



# *TOWARD THE MARK*

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

*PHILIPPIANS 3:14*

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Dear Reader,

“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I **will come again**, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (Jn. 14:3).

Our Lord is now seated on His Father’s throne crowned with glory and honor. God has given Him a Name which is above every Name, not only in this world but also in the world to come. That is His position at the present moment. After He went He sent the Holy Spirit. In Christianity two prominent facts stand out – the Lord Jesus is in the glory and the Holy Spirit is down here. Now think of the Savior going to leave that little company of His beloved disciples and going back to the Father. They were going to miss Him, for although they were very weak and many times could not understand Him, yet they loved Him. Has He any balm for their wounded heart? These are the words which He chose to comfort them and us: “Let not your hearts be troubled...I will come again,” just as sure as He came the first time (in due time “of God’s counsels He said I will come again”). It is as plain as words can make it. And the children of God have been waiting for the fulfillment of that promise, though some have gone on before.

**There is no need to look for signs; as far as this promise is concerned, there is nothing that lies between. It is simply, “If I go I will come again”. Now the question is, “Are you ready?” Is He the center of our affection? Are we living in the light of the fact that we are pilgrims and strangers here? Do we know that Heaven is our home and that our citizenship is in the heavens? Have we lost our pilgrim character and settled down here? Have the cares of this life taken hold of us, and the mirage of this world, its false attractions, and its politics made us to act and to live like earth dwellers? Remember He said, “I will come again.” Are you ready, dear Christian?**

Thank you for your prayers and overwhelming encouragement. It is our prayer that the Lord will use this issue to help you grow in Him.

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

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# TOWARD THE MARK

<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page</u>
The Holy Spirit	1
The Kingdom of Heaven	8
Ambition	15
Cheer Up	17
Ya-Luen	20
Questions and Answers	21
The Patience of Hope	22

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

## MILK

*“The truth shall make you free”*

### THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We need to now consider one more of the terrible consequences of sin. *Sin has made man to be powerless.* Not only have we fallen into bondage of sin (as we saw when considering redemption) but we are completely without power to please or to serve God. Yet the creature should always (within its own limits) perfectly serve its Creator.

**So we must have power both to deliver us from the internal paralysis produced by sin and to enable us to properly go through external circumstances in serving the will of God. We get this power by the indwelling of the Spirit of God.**

Something less might have been sufficient, but God wonderfully gave us His Holy Spirit. When the risen Christ was about to return to the glory, He told His disciples that, “You shall receive power after the Holy Spirit is come upon you and you shall be witnesses unto Me” (Acts 1:8). As seen in Acts 2, this promise was fulfilled 10 days later on the day of Pentecost.

We have seen that Ezek. 36, 37 prophesy as to the work of new birth and quickening which will be worked in the remnant of Israel in a future day to prepare them for millennial blessing. Both chapters also mention the gift of the Holy Spirit: “I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you shall keep My ordinances, and do them (36:27)...and shall put My Spirit in you, and you shall live” (37:14). As a consequence, there will be Spiritual life in Israel which will express itself in active obedience to God’s will. They will want to do as God directs. The same thing is predicted at the end of Joel 2, which Peter quoted on the day of Pentecost, saying that what had just occurred in their midst was a sample of what Joel had foretold. **However, the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost had fullness and permanence that was never contemplated in Old Testament times.**

New birth is produced by the Holy Spirit and it gives us a new nature which is spirit in its inherent, basic character (Jn. 3:6). *That which is produced by the Holy Spirit’s action partakes of His own nature.* But new birth must be distinguished from the Holy Spirit’s indwelling of people who are already born again, which is what occurred at Pentecost. Also note that power is connected with the Holy Spirit *personally indwelling* the believer’s body and not with the new nature produced by the Holy Spirit. See Rom. 7:7-8:4.

**In Rom. 7, we see the experience of one who is born again since he has “the inward man (which) delights in the law of God” (v. 22). Consequently, he desires that which is good but finds that he is unable to practice it. Only when he finds the Deliverer in “Jesus Christ our Lord” (v. 25) and knows “the law (control) of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” (8:2), does he have the power to overcome “the law (control) of sin and death” (8:2) and to fulfill the things which the law righteously required (8:4). Delivering-power is only found in Christ and in His Holy Spirit.**

The above verses show us the power that delivers us from the *internal* paralysis that sin induces. This deliverance must come before we can be marked by power in witness to our risen Lord. See Acts 1:8 and Lk. 24:49. We must remember that even as saints, we do not have inherent power. *Rather, all power for us comes in the person of the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*

The 11 men to whom the risen Lord spoke in Lk. 24:49 were *apostles* on whom the foundation of the Church was later built. Previously, there had been a powerful work of the Holy Spirit in them, and for over three years they had been especially instructed by the Lord Himself. Yet none of these things gave them power. However eager they were to begin their great work of witness, they were not able to do so until the Holy Spirit Himself was given to indwell them. They didn’t bear witness at all of the risen Lord until then. But immediately after the Spirit’s indwelling, their mouths were opened with great and wonderful results.

