

Paul Selvam

# Alphabet Soup for the Weary Soul

Vol. 1

# Foreword

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**I**n November 2013 I was struck with a bad throat infection. It was extremely painful. It was then that a dear friend of mine, Annie Khoi, offered me a special bird's nest soup and double boiled Chinese herbs to soothe my throat and aid my recovery. She had spent a lot of time and money preparing this traditional Chinese delicacy.

On my way home from Annie's house, I found a mini inspirational book in my car that had a short devotion on each page. After drinking the soup and enjoying the Christian love and warm hospitality of Annie, I felt lifted up. I was reflecting on the devotional book and Annie's soup.

It was then that the idea of an alphabet soup for the weary soul bubbled to the surface. Annie had made soup and encouraged me. I had a knack for words and poetry – why not cook up an alphabet soup to encourage fellow sojourners?

And that is exactly how this book happened. I hope you will be refreshed.

Paul Selvam  
Malaysia  
January 2014

# Dedication

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This book is dedicated to my late wife Esther Selvam who entered glory in 2013. She was truly a woman after God's own heart and a source of strength for me. She inspired me to wholeheartedly seek after the things of God. I dedicate this book in memory of the amazing mother, wife, friend and encourager that she was.



# Alpha and Omega

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**W**e are so used to a beginning and an end. Like the circle of life - to be born and to die. Like any good story, a beginning, an exciting plot and finally, and hopefully, an unpredictable end. But an end there must be. Maybe even a fairy-tale ending of *happily ever after*. All of this makes us human. And makes sense to us as humans. Mortal humans.

But then we are faced with the declaration that He has no beginning and no end. And at the same time He is the beginning and the end. Makes no sense to our human logic. And then we step out in faith. At His bidding. And we behold a Maker who is eternal. Who transcends logic. And we discover that we too are immortal spirits. Like Him. Made in His image.

# Blessing

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*The LORD bless you and keep you;  
The LORD make His face shine upon you,  
And be gracious to you;  
The LORD lift up His countenance upon you,  
And give you peace.*

**W**hat a blessing, what a comfort. For the Lord of the Universe to do good unto us and to keep watch over us. To look upon us kindly and with pleasure. To provide all that we could ever need, and more. For His grace is sufficient for us. No, we are more than conquerors in Him. To give us peace. Yes. He died on a tree that we might become partakers of Him, the Prince of Peace. He lost all that we might gain all. We are blessed indeed.

# Children

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“....unless you change and become like little **children**, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven”.

**U**nimaginable bundles of joy. Each one born with unlimited potential loaned to us for a season. Fearfully and wonderfully made . Knitted by the hand of God in the secret places. Purpose made for a divine assignment. Pure souls. How we mould them will decide if one will be a Hitler, a Ghandi, an Einstein or a Mother Theresa.

And for ALL, however we are formed or deformed by the world, He offers hope. Hope of a transformed life. Hope of eternal life. When we believe - like a child.



