



# *TOWARD THE MARK*

***“I PRESS TOWARD THE MARK FOR THE PRIZE  
OF THE HIGH CALLING OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS.”  
PHILIPPIANS 3:14***

*A MAGAZINE FOR YOUNG CHRISTIANS  
OF ALL AGES*

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Dear Reader,

**“The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord; and He delighteth in his way” (Psalm 37:23).**

Not his way only, but his very steps are ordered, and that by the One who knows all, sees the end from the beginning, discerns every snare and pitfall, and orders all with unerring wisdom. Who would not commit his way to the Lord and follow that which is good in view of this? **What rest of heart it gives to know that I don’t have to anxiously consider every step I take, as though all depended upon me, but that I can trust in the Lord at all times.** Then will He delight in the way that I take, for it will be the way of His pleasure.

**A man of faith knows that when he awakes in the morning, God is his Helper and Resource. It matters little to him how many are his difficulties, or how great; God is greater than them all, and he can start the day with the knowledge, God is for me.** He and his brethren are like an army marching through a foreign land, having at its back a good base of supplies. Many a commander has been beaten because he advanced too far and forgot the necessity of a good commissariat, **but the Christian knows that it is written, “My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.” His firm conviction is that “they that wait on the Lord shall not want any good thing.” And if the world spurns him because of his faithfulness to God, what of that? He can rejoice that God Himself is not only his shield, but his exceeding great reward.**

May the Lord use this issue of Toward the Mark to strengthen you, encourage you, and help you to be established; to the end that Christ may be displayed in your life.

Thank you for your e-mails and notes of encouragement.

**Please keep praying for the Lord’s blessing on Toward the Mark.**

Yours in our soon-coming Lord,  
*Emil S. Nashed*

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*I have the pleasure to inform you that a mailing list has been set up for Toward the Mark. If you would like to receive an electronic version simply send an e-mail to [toward.the.mark@gmail.com](mailto:toward.the.mark@gmail.com) or visit [www.towardthemark.org](http://www.towardthemark.org) to be added to the mailing list. If you would like copies of older issues, please mention it in your e-mail.*

***Quotations from Scripture are generally taken either from the King James translation or the J.N. Darby translation.***

## MILK

*“The truth shall make you free”*

### ADDRESSES TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES IN ASIA

#### REVELATION 2 AND 3

##### Sardis (Revelation 3:1-6)

Sardis is about 30 miles south of Thyatira, continuing the circuit from Ephesus which ended at Laodicea. We have learned already that the seven churches in Asia can be looked at as giving us a prophetic picture of the history of the Christian church on earth in the period from when the apostles lived right up to the coming of the Lord. **The last four of these seven churches, Thyatira to Laodicea, describe conditions which will continue until the coming of the Lord. Sardis, the second church of this group, forms part of that prophetic history; the so-called Sardis period from about 1500 AD, beginning with what is commonly referred to as the Reformation. However, it must be said very clearly that the address to Sardis is not a description of the Reformation itself.**

Historically, the moment came when God raised up men who were determined that their faith and practice would be governed by the Word of God alone. **Giants of the faith at that time included those like Martin Luther, who insisted, from scripture, on the truth of justification by faith. Another, William Tyndale, martyred at only 41 years of age, said he could not rest until every plough boy in England had in his own hands a personal copy of the Bible in his own native language. This was truly a work of the Holy Spirit, following many centuries of spiritual darkness and superstition, which we have considered as the Thyatira period.** How very sad it is that so few in our day are really in the enjoyment of the blessing men like them secured, at such great personal cost

We shall also consider the local conditions in Sardis and apply the moral challenge to our own heart and conscience, to judge the measure of our own faithfulness. Now let us look at our text to confirm that it supports the propositions we have made.

Verse 1 “And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.”

**The angel represents the responsible element in the local church; those who are able and willing to accept local responsibility. Clearly, they must be fully dependent upon the Lord to do this effectively.**

To each church, the feature quoted from the description of the Judge given in chapter 1 verses 12-18 is significant and relevant to the conditions at that particular church. Here, the term “He that hath the seven Spirits of God” signifies the *plenitude* of the Holy Spirit. He and His power are available in abundance, controlling and guarding God’s interests. The Son of God as such, in all His personal dignity and majesty, had something to say to Thyatira, which gave Him a small place (Roman Catholicism relegates Him to being Son of Mary—exemplified significantly in the many statues which depict a large Mary and a very small Jesus). At Sardis the emphasis is likewise very apt. It is the Spirit of God Who has something to say to Sardis, which gave little place to the Spirit. **The great sin of Protestantism generally is the little place they give to the Spirit of God.**

The Dark Ages were ended by the Reformation, from which Protestantism emerged. But control of God’s interests is in His hands, not in the hands of those who promoted the Reformation. They had been called out to do a specific job, which they did very well, but their exercise was limited to essential basic matters. As a picture of this, the church at Sardis started well, but soon lost its early life and vigour.