At Pentecost, the disciples were not only indwelt by the Holy Spirit but were *filled* with Him (Acts 2:4). To be *filled* with the Holy Spirit means that there is no force allowed to be *active* within the believer to oppose or hinder the Spirit's power. This filling of the Spirit is not permanent as is His indwelling, for Peter was again filled with the Spirit in Acts 4:8 and yet again in Acts 4:31. When the Holy Spirit thus fills a believer, the believers *flesh* (old nature) has been judged and made quiet. The Spirit's power is then irresistible. Stephen illustrates this. Being full of the Holy Spirit, he was "*full of faith and power*" and his opponents "were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke" (Acts 6:8-10). Unable to resist him by words, they became violent and stoned him to death, thus destroying the *temple* of the Holy Spirit.

The history of the early Church as recorded in Acts shows that the filling of the Holy Spirit occurred only occasionally, even with the Apostles. However, all Christians are now exhorted in Eph. 5:18 to "be filled with the Spirit," and this is surprisingly contrasted to being "drunk with wine." When the wine is drunk in excess, it assumes control of the person and carries him outside of himself. Such action is from Satan and is evil. However, the Holy Spirit also can completely control a person and carry him outside of himself, but in a way that is divine and good. Here in Eph. 5:18, the very good is contrasted with the very evil. So, if one is filled with the Spirit, then obviously, all that is not Himself and of Him is excluded. There's no room left for other things.

**It is these *other things* (which so often fill our thoughts and use up our time and energies) that hinder us from having the power that we desire for witness and service. These other things are not just *evil* things but the many trivial and profitless things that we so often get involved in. Hence, we read, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God" (Eph. 4:30). If we do grieve Him, we don't lose His indwelling-presence because the verse continues, "by Whom you are sealed unto the day of redemption." However, for as long as we continue to grieve Him, we do lose many of the *benefits* of His presence such as spiritual power and spiritual joy. Some of the things that grieve Him are malice, bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking (v. 31). Since these things are so often seen in us, the wonder is that His power is manifested at all!**

The Apostle Paul was called and saved so that he might be a *pattern* for us to follow (1 Tim. 1:16). Therefore, we can see how the Holy Spirit should be working in us by looking at how the power of the Holy Spirit worked in Paul's life of service and witness. There was an extraordinary *range* to his service. Within about 25 years, he had evangelized people over hundreds of thousands of square miles, traveling on foot with an occasional ride on a ship or on an animal. A miraculous feat indeed! It was only possible because he was energized by the Holy Spirit.

**1 Cor. 2:1-5 shows the *simplicity* of his preaching.** All merely human adornments were discarded so that the central fact of the cross of Christ might be more plainly revealed. His preaching was marked by the "demonstration of the (Holy) Spirit and of power" so that the faith of those who received his message would not stand in "the wisdom of men but in the power of God."

**2 Cor. 3:1-6 and 4:1-7 show us the *life-giving-power* of Paul's ministry.** His converts were "the epistle (letter) of Christ...written...with the Spirit of the living God, "for the Spirit gives life." Both *life* and *light* are connected in this passage, for Paul says, "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ [shines through] earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."

**2 Cor. 10:1-6 and Eph. 6:12-18 show us the power of and need for *spiritual weapons* in the aggressive conflicts of the Gospel.** Satanic powers have fortified themselves in human minds and formed strongholds of human reasoning and lofty thoughts which can only be overthrown by the Holy Spirit's spiritual weapons.

**1 Thess. 1 and 2 give us a lovely picture of the *spiritual fruits* seen in the lives and characters of new believers when the Gospel comes "not...in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance" (1:5).** While they served the living and true God and waited for His Son from heaven, the Thessalonian believers were followers of the Lord, *examples* to other believers, and preachers of the Word which had saved them.