# Death

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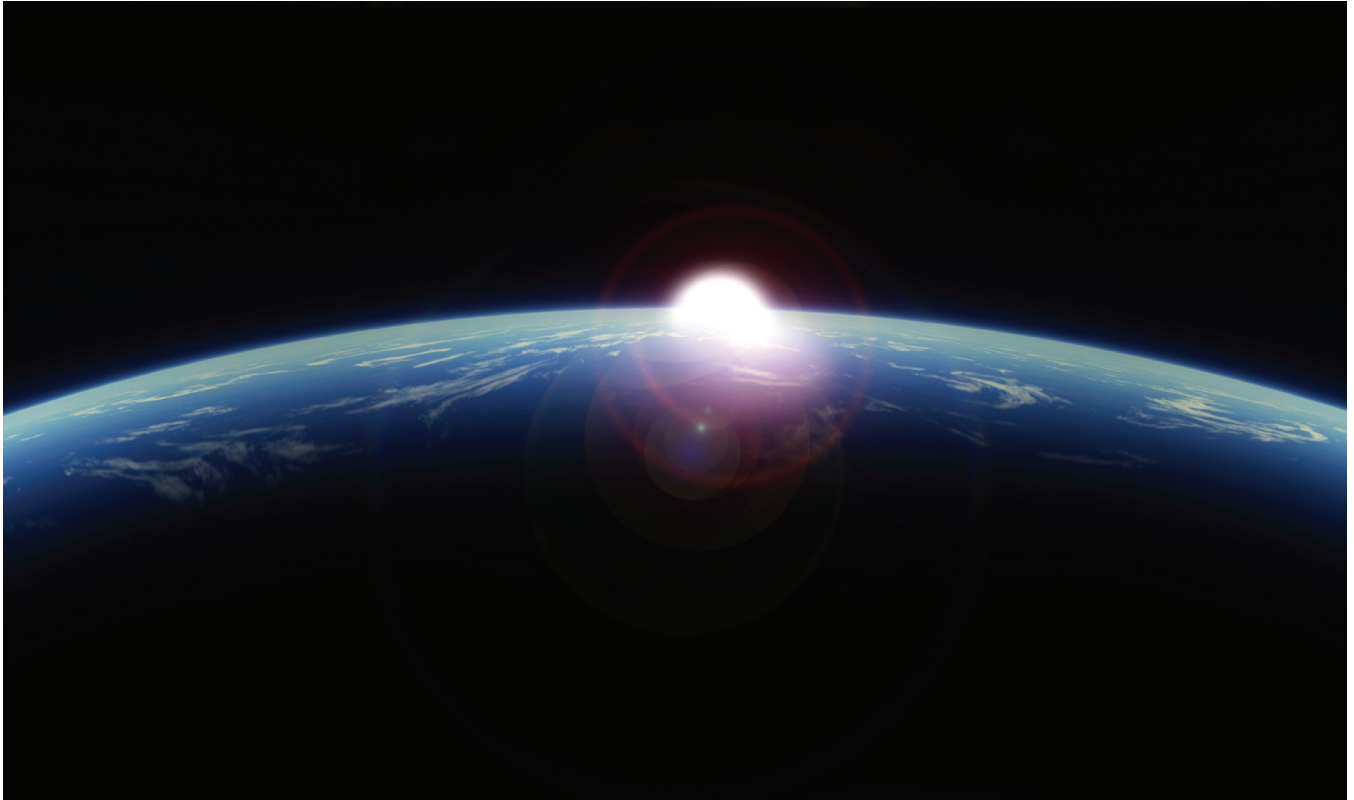


Nothing in life fascinates man more than death. Nothing in life prepares man for death. So we seek to live longer. To delay the inevitable. To cheat death if that were even possible. But alas we are creatures born with a death sentence. To many, death is a fearful mystery. Yet to others a stealthy evil waiting to strike. At any turn in the road called life.

But then one man in history died and rose again. One man in history declared, I am the resurrection and the life. Even if you die, you will live again. For me to live is Christ, to die is gain. Before Christ death was a loss, a total loss. After Christ, death like the cross, is a plus. To die now is to gain Christ. To gain eternal life.

# Earth

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He spreads out the northern *skies over empty space; he suspends the **earth** over nothing.*

**W**e are obsessed with this earth. We race through life to win a bit more of it at every twist, every turn. We hunger for earth. We thirst for earth. An inch more, an acre more. A block more. We fight for it. We lie for it. We cheat for it. We even die for it.

And then we discover, our Father owns tonnes more of this speck called earth. And that the meek shall inherit the earth. And *that those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.*

A bit more earth, anyone?

*“Look again at that dot. That’s here. That’s home. That’s us. On it everyone you love, everyone you know, everyone you ever heard of, every human being who ever was, lived out their lives. The aggregate of our joy and suffering, thousands of confident religions, ideologies, and economic doctrines, every hunter and forager, every hero and coward, every creator and destroyer of civilization, every king and peasant, every young couple in love, every mother and father, hopeful child, inventor and explorer, every teacher of morals, every corrupt politician, every “superstar,” every “supreme leader,” every saint and sinner in the history of our species lived there—on a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam.”*

*Carl Sagan, The Pale Blue Dot.*



# Friendship

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A friend. Someone who loves us unconditionally. In good times or bad times. In good health or bad. Who knows our secret sins yet condemns us not. Who knows our strength is low yet urges us on. Laughs with us in our joy and cries with us when the world is laughing at us. Rare jewel. More rare than refined gold. Warms our hearts in the bitterest cold. Souls in sync. Speech without words. A wordless sigh that communicates a wealth of meaning. A glance that speaks oceans of words. A life lived through another.

*A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity.*

# Grief

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*But though He cause **grief**, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies.*

**G**rief touches every human being. At some point in our life. Loss of a loved one. Diagnosed with an incurable disease. Loss of a limb. Or a vital organ. Loss of a job. Loss of property. Loss of freedom. Loss of innocence. Loss of hearing. Loss of speech. Loss of respect. Loss of zest for life. Grief knows no boundaries. Is no respecter of persons. On every continent. Every village. Every city. The human race grieves.