Next, it says, “He has the seven stars.” Simply put, these stars represent those in each church who bear light, and give due witness, in life and word, to the truth of God.

**The Lord’s first words are, “I know.” He can see below the surface.** Like the tribute to the written Word of God, Hebrews 4:12, He “is able to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

“Thy works.” There is no specific commendation given to this church. The inertia into which Sardis had sunk is highlighted by the

fact that more is commended even in Thyatira than in Sardis. It would seem that what was done at Sardis was done by way of habit, rather than by the leading and guidance of the Holy Spirit. This is a constant danger in any sphere of Christian life and service.

The Lord goes on to say, “thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.” **The word “name” here is not an actual personal name, but means a reputation.** The Christians at Sardis were proud of their accomplishments. There had been initially a real work of God, with great spiritual energy. But the Lord gives His personal judgement of this church. They had become morally and spiritually dead! All that was left was a reputation! What had started so well had just tailed off. **What really counts in the Lord’s work is an ongoing dependence upon Him, empowered by the Holy Spirit, if it is to continue in vitality.**

Verse 2 “Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.”

“Be watchful.” The Lord Jesus requires watchfulness (we shall return to this point when we consider verse 3). But what is the point of calling upon dead people to be watchful? If they had been alert, they would not have drifted into this condition. We, too, must be watchful, in prayer and in deed, lest Satan gains a foothold.

**The next call is, “Strengthen the things that remain.” There was urgent need for renewed strength, to be steadfast and true to what they believed. We have thought about one or two historical examples. Think, too, of those like Elijah, Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, and the list of faithful men in Hebrews 11, who have left us such sterling examples to follow.**

“Ready to die”—not actually dead, but on the point of dying. There was a necropolis, a cemetery, in nearby hills—the regional centre for the dead, indeed “a city of the dead.” The citizens of Sardis had a reputation for being alive, even lively, but in God’s eyes they were as good as dead, like the occupants of the nearby necropolis. They would be particularly sensitive to this, to them, offensive comparison.

The call to strengthen is followed by a rebuke. “I have not found thy works perfect,” that is, complete, “before God.” In what way?

The Lord does not refer to their words, but to their works, their deeds. Our teaching may be orthodox, but there must be a parallel practical response along with it. **The Reformers abandoned some of the trappings of Roman Catholicism but they did not go all the way. There was not that full reliance on the power, control, and leading of the Holy Spirit which is available in abundance.** The moral lesson must be learned and applied, put into practice, otherwise this is merely a history lesson. Mere profession does not complete anything. **The address to Sardis describes the aftermath of the Reformation. Because of the intense hostility of the ecclesiastical system which had held so many in bondage for several centuries, the Reformers turned for protection to the political powers. This in turn led to worldly associations and eventually a giving up of many of the spiritual gains won by the reforming pioneers at such personal cost. Instead of seeking the world’s protection, there should have been dependence upon the One in whose hand were such great resources As a result, we have now what is known as Protestantism with its many variant denominations. There was indeed, and continues to be, a need to repent!**

Verse 3 “Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.”

“Remember.” Take account of “what” you have been through, the victories won, but also “how,” the cost involved. Do we hold dearly the advantages we possess today? It is a continuing challenge to every true believer, especially when we consider the cost involved for the stalwarts of former days. Hold fast, indeed! Otherwise there will indeed be a renewed need for repentance.

“If thou shalt not watch.” In the sixth century BC, under siege by Cyrus, Sardis fell on the fourteenth day of a siege because there was no sentry at what they thought was the strongest point in their defence. They assumed, mistakenly, that they were impregnable at that point. This led to lack of watchfulness, and an unexpected defeat. Those on sentry duty had failed in their vigilance.

Let us think now of the way in which the Lord Jesus refers to His coming again. It is given along with a warning. “If therefore thou

shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief.” This is certainly not the way He will come for His own. It is the way He will come to the world, lying asleep and indifferent to Him. Just listen to Paul’s words writing to the Thessalonians, “But ye, brethren are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief” (1 Thessalonians 5:4). He was writing of sudden destruction coming upon the world. Much at Sardis had become a mere profession, identified with the world, and therefore in danger of being judged with the world. The Lord will come for His church as the Bridegroom, claiming His bride, not as a thief.