**Finally, 2 Tim. 1 shows the Holy Spirit as the power for *endurance* and for *love*—the Spirit is characterized by**

“the spirit...of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (v. 7) so that the believer is enabled to be “a partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel according to the power of God” (v. 8). The believer is also able to “keep by the Holy Spirit Who dwells in us” the good deposit of truth which he has been entrusted (v. 14).

As we see the above, we can truly say that God’s gift of the Holy Spirit, as well as His Gift of His Son, are both *unspeakable* (2 Cor 9:15).

Now, some people believe that since God is unchangeable and since the Holy Spirit’s power at the beginning of Christianity was very great and was displayed in signs and wonders, all this should be seen today. God is indeed unchangeable but this does not mean that He cannot vary the way He deals with men, according to His wisdom, to meet changing situations. He has done this in the past.

**The display of His power in miracles has never been constant. In fact, miracles have only been seen at three times in man’s history (which covered a total of about 300 years, Ed.). Miracles were first seen when God, through Moses, intervened to bring Israel out of Egypt and into Palestine and begin the Law-system. Miracles were next seen about 500 years later when God intervened through Elijah and Elisha to recall Israel to the broken-law and to testify of His goodness. Miracles were not seen for another 900 years until God intervened in Christ and shortly thereafter formed the Church through the Apostles. Almost no miracles were performed at other times. “John (the Baptist) did no miracle” (Jn. 10:41). He lived just before the third great miracle-time began in connection with Christ.**

Contrary to popular belief, these miraculous signs were not really a great display of God’s power since they were only effective for *earth*, for *time*. For instance, in Acts 9, Aeneas was healed and Dorcas was raised from the dead, but they both died some years later and the miracles were as if they had never been. But Acts 9 opens with the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. His traveling-companions were speechless with amazement even though they didn’t understand the miracle. It was, of course, a great spiritual miracle which still affects the whole world. *In fact every true conversion is a miracle which abides to eternity and these great miracles are happening daily.*

Paul’s preaching displayed the power of the Holy Spirit. Sadly, we can’t speak of most modern preaching in that way. The fact is that much modern preaching is characterized by the very things which Paul avoided so that his preaching might be in the power of the Holy Spirit. He renounced all dishonesty, including the deceitful handling of the Word of God (2 Cor. 4:2) as well as so-called reputable things such as excellency-of-speech and human wisdom (1 Cor. 2:1-5).

Yet, even when the Word is faithfully preached today without resorting to human methods, there still seems to be a lack of power. Eph. 4:30 and 1 Thess. 5:19 may help us understand why. Often the Holy Spirit is grieved by the servant’s life, walk, and attitude, and hence, there is little fruit in what he does. Even when this isn’t the case, the Holy Spirit is still grieved by the general low condition among Christians. Further, the Holy Spirit is *quenched* (cooled off) by the introduction of human organization (as seen in all denominations today, Ed.) which does not allow for His free action among the Lord’s people. Still further, there is a growing unbelief on the part of many who *claim* to be servants of God, so that they deny and ridicule almost every truth which they are pledged to uphold. Thus, the Holy Spirit is grieved and quenched right in the middle of that which calls itself the Christian church, and that fact alone accounts for His withholding any great display of His power.

**However, the Holy Spirit is still working and people are being converted and blessed, even though His work is proceeding in quieter and less-noticed ways than in the early days of the Apostles.**

Power for *victory in our own lives* is just as important as power for service. We can experience power-for-victory by *walking in the Spirit* (Gal. 5:16). Eph. 1:13 says that the Holy Spirit was given to us when we believed the Gospel for our salvation. Upon believing, the Holy Spirit marks us out (seals us) as belonging to God. But then we are to walk in the Spirit—He is to be the practical and real Source and Energy of our lives and activities. Walking is one of our first activities as a baby, so God uses it as a figurative expression for all our activities. Our thoughts, speech, and actions are to be under the Holy Spirit’s control. Only then will we not be fulfilling the desires of the flesh, our old nature (Gal. 5:17). *The Holy Spirit wields an uplifting power that is much greater than the downward drag of the*

*flesh, and we can experience that power if we walk in Him. Read all of Gal 5:13-26.*

**How do we walk in the Spirit? Read Gal. 6:7-9. Our daily lives are made up of sowing and reaping, as if we go forth each day with a seed-basket on each shoulder. We may put one hand in the *flesh-basket* and sow to the flesh, or the other hand into the *Spirit-basket* and sow to the Spirit. In other words, we may yield to and do the things which merely satisfy the flesh or we may give ourselves to the things of the Holy Spirit and sow seeds that will be fruitful to God's glory. *God does not do this for us. We do it ourselves!* All day long, we are doing one or the other. Into which basket are you continually placing your hand? *The secret of walking in the Spirit is the determined refusal of the flesh-basket and the determined, active use of the Spirit-basket!***