*But He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with **grief**. Which is why He can say, come unto me all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. There is a rest. Today. From all grief. Only believe.*

# Hope

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**A** sure expectation. That which keeps an earthquake victim surviving under tonnes of rubble. For days without food or water. Alive on a finest thread of hope. The hope of seeing the sunlight again, hope of embracing a loved one again. Of hearing the birds sing cheerfully again. The farmer who sows his seed in drought resting in the sure hope of rain to bless his labor. The hope of a better future that keeps humanity moving. Growing. The dry tree in autumn that “dies” in winter yet lives in hope of a spring. When it shall bloom again.

*Though its roots grow old in the ground and its stump dies in the dry soil, at the scent of water it will flourish and put forth sprigs like a plant.*



# Inspiration

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**I**nspiration – God breathed. We seek for inspiration. For innovation. For a new way out of our old dilemmas. For creating art. Music. Poetry. Dance. Life. We meditate. We manipulate. We vegetate. We stimulate. We regurgitate. To seek new meaning. A fresh perspective. And we feel important when we are praised. Celebrated. Honored. Inspired.

Yet our very breath is borrowed. Never knowing when it will be taken back. No guarantee of even one more breath to breathe.

*Let everything that has breath praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!*

# Jesus

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**T**o many a curse word. A swear word. Spoken under the breath. In moments of exasperation. In fits of frustration. In spasms of anger. As a rant of rebellion. Under the misery of invisible chains. Chains of the past. Of soul wounds running raw. Daily torment. Quickening pace of the race. Insecurity. Addictions. Unsatiated appetites. Demonic deception. Worshippers of self. Like lucifer himself.

But to those who know Him. Sweetest Name. Wonderful. Counselor. Mighty God. Prince of Peace. King of Kings. Saviour. Healer. Baptizer. Son of God. Lamb of God. Lion of Judah. Maker of Heaven and Earth. Great High Priest. Our advocate in Heaven. Judge. Lord of Lords.

*Therefore God exalted him to the highest place  
and gave him the name that is above every name,  
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father*

# Kindness

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**K**indness is the quality that makes the difference between a life measured by success vs a life measured by significance. Alexander the Great was an unprecedented success if measured by the sheer size of his empire and the number of armies he overcame. But he also ordered the merciless killing of entire cultures and peoples that did not surrender on his terms. The names of Mother Theresa or Nelson Mandela will live on forever because of their kindness.

One was kind to strangers cast out as trash by society; the other to people who tortured and enslaved him and robbed him of the prime years of his life. Kindness is a divine attribute. Humans struggle to be kind in a world that believes only the fit and tough deserve to live. Those who have found the Light, those who have tasted the unconditional love of a Saviour will find it easier to be kind.

*Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and railing, be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you*



# Light

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A world without light is unimaginable. No human would want to live in utter darkness. When a person is locked up in solitary confinement and denied the luxury of light, death slowly sets in. Yet so many of us are living without light in our souls. Without The Light. Jesus said “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life”. He is the Light that transforms. That heals. That saves. That totally delivers us from all bondages.

*A candle's but a simple thing;  
It starts with just a bit of string.  
Yet dipped and dipped with patient hand,  
It gathers wax upon the strand*

*Until, complete and snowy white,  
It gives at last a lovely light.  
Life seems so like that bit of string:  
Each deed we do a simple thing;*

*Yet day by day if on life's strand  
We work with patient heart and hand,  
It gathers joy, makes dark days bright,  
And gives at last a lovely light.*

- Clara Bell Thurston

# Mother

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**T**ruest embodiment of God's love. Constantly caring, thinking, planning for the health and welfare of her child. Selfless giving - no sacrifice is too great. The same qualities no matter in Mongolia, Cairo, Nairobi, London or Paris. A truly redeeming grace of the human race.

*If I were hanged on the highest hill,  
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine  
I know whose love would follow me still,  
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!*

*If I were drowned in the deepest sea,  
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine  
I know whose tears would come down to me,  
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!*

*If I were damned of body and soul,  
I know whose prayers would make me whole,  
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!*

*By Rudyard Kipling*



# Nuggets

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**N**uggets of wisdom. Nuggets of truth. Nuggets of precious metals. Something rare and valuable. Someone once said when mining for gold or diamonds, a mountain of dirt is removed to find a tiny piece of metal or stone. Yet it is not the dirt we are looking for but the hidden, buried jewel. So in our interaction with others, we will face a mountain of dirt, but if we keep digging we will find that ultimate good in each and every person. We just need to remember, it is not the dirt we are looking for but the nugget.

*Blessed are those who find wisdom,  
those who gain understanding,  
for she is more profitable than silver  
and yields better returns than gold.  
She is more precious than rubies;  
nothing you desire can compare with her.  
Long life is in her right hand;  
in her left hand are riches and honor.  
Her ways are pleasant ways,  
and all her paths are peace.  
She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her;  
those who hold her fast will be blessed.*



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