Verse 4 “Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.”

“A few names.” The system was dead. But there were a few individuals who were livingly, actively responding to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

“Which have not defiled their garments.” **Personal holiness and righteousness are essential in witness and service for our blessed Lord.**

“They shall walk with Me in white.” Roman citizens welcoming a victorious general returning from a successful campaign were robed in white, and those of particular renown were granted the honour of walking with him in his triumphal procession. There was, evidently, a remnant in Sardis, just a few, and known personally to Christ, of whom He can say, “They have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy.” During times of difficulty and stress, and maybe opposition, they remained faithful. What an honour, from the Lord’s own lips, “they are worthy.”

Verse 5 “He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.”

**Each of these addresses closes with a promise to the overcomer, one who is true to the Lord in an evil day. It is not now “they,” but “he”; an individual matter. Here the promise is threefold.**

The first is very similar to the promise of verse 4. “The same shall be clothed in white raiment.” As we have considered, prominent Roman citizens welcoming a victorious general returning from a successful campaign were robed in white, and those who were deemed worthy were granted the special honour of walking with him in his triumphal procession. **The overcomer shall be part of the victory parade of Christ, associated with Him in His day of glory.**

The second of these promises is another encouragement, “I will not blot out his name out of the book of life.” This is possibly a reference to excommunication. **At the latter end of the first century AD, the Jews secured partial protection for those enrolled in the register at the synagogue. Offenders against the Jewish authorities incurred excommunication, and exposure to persecution from the Roman authorities for not worshipping Caesar. Those who were contending strongly for the Christian faith were sometimes blotted out of men’s books at the local synagogue, but they are given the promise that they shall not be blotted out of God’s book.** This promise would have a parallel significance for the Reformers in their day.

**No true believer will ever have his or her name erased out of God’s book. Their eternal destiny is secure. There may be others who pride themselves in having their names in earth’s roll of honour, but their position there as such would always be insecure, dependent on their future behaviour and performance. The overcomer can be assured of his place in the book of life, from which his name can never be erased.**

The third promise is a place of honour, “I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.” **The Lord Jesus will remember, and honour, the faithfulness of His servants!**

Verse 6 “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”

As we come towards the end, the call to the overcomer becomes more urgent and distinctive. In all the difficulties of our day, let us take courage. Let us be watchful, strengthened, and holding fast until the Lord comes. “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches.”

## MEAT

*“Sanctify them by the truth”*

### THE FATHER’S NAME

To Abraham, God was known by the Name of The Almighty, and through Moses God made Himself known to Israel as Jehovah, but God as yet remained within the thick darkness; He was not known to men, even as we read in John 1:18, “No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.” It was in the Person of the Son that God was made known, and this in His declaration of the Father’s Name.

In Matthew’s Gospel the Lord Jesus is specially presented as Israel’s king, and in chapter 11 we see Him as rejected by the nation, and reproaching the cities “in which most of His works of power had taken place.” Yet, at that very time, with Israel’s door closed against Him, Jesus gives a remarkable answer, for it is written, “At that time, Jesus answering said, I praise Thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and the prudent, and hast revealed them to babes” (v. 25). The leaders of Israel, the wise and the prudent, were blind as to the glory of the Person who was in their midst; but the disciples, those who were accounted but as babes, had the knowledge of God in the Person of Jesus. **This is the divine answer to His rejection by the leaders of Israel. It was the good pleasure of God to give the revelation of Himself, not to great religious leaders, but to the simple men, untaught in the schools of men, but educated in the company of the Son of God.**

Then follows from the lips of the Lord the wondrous truth of Christianity, “All things have been delivered to me by My Father, and no one knows the Son but the Father, nor does any

one know the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son may be pleased to reveal Him” (v. 27). **The kingdom of Israel may be refused Him by the people and their leaders, but His Father had given everything into the hands of the Son of God. Henceforth, He would not have the kingdom from Israel, but He would have it among the “all things” that His Father had entrusted to Him.**

The Son stands in a relationship with the Father that the Father only could know, even as in the Person of the Son there is a holy mystery beyond the knowledge of any but the Father. **But the Son had come to make the Father known, and in this revelation is the substance of the truth of Christianity.** How often the Name of Father was on the lips of the Son, and while this showed the public nature of the declaration of the Father’s Name, it was not to all that holy, precious Name was known, but only to those “to whom the Son” was pleased to reveal Him. Many heard the Son speak of the Father, but few entered into the knowledge of the Father’s Name.

**While the making known of the Father’s Name gives the full revelation of God in His nature, and brings to light the eternal relationship of the Son and the Father, yet the Name of the Father is known to the babes in the family of God.** Writing to the babes, the apostle John says, “I write to you, little children, because ye have known the Father” (1 John 2:13). This is not knowledge attained by spiritual growth, but communicated by the Son of God to all in the divine family; it belongs to the relationship of sonship, which belongs to all who have received the truth of the Gospel and received the gift of the Holy Spirit. Writing to the Galatian saints, the apostle Paul says, “Because ye are sons, God has sent out the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Galatians 4:6).

**Especially in John’s Gospel do we hear the Son speak of the Father. The temple, in John 2, is His Father’s house; and in**

**John 4, to the lonely woman of Sychar, He speaks of seeking worshippers for the Father, such as should worship Him in spirit and in truth. In chapter 5 He speaks many things concerning the Father. He says, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work” (v. 17). Quickening, raising the dead, life, judgment and all His works are viewed by Him in relation to the Father. He speaks of the Father’s love for Him, and of the witness of the Father to Him, saying, “I am come in my Father’s Name, and ye receive me not; if another come in his own name, him ye will receive” (v. 43). He would not accuse them to the Father, but Moses, whose testimony of Him they had refused would accuse them to Him.**

There is much of which the Son speaks concerning the Father in John 6, 8, and 10; His prayer to the Father in John 11 at the tomb of Lazarus manifests His all-absorbing desire to glorify the Father’s Name in the moment of the display of His power as the Resurrection and the Life; again in John 12, **He values the Father’s honour and seeks His glory, with all the judgment of the cross troubling His soul; and He closes His testimony to the world in speaking of the Father’s commandment which brought life eternal to those who believed in Him.**

In John 13-16, the Son of God is preparing His own for their place with Him before the Father, in all the affection of which He had spoken, and as having His life and the gift of the Holy Spirit. John 17 gives that most wonderful prayer, in which the Son speaks of His own place with the Father and of all the glory belonging to Him and about to be received, His eternal glory with the Father, the glory received from the Father as Man, and what His own would behold in the Father’s House and share with Him in the glory of the coming day.

### **The Father**

It must be evident that when the Lord uses the words “The Father” He is thinking of God as revealed in this holy Name

that brings to light the relationship in which the Persons of the Godhead have ever been. Because of this, when the Lord sent out the apostles, as recorded in Matthew 28, He said, “Go and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them to the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” (v. 20).

**Although revealed in time, and not until the Son came, the name of Father belongs to eternity. This is clearly seen in such Scriptures as, “I came out from the Father, and have come into the world; again I leave the world and go to the Father” (John 16:28); “Father...thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world” (John 17:24).**

**The Name of Father brings with it the deep and eternal affections that could not be known until Jesus came; the grace towards men for those who were drawn to the Son; and the eternal life which was with the Father, was revealed in the Son, and which has been made available to us through the death of Jesus.**

### **My Father**

**When the Lord said “My Father” He asserted the divine relationship in which He stood with the Father. We see this in John 5, where, in verse 17, He says, “My Father worketh hitherto and I work.” They had sought to kill Him for healing the impotent man on the Sabbath (v. 16); now “the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He had not only violated the sabbath, but also said that God was His own Father, making Himself equal with God” (John 5:18). In chapter 10 we see the same thing. **Three times over He had said “My Father” (John 10:25, 29), then said, “I and the Father are one” (v. 30); then the Jews “therefore again took stones that they might stone Him,” giving as their reason, “because thou, being a man, makes thyself God” (vv. 31-33).****

This was the assertion of the relationship in which He then stood as a Man on earth to God the Father in heaven. In John's Gospel His relationship with the Father is not viewed as Son on account of the virgin birth—that we have in Luke's Gospel—He is Son in relation to the Father because of His eternal relationship with Him, having brought as the incarnate Son the same relationship into Manhood that ever belonged to Him with the Father. He is a divine Person on earth, who can say, "I honour my Father," and "It is my Father who glorifies me" (John 8:49, 54).

### Father

If the Lord says "My Father" in testimony to the Father before men, when addressing His Father, He says, "Father." (The record of His address to His Father in Gethsemane in Matthew's Gospel gives "My Father.") **We hear the Son address the Father thus when He praises Him as having hidden the wonderful truths of the divine revelation from the wise and prudent, and having revealed them unto babes. In Gethsemane, in His deep agony, He says "Father"; on the cross, Jesus said "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do" Luke 23:34; and after He had borne the judgment of God for sin, He can say "Father, into Thy hands I commit my spirit" (v. 46).**

In the Gospel of John, the Lord at the grave of Lazarus, says, "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me"; in John 5:12, where His soul is troubled, He asks, "What shall I say?" Will He say, "Father save me from this hour"; He will say, "Father glorify Thy Name." His prayer in John 5:17 opens with the words, "Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may glorify Thee." In this chapter, He uses the Name "Father" in verses 5, 21, and 24 as well as in the opening verse.

### The Living Father

**Everything that lives comes from the living God; indeed, in John's Gospel the Son is presented to us as having life in Himself, first, inherently in John 1:4, then as receiving it from the Father in John 5:26. The Son had come to bring to light a new kind of life altogether, not a life that perishes, but eternal life, a life which has its source in the Father and the Son.** Coming into the world, the Son was the Living Bread, and could say, "If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (John 6:51).

What a wonderful mission belonged to the Son. He had been sent into the world, a world of sin and death, to bring into it the life of God; but this life could only be appropriated by men in feeding upon His death. The source of His mission is the Living Father; He had sent Him, the Bread of Life, the Living Bread, that men might have life in communion with Him in a scene where death is unknown. The whole existence of the Son was inseparably bound up with the life and being of the Father, and the Living Father had sent Him to give effect to His will in the manifestation and the communication of eternal life.

If the leaders of Israel were unconcerned regarding the mission of the Son of God, the One they claimed to be their God was livingly concerned. **He was not a God that was indifferent to the creatures of His hand, nor to the people that He had chosen for Himself. He had come out in the person of the Son to make Himself known as Father, and He was the Living Father, vitally interested in every movement of His Son, and in the attitude of men to Him. It was a small matter to the Jews that Jesus should live and die; it was of the utmost importance to the Living Father.**



### Holy Father

As the Son, in prayer to the Father, in John 17:11-12, thinks of His own in the world, left behind as He returns to heaven, He says, “Holy Father, keep them in Thy Name which Thou hast given me, that they may be one as we. When I was with them I kept them in Thy Name; those Thou hast given me I have guarded, and not one of them has perished, but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.” The Son cared for and watched over His disciples, not only because they were His own, but because they had been the Father’s gift to Him. **He guarded them in the Name of the Holy Father as still belonging to Him though He had given them to the Son.**

Now that He is to return to the Father, He gives them back to His care and protection, knowing that He would shield them from the enemy and give them the sense of His great love for them. We have been privileged to listen to these precious words that we might realize the deep interest and affection of the Holy Father in those He has given to the Son; and that we might know the preciousness and blessedness of what is involved in the Name of the Holy Father. **The more our souls enter into its deep meaning, the more shall we enjoy His love, evinced in the portion given to us along with His own Son, and the more shall we seek to be here for His pleasure, separated to Himself, and apart from all unholiness that is so contrary to the Name of the Holy Father.**

### Righteous Father

If the Son had given over to the care of the Holy Father those He had received from Him to protect in this world, He is constrained to tell the Righteous Father “the world hath not known Thee” (John 17:25). **There is no knowledge of the Righteous Father in this world; so that we would seek in vain to have any knowledge of Him in the schools of this**

**world. But the Son could add, “But I have known Thee.” Here is One in whom is found the full and perfect knowledge of the Father, the Righteous Father, the One who is the source of all, and righteous in all that He does.**

Rejected in unrighteousness by the world, the Son can find His consolation in returning to the Righteous Father, as He says in John 16:10, the Spirit would convict the world “of righteousness, because I go to my Father.” There was also the knowledge that if the world knew not the Righteous Father, there were those who knew that He had sent Him. **His mission had not been in vain; the Father had drawn to Him those who were to be His companions in His glory and in the joys of the Father’s House, and they knew Him as the Sent One of the Righteous Father. To them He had declared the Father’s Name, and would again make it known to them, so that they might know divine love in their souls, and be here as witnesses for Him in the scene out of which He had gone.**

### My Father and Your Father

During His sojourn with His own, the Son of God had declared to them the Father’s Name, but He added in John 17:26, “And will declare it.” We have the prophetic utterance of this wonderful declaration in Psalm 22:22, and its fulfilment in John 20:17, where the Lord says to Mary Magdalene, “Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father; and to My God and your God.” **The declaration of the Father’s Name in His life had brought out the Father’s grace, affection, and counsels, and had shown the eternal relationship of the Son to the Father; the declaration of the Father’s Name in resurrection brought His own into His place of relationship and affection with the Father.**

We could not have conceived such blessing as is involved in the new relationship declared in the making known of the Father’s Name by the risen Son of God. Even now we know the relationship; we know the joys of being in the company of the

Son of God where He leads the praises of His own to the Father in the midst of the assembly, and where we, as newborn sons, call on the Father's Name. **But it is an eternal relationship that brings with it eternal blessing; all the deep joys of the Father's House, where as sons with His own Son we shall be before Him in love for evermore.**

### Our Father

On earth, the Lord Jesus taught His disciples to say, "Our Father, which is in heaven" (Matthew 6:9); but blessed as this relationship is it does not reach the truth of the eternal relationship secured by Christ's death, and announced in resurrection. **It is the relationship of God in heaven with a people on earth, not the heavenly and eternal relationship that belongs to the counsels of God.** In all the epistles of Paul, written to gatherings of the saints, he speaks in the introduction of "God our Father." **It is the true relationship of the Christian circle to God, who has been made known as Father by the Lord Jesus Christ, and who has brought us into the favoured place of relationship in Christian blessing.**

As we contemplate the wondrous revelation of the Father in the Person of the Son, and consider all the blessing that has been brought to us in the knowledge of His Name, and all the love made known in the gift of His well-beloved Son in whom we are so richly blessed, we can surely say with the writer of the epistle to the Ephesians, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love" (1:1-4).

### SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES!

1. Who was exiled to the land of Nod?
2. What are the only books of the Bible named after priests?
3. Where did the apostle Peter heal Aeneas ?

### Exercise

*"Exercise thyself unto piety"*

### CHRIST OUR PATTERN

(1 Peter 2:21)

**The Christian is enjoined to follow the steps of Christ. He is not commanded to speak as He did of whom it was said, "Never man spake like this man" (John 7:46); nor to do the works of Him who said, "If I had not done among them the works that none other man did" (John 15:24), for, both in words and works, He held a place absolutely preeminent. He was the truth, and all He said was infallibly true. He "went about doing good, for God was with Him" (Acts 10:38), and miracles of mercy followed where He went.**

**The Christian is not commanded to do miracles, like his Lord, but he is exhorted to "*follow His steps*" (1 Peter 2:21). This he is bound to do. It is his duty and pleasure to trace out his Master's footsteps and to place his own feet in them. This is the truest form of discipleship.**

Let it be very clearly understood, however, that no one can imitate the Lord Jesus Christ until he is consciously reconciled to God on the ground of redemption. The imitation of Christ on the part of one who has never been "born again," nor, therefore, a child of God, is impossible. The attempt must be a total failure; and the more honest that attempt the greater will be the disappointment. It were a thousand times easier to paint the rainbow on canvas than for man, as such, to exhibit in his life the moral features of Christ.

**No, a man must have not only new desires, but a new nature and a new power, that of the Spirit of God, who alone can so minister Christ to the renewed heart that it seeks His image and also conformity to it.**

**It is by the Spirit of the Lord that such an one is “changed into the same image from glory to glory” (2 Corinthians 3:18). And may I say that no change is so complete and exquisite as this.**

Think, for instance, of a Saul of Tarsus—the chief sinner, changed into the image of the Lord Jesus!

Think of the same change being effected in any of us who have learned our natural loathsomeness, that we should bear His image—fully in the glory itself, but gradually and increasingly now while on our journey to it! What a wondrous power this supposes; but, just as surely as the Spirit of God dwells in the believer, so does this process of sanctification proceed, though assuredly not to the eye of the believer himself. Others can notice the progress of the Christian as he moves on “from glory to glory.” He becomes more like his Pattern. Wonderful fact! Nor will the process cease until he shall be “conformed to the image of the Son, that He may be the first-born among many brethren” (Romans 8:29). They shall remember Him who shall be the Chief of all.

**“Christ also suffered for you”—there He stood alone, for none but He could take our place under the judgment due, nor exhaust its awful sentence, when He was “made sin for us”; but beside making atonement in death, “He left us an example that we should follow His steps.” Here He is not alone. Not one of His loved and blood-bought people but should follow His steps.**

Some may follow them more faithfully and closely than others, but He tells us that His “sheep hear His voice,” that He knows them, and that they follow Him. This is the one distinguishing mark of all His sheep. They follow Him.

**It is remarkable that the word “example” here, is found nowhere else. It means a “copy or underwriting.”** It is not the same as that of the Apostle when he charged the saints at Philippi to be followers together of him and “to mark them which walk, so as ye have us for an ensample”; nor again when he urged his son Timothy to be “an example of believers.” In these cases it is a “type,” but here it is a “copy.” That is, our Lord Jesus Christ is the standard, and no lower one will do.

Can we, then, reach this standard here below? Certainly not; but still, “Every man that hath this hope in Him [the hope of being like Him when He shall appear] purifieth himself even as He is pure” (1 John 3:3). Again, we have the universality of the process. “Every man” addresses himself to reach that perfect Standard.

**Needless to say that He holds a place far beyond the reach of man. He is “the true God and eternal life” (1 John 5:20); but here we are dealing with the standard of purification and the Pattern—the copy for our imitation. Men speak of high ideals; could any ideal exceed this?**

And what are the steps we are to follow? They are to be traced from the time when, in the midst of the doctors, He said: “Wist ye not that I must be about My Father’s business?” to that when, that business perfectly completed, He cried: “It is finished,” bowing His blessed head and giving up His Spirit to the hands of His Father.

**What a study! What an example! Our passage in 1 Peter gives us a summary of the steps in four bold negative statements:—**

- 1. Who did no sin**
- 2. Neither was guile found in His mouth**
- 3. Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again**
- 4. When He suffered He threatened not.**

**Mark, in these He left us an example; and how we are rebuked as we view Him absolutely clear of the failures to which, alas, we are all so prone.**

And then, in deepest confidence, “He committed Himself to Him who judgeth righteously.” **If the other statements presented His life negatively this gives us the constant repose of His soul in a positive way. His vindication was of God. Are we in the habit of making this committal? We gain a victory when we do so; for there the battle ends. His whole life was submission, hearty and unquestioning, to the will of the Father. This was His yoke. It was easy. And when we, through grace, bow uncomplainingly to that will, we, too, prove the yoke to be easy and the burden light.**

But there must be reality. The headline must be copied, and the example imitated. The most beautiful (only beautiful) steps have been imprinted on this more than desert waste, by the holy and sacred feet

of the Son of God, leaving behind them the plainly visible signs of the one path that is pleasing to God, and that which, in the power of the Holy Spirit, each and every child of His should pursue.

*The Lord is Himself gone before,  
He has marked out the path that we tread.  
It's as sure as the love we adore,  
We have nothing to fear nor to dread.*

*There is but that one in the waste  
Which His footsteps have marked as His own,  
And we follow in diligent haste  
To the place where He's put on His crown.*

Yes, He has gone on high. We behold with unveiled face His glory there. Every ray of it is lovely; it wins the heart; it separates from earth; it changes him who beholds into “the same image from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord.” **The transformation is marvelous but divinely simple. The Potter fashions the vessel as it seems good to Him, and the skill of the Potter is seen in His work.**

**Beloved, may we set our hearts on acquiring a much greater likeness to the Lord Jesus Christ who is our Pattern as well as our most precious Saviour.**

**J. Wilson Smith**

### ANSWERS TO SCRIPTURES SEARCH!

1. Cain (Genesis 4:13-16)
2. Ezra and Ezekiel
3. Lydda (Acts 9:32-35 )

### Rest

*“Shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee?”*

### THOU ART MY GOD

**There are times in every life when everything seems tottering to its fall. Nothing is fixed, nothing sure, and every new thought brings only another possibility of ill. Times of national crisis, and of commercial panic; times of overwhelming grief. Hopes are all gone... The sick, faint heart sees only desolation everywhere, past all avoidance, past all remedy. Then blessed is the man who knows what it is to hide himself in God; to come out of the toss of the storm, and to rest in this: “Thou art my God.” For then can he say, “Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear... For in the time of trouble shall He hide me in His pavilion... therefore will I sing unto the Lord” (Psalm 27:3, 5-6).**

It is in the day of trial and difficulty that the soul experiences something of the deep and untold blessedness of being able to count on God. It is not in gliding along the surface of a tranquil lake that the reality of the Master's presence is felt, but actually when the tempest roars and the waves roll over the ship.

**The Lord does not hold out to us the prospect of exemption from trial and tribulation—quite the opposite. He tell us we shall have to meet both the one and the other; but He promises to be with us in them, and this is infinitely better. God's presence in the trial is much better than exemption from the trial. The sympathy of His heart with us is sweeter far than the power of His hand for us. The Master's presence with His faithful servants while passing through the furnace was better far than the display of His power to keep them out of it (Daniel 3).**

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**Q.** Would you explain Jude 1:23, “but others save with fear, pulling [them] out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.”

Sam

**A.** Dear Sam:

This is an important question which has often caused confusion and misunderstanding. For a clearer picture we must look at it along with the previous verse: “And of some have compassion, making a difference” (v. 22).

**The two groups “some” and “others” are both separate from the “evil persons” referred to in verse 4 and “the saints” addressed in the epistle. They are those who may be referred to as “followers” and “leaders,” respectively.**

The “some” are simple persons who are prepared to listen to the evil men, courting danger but not yet involved with them and not understanding the danger. In contrast the “others” are those who are contaminated by the evil and are in danger of following and becoming associated with the evil men. **For those in the first group, we would recognize their simplicity and seek gently and kindly to help them to remove themselves from the dangerous place. However, in dealing with the second group, that is the “others,” greater care is needed. Those who would seek to rescue these “others” are kept from self-confidence through a realization of the horror of defilement and the risks to which the others are exposing themselves (save from fire); they are kept pure by a real sense of dependence upon the Lord.**

What is clearly evident is the need for discernment and coupled with that a real compassion for those who are erring. We must heed the admonition in Galatians 6:1: “Ye who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of meekness, considering thyself lest *thou* also be tempted.”

JAP

## WAITING FOR THE GLORY

I'M waiting for the glory;  
Are your thoughts with me too?  
It is the old, old story,  
But all most sweetly true.

I'm waiting for the glory;  
Jesus Himself is there;  
He's gone on high before me -  
Calls me with Him to share.

Jesus, the Lord, did love us -  
Will love us to the end,  
And lifts our hearts above us,  
To love that will not end.

For the day is nearing, nearing,  
When we shall see His face;  
Each step the way endearing,  
Which leads to that blest place.

For Jesus comes with power  
To change these bodies vile,  
Or raise them in that hour  
From where they rest awhile.

Then shall His soul's deep travail  
Find its love-fraught reward;  
Nor joy nor promise shall fail -  
With Him, like Him, their Lord!

But who's this all-glorious Lord,  
To whom each knee doth bow?  
The Sorrower, once abhorred!  
The Lord in His glory now!

Art waiting for the glory?  
Thy thoughts go with me too!  
Yes, 'tis the old, old story,  
But all most sweetly true!

JND



## THE TITANIC

“Gentlemen, I regret to say that the Titanic sank at 2:20 this morning.” This was the announcement made by Philip Franklin, vice president of the White Star Line in New York, referring to the sinking of the luxury liner that resulted in the deaths of over 1,500 of the 2,200 passengers aboard on April 15, 1912. A hundred years after the sinking of the Titanic, this horrific event still has a gripping fascination for millions of people.

So many of the events on that fateful night mirror the spiritual peril that faces a world seemingly oblivious to where it is heading. Even after the Titanic struck the iceberg, the crew couldn’t persuade passengers to take to the lifeboats when they had paid enormous sums of money for luxurious accommodations. **After all, only days earlier the ship’s builders had boastfully told reporters that “God Himself couldn’t sink this ship.” The Titanic symbolized the world’s sense of achievement, enterprise, invincibility and arrogance. Confidence in human ability and technological prowess convinced people to believe in the “unsinkable” rather than the “unthinkable.”** As a result, many of the ship’s lifeboats that were designed to hold up to 60 people left the ship with only a quarter of that number aboard.

The anniversary of the Titanic’s sinking provides a timely warning against the world’s misplaced confidence in its own achievements and failure to heed the warnings of a loving God. According to the designer of the Titanic, the interior furnishings and decorations were meticulously discussed for many hours, whilst the question of lifeboats merited only “five or ten minutes” discussion. The parallels are many, and they are uncomfortable ones. At the entrance to an exhibit of artifacts from the Titanic there is a large wall with two lists. They are reminiscent of the lists posted after the tragedy in the White Star Line’s offices in Liverpool, England. As anxious relatives waited to hear the fate of a passenger they loved, a company rep would add names to one of two lists: “Known to be saved” and “Known to be lost.” **There were only those two lists. And everyone reading this is also on one of two lists: “Known to be saved” or “Known to be lost.” Not “rich” or “poor”...not “liberal” or “conservative”...not “Religion X” or “Religion Y”—just “saved” or “lost.”**

What happened to the Titanic was a terrible tragedy, but there’s a spiritual parable in the story, and we need to hear the voice of God who tells us not to assume that this world is unsinkable, but that, in the words of Scripture, “The end of all things is near” (1 Peter 4:7). **Are you ready to meet your Creator? Come to Him now as a lost sinner, believing that the Lord Jesus Christ loves you and died on the cross to pay for the wages of your sin and to save you from eternal torment in hell.**

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

**Would you receive Him as your Lord and Savior Today?**