However, we see many Christians who are not guilty of serious outward misconduct but who are still without much of the Spirit's liberty or power. With such, there are probably serious *internal* lapses in conduct such as failure to concentrate on God's things or just plain spiritual laziness. The Holy Spirit is here to take the things of Christ and to show them to us, and He will be very grieved by our inattention, inactivity, and laziness. If you went to someone with important news about a much loved mutual friend and he began to interrupt your story with unimportant remarks about other things, or if you found him falling asleep in his chair, you would quit telling your story and be grieved and angry.

**The Holy Spirit is sensitive about all that concerns the glory of Christ. Inattention will grieve Him as much as open sin. Therefore, let each of us ask God to show us how much of our own spiritual poverty and lack of power is a result of both our outward and inward conduct.**

**F. B. HOLE**

## Meat

*"Sanctify them by the truth"*

## THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

Since our last paper appeared, further enquiries have come to hand about the distinctions we pointed out. A few days ago we came across the following extract which may help to make the subject a little clearer.

"Matthews only uses the expression "Kingdom of heaven!" It is often, in a general sense, capable of being interchanged with the "kingdom of God" as we see by comparing Luke. Notwithstanding, the two phrases cannot always replace each other, and Matthew uses the "kingdom of God" in a few passages where the "kingdom of heaven" could not be used. (Mt. 6:33; 12:28; 21:31, 43). Thus the "kingdom of God" was there when Christ the king was **there**; the "kingdom of heaven" began with Christ **going to heaven**. By and by, when Satan ceases to rule, it will be the "kingdom of heaven" (and of God too, of course), not in mystery, but in manifestation. The "kingdom of God" has also a moral force which the "kingdom of heaven" has not; and in this way it is frequently used by Paul, and was peculiarly suitable to the Spirit's design in Luke." (JND)

Following the outline of the kingdom in its widest form, we come now to regard it in a more restricted way dispensationally as presented to us in the seven parables in Mt. 13. Here we have an outline of the whole Christian profession which began on the day of Pentecost and will continue until the end of this age. Beginning with only good seed, it has become a mixture of good and bad, but resolving all this will take place when the saints are taken to heaven and the rest left for judgment in this world. As this character only came into existence after Christ was in heaven, the kingdom is looked at as a mystery, for we have a kingdom without a visible king. It is an aspect that only those who have eyes to see can understand, hence our Lord spoke to them of the "mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" (v. 11).

We must note that the first parable was not called a similitude of the kingdom, though there can be little doubt it prepared for it. The Sower rather covered the later part of the ministry of our Lord and only came in after His rejection by Israel. He accepts His rejection in chapter 11 and formally rejects the nation in chapter 12, then He begins a new work as the Sower —

not this time with Israel in view but with the Assembly in view, for this is bound up with these parables. Moreover, we have no mention of a “field” in the parable, which our Lord says in this chapter “is the world.” Again, the reason is His work did not go beyond the confines of Palestine. The kingdom as outlined in the other six parables did not begin until Christ was in glory. This is clearly seen in the next parable where the field is in the hands of men. No doubt the sowing by our Lord produced the company who received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and it was to them the care of the field was committed, and it has been in the care of men ever since. In support of this we note that “the field” (v. 38) becomes “his field” (v. 24) and “thy field” (v. 27). When did **the** field become **His** field? When He sold all that He had and bought it; a reference to the death of our Lord. So the second parable speaks of “his field” and clearly indicates that the kingdom as outlined in these other six parables had its beginning after the cross in the coming of the Holy Spirit into this world. The Lord as the Sower in the first parable prepared for this, but only as the Sower in the second parable did He bring it into being in this world.

In the first similitude of the kingdom, beginning in verse 24, we see the introduction of the kingdom into this world by our Lord - the Sower - but through the apostolic company called men here. It was while **they** slept - not the Sower - that the enemy sowed tares among the wheat. Here is the secret of all the evil that is found in the bosom of Christendom today. Both wheat and tares growing together as far as the **field** is concerned, and this state will abide until the end of the age. At the end of this age the angels will come forth and bind the tares together to burn them, and the Lord will gather His own to Himself. We believe the order is: first the tares bundled, then the wheat gathered into the barn, and lastly the tares burned after the wheat has been taken away. This is all in preparation for the righteous to shine forth “as the sun,” thus pointing to heaven as the place from which they will shine (v. 43).

“At the close, He will bind all the enemy’s work in bundles; that is, He will **prepare** them in this world for judgment. He will **then** take away the church.” (J.N.D. Synopsis, vol. 3, page 93.)

While speaking of the assembly being bound up with these parables, we do not fail to distinguish between the kingdom and the Assembly. The fact is, the kingdom has been introduced into the world in the power of the Holy Spirit with a view to securing the Assembly. There could be no thought of good and bad in the Assembly, but this will come out more clearly as we follow our Lord’s teaching in the other parables.

Next we have the parable of the mustard tree, v. 31. This shows to us the kingdom of heaven becoming a great world power, though of quite a small

beginning. No doubt affiliation with the political powers has brought this about. So worldly has the professing Church become that the Devil and his angels are firmly established therein. The word of the Lord to Pergamos clearly states this: they were dwelling where Satan’s throne is (Rev. 2:13). For the full result of this, we have to turn to Rev. 18:2, “the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.” Such the sphere of the kingdom is rapidly becoming.

Then in the next parable of the woman hiding the leaven in the three measures of meal, we are given to see that along with external greatness there is internal corruption. No doubt the two go together. Comparing this with Zech. 5:5-11, where the “ephah” is the same measure as three measures (three seahs), idolatry is clearly intimated, and we believe will be seen in its full-blown character when apostate Christendom bows down to the image of the beast. The simile of the “woman” refers to the Babylonish character of things, and, running these similitudes together, it is the scarlet beast being ridden by the woman clothed in purple and scarlet. Such will be the end result of the tares being left after the wheat is safely in heaven. It is of interest to note that all these parables were given by our Lord publicly, outside of the house, and refer to the character of the kingdom as seen publicly in this world. He has much more of this instruction to pass on to them, but the rest He speaks to them inside the house; for if all this serious corrupt condition needed to be pointed out, there is yet much of a very blessed character to pass on, but only to those who have eyes to see and ears to hear. Explanations are given inside the house. We may be deeply thankful that we are permitted to hear our Lord explaining what He had said to the multitude, and adding for **their ears alone** another three parables, where all that is vital and precious to His heart is opened out to them. In this connection it is well to remind ourselves that our Lord is not only the “field” owner; he is also “the householder” (v. 27). It is not quite by surveying the “field” that we are taught about the mysteries of the kingdom, but rather by coming to the householder for an explanation. The result is that we ourselves will become householders (v. 52) and thus able to teach others also. But the rest we must leave for another time.

The first thing to note about the last three parables given in this chapter is they were uttered in the house; we can expect something now that is not so manifest in the world and can be understood only by those who have eyes to see and hearts to understand (v. 51). The first three (already considered briefly) show the pretentious character of the kingdom in this world as seen by all; these things being the direct outcome of the tares sown among the wheat. Now however, we are going to hear from the lips of our Lord that, in spite of all this false manifestation, there is that in the kingdom which is valuable to Him - no doubt the outcome of the wheat. Some have thought

that Israel, the church, and the nations are prefigured here, but had they considered that it is the “mysteries” of the kingdom in “this age” (v. 49) they would not have fallen into this mistake. Moreover, the treasure coming before the pearl would forbid this, for surely the “Assembly” will take precedence over Israel in the kingdom in the world to come. But it is not the kingdom in the world to come, but the kingdom of today which was set up when the Holy Spirit came down from heaven; in which neither Israel nor the nations **as such** have any part. This chapter teaches as clearly as words can teach that all that is spurious in this kingdom will be burned up, and all that is good will be in heaven (vv. 30, 43), a place where neither Israel nor the nations will be.

In the parable of the treasure hid in the field, quite a few things need consideration. First, it was hidden, then found, then hidden again; and only known to be there by the One Who bought the field. No stretch of the imagination could make this Israel on the earth, known to all the nations as the people of God. Have we any light about this hidden treasure? We certainly have, not in Ex. 19:5, but in this very chapter (v. 35). It was the secret of the Godhead which Christ had come to effect; a secret which had not been made known in this world before. Our own judgment is that this parable does go further than the Assembly and includes all the Old Testament saints who will compose the heavenly company of Heb. 12:22; called four and twenty elders in Rev. 4:4. Every instructed believer knows that the saints who have died in a former dispensation will be raised when the Lord comes for His Own, and we have long considered that the treasure will include them as forming the whole family who take up priesthood in heaven. We believe they will all “shine forth as the sun” (v. 43).

But the next parable, so well known to us, brings out the Assembly in her own distinctiveness as the “one pearl of great price” (v. 46). Should any doubt arise as to this, one passage in Rev. 21:21 - where every gate is of “one pearl” - would show her value and preciousness to the One who bought it. We have long understood that the twenty four elders are composed of all the heavenly company, and this we suggest is the answer to the treasure; but when we come to the “marriage of the Lamb” (ch.19:7), the Assembly is there seen in her own distinctiveness and the rest of the heavenly company called to have fellowship in the event. After this ceremony **the twenty-four elders are never seen again**. This, to our mind, is why we have these two parables: the treasure, all the heavenly company; the pearl, the Assembly which Christ loved and gave Himself for. It is worth considering that he found the treasure and bought the field to obtain it. By contrast, He was “seeking” goodly pearls and bought one, rather than the field; nor was He **seeking** treasure as He sought the pearl, facts we judge bear out what we have suggested as to their meaning.

Lastly we have the parable of the net, which clearly shews the means used to bring the kingdom into being. Again we are back to **men**, for it was through men the Lord sent out the gospel which has gathered the whole company called Christendom today, good and bad. We might notice that in the former parable of the tares and the wheat we have “men” brought in. So we have in the “net,” but with the “treasure” and the “pearl” no **men** are mentioned as taking part in this matter; this was all of Himself, and we may thank God that all He does Himself, is GOOD, and will abide for His eternal pleasure and our eternal blessing.

One other matter is worthy of note. It is the work of angels to deal with the bad (v. 49) and the work of men to deal with the good. Do not let us be found doing the work allotted to angels and waste our time trying to turn bad into good. Rather let us be active to secure and help that which is clearly good, and thus be found “fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God” (Col. 4:11). If then we have learned rightly from our Lord the bearing of these parables - and it is only in the house we can learn rightly - we shall be householders capable of bringing out of our treasures, “things new and old.” Not things new and future, but things new and old; those things of the kingdom of heaven in its mystery form (as we are in it today), yet securing all the saints who will be in heaven at the coming of our Lord. Need we add that His coming will bring this age to a close so far as we are concerned? After that, all connected with this age will be burned in the fire, ere we shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of our Father (v. 43).

In bringing to a close these papers on the kingdom, we come now to the third and most restricted aspect of it. We have already considered it in its widest aspect as taught in the prophecy of Daniel. Second, in its dispensational aspect as taught in the Gospel by Matthew. In this paper we have before us the vital and spiritual aspect of it as taught in the Gospel by John. In Jn. 3, it is very clearly stated in our Lord’s discourse to Nicodemus. We have noted in Daniel that, up to a point, men are allowed to act in willfulness, even though God is the ruler of the universe. Then, in Mt. 13 we have noted that tares are allowed to grow alongside of the wheat; children of the wicked are allowed to live within the bounds of the kingdom in testimony. In the kingdom as we now have it in Jn. 3, only living, spiritual believers who are born of God can ever enter into it. In the other three Gospels the kingdom as a sphere of profession is presented, and this may be true or false; but here in Jn. 3 only those born of God ever enter it, and children of the wicked one can never find entrance into it.

It is composed only of those who are born of God and who believe in the Son, receiving as a result Salvation and Eternal Life (v. 16).



Born of God has been mentioned in this Gospel before, in chapter 1:12-13. We read that two things marked those who received the Son: they “believed on His Name” (v. 12) and they were “born...of God” (v. 13). The verb used here “were born” is in the past tense, teaching us that they believed on His Name because they “were born” of God. The same order is found in chapter 3, where we are told that anyone who enters the kingdom is first born again (vv. 3-5), then they believe on the Son (v. 16). It is in this way living, spiritual believers are formed and brought into the kingdom.

There are four statements in this verse (v. 13); one is positive and three are negative. The one positive statement is: “which were born...of God.” The three negative are: “not of blood,” “nor of the will of the flesh,” and “nor of the will of man.” These three things are the component parts of our human birth into this world. “Blood” would refer to the nature of that birth, “flesh” to the agent, and “man” as the source. This is what our Lord refers to in chapter 3: “that which is born of flesh is flesh.” We learn that new birth is not the product of nature, nor brought about by the flesh, nor does it spring from man, but is altogether of God (“which were born...of God”). More details are given in chapter 3 as to the agents God does use to bring this about. In chapter 1, stress is laid upon what the new birth is **not**, while in chapter 3, stress is laid upon what it is and how it **is** brought about by God.

When Nicodemus came to our Lord seeