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think; able to make all grace abound; able to keep us from falling; able to subdue all things unto himself." And, above Darius, stands our Lord, "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" If we reply, "Yea, Lord," He will answer, "According to your faith be it unto you." [Page 76, 77]

40. Many Titles

Paul was a Jew by birth, a Greek by speech, a Roman by citizenship, a lawyer by training, a tentmaker by trade and an apostle by the grace of God. [Page 78]

41. Jesus Was Humble

Wouldn't you think that Jesus, with only three years to go, would have visited Rome and Athens, would have sought all available publicity, would have called on celebrities and appeared at forums and symposiums, would have rushed from dawn to midnight, making every moment count, would have held public debates and put on healing exhibitions? Instead, He stayed in an obscure little Roman province, talked with a few individuals, mingled with ordinary people, exasperated His brothers by

not performing in Jerusalem. It is all so foreign to our American way of doing things. Maybe we had better learn the gait of Galilee! [Page 79]

42. Finish Well

It was said of the great racehorse Man o' War: "Some horses led him at the first turn, some led him at the backstretch, a few led him at the far turn, but no horse ever led him in the homestretch." Some Christians run nobly at the start of the race, some do well halfway, but blessed is the man who makes a good finish. Paul's batting average was good to the end of reason: "I have finished my course" (II Timothy 4:7). [Page 80]

43. Nothing Is Settled without God

Years ago I discovered among my father's papers a statement, whether original with him or borrowed, has meant a lot to me: "Nothing is ever settled until it is settled right; and nothing is ever settled right until it is settled with God." [Page 81]

44. Feeding Sheep

I want my message to be intelligible to the ordinary man. I'm feeding sheep, not ministering to a few intellectual giraffes. [Page 83]

45. Pentecost Accomplished God's Purpose

[A revival, a visitation from God, will not accomplish everything that some people expect. Pentecost did not convert Jerusalem. Jerusalem went on to judgment. Pentecost accomplished God's purpose. God is not out to convert the world but to call out a people for Himself. Revival furthers that purpose. [Page 950 (underline added by Mr. Nichols)]

46. Compassion as Deep as Life

Alexander McLaren wrote: "It was not Erasmus, the polished, learned, scintillating intellect of his time who made Germany over; it was rough, rugged Martin Luther with a conviction and compassion as deep as life." It is the day of Erasmus again. God give us a Luther! [Page 96]

47. We Must Humble Ourselves before God

True revival is a filling process: "Every valley shall be exalted . . ." (Isaiah 40:4). We must fill up the empty places in our lives, not with the cheap trash of this age, but with prayer, worship, witness, and the Word. It is a leveling process: ". . . every mountain . . . shall be made low . . ." (v. 4). Pride must come down and we must humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God. It is a Straightening process: ". . . the crooked shall be made straight . . ." (v. 4). Things must be made right, as when

Zacchaeus cleaned up his financial affairs. It is a smoothing process: “. . . the rough places [shall be made] plain” (v. 4). Our rough dispositions, our tempers and tongues, must be made gentler so that we are not so hard to live with. What is the consequence of all this? “. . . the glory of the Lord shall be revealed . . .” (v. 5).[Page 99]

48. Obedience Comes First

Sam Jones used to say something to this effect: “If I started out to chop wood and you found me later sitting with my ax on my knees and not a chip in sight, what would you think if I said, “I’m waiting until I work up a sweat to chop wood?” Sam concluded that the best way to work up a sweat is to start chopping wood. Some of us are waiting for a feeling before we go to work for the Lord. Obedience comes first, then the feeling. “If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them” (John 13:17). [Page 100]

49. Beware Satan’s Devices

Paul was ignorant of Satan’s devices, but we are not so wise. Among his most successful devices today are these: exalting tolerance above truth; emphasizing the head more than the heart; making size more important than sort; stressing the positive to the neglect; putting happiness above holiness; majoring on this world instead of the next. [Page 101]

50. Night Watchman of the Universe

An old bishop relates how he was unable to sleep one night until he thought of the verse, “. . . he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep” (Psalms 121:3). The churchman pondered that for a while, then turned over and said, “Well, Lord, if You’re sitting up, I don’t need to—so I’m going to sleep.” Thank God that He is Night Watchman of the universe! Let Him do it! [Page 103]

51. Christians are the Salt

[Our Lord did not carry a placard into Jerusalem to incite insurrection against Rome. The early Christians did not specialize in reforming the social order. They were the salt of the earth, and like salt they noiselessly revolutionized history by the influence of the gospel in human hearts. It is a sad day for the church when it gets confused about its message, mission, or method. [Page 105]

52. We Must Act By Faith

God called Philip out of a spiritual awakening in Samaria and sent him off on a way “which is desert” (Acts 8:26). One must always be prepared for strange turns in the divine itinerary of our earthly sojourn. God’s timetable does not follow our little patterns. Next day may move us from a Samaria to a Sahara! But He who says “Go” goes along. [Page 108]

53. Throw Yourself in His Direction

Alexander Whyte wrote to a troubled soul “Act faith if do not feel it. . . . Throw yourself in His direction, even though you cannot reach Him. . . . He does not say “See”: He only says “Look . . . that is all you have to do with, He will take care of the rest. . . . It is very simple-keep *looking*; He will take care of the *seeing*.” [Page 113]

54. Christians Must Have Deep Roots

I do not understand all the details of the Book of Revelation but there is a special blessing promised to all who read, hear, and keep its message and I don’t want to miss that blessing. I have read many interpretations of many schools of thought and I do not think anybody has the last on the exact meaning of every seal, trumpet, vial, and six hundred and sixty-six. But I read the Apocalypse more than ever and understand what Godet meant when he wrote, “The more deeply the church plants in the earth the stakes of her tent and establishes herself at her ease here below, the more does the Apocalypse become to her a foreign and even repulsive book. The more, on the other hand, tempestuous winds shake the curtains of her temporary dwelling-place and threaten to break their cords, the more does she feel the value of this marvelous book which teaches her to look up continually toward the bridegroom whose return she expects.” These weird and sinister figures that move through this mysterious book take on fresh meaning against the uncanny, frightening headlines of every newspaper. The only vantage point for a correct survey of the modern scene is Patmos] page 120

[I wonder what church would even consider, either for a pastor or as a visiting minister, a preacher with this description: Has eye trouble; is not much of a speaker; does not play up to the pillars of the church; has had a run-in with one of the main leaders; respects them but says he is called from higher up; has no home; stirs up the people; is called an upsetter; is old fashioned; condemns false teaching openly; won’t play ball with liberals; believes in church discipline; oh, yes, is often in jail. Am I trying to be funny? No. This man’s name is Paul the Apostle. [Pages 120-121]

Source: ***Pepper ‘n Salt***, by Vance Havner, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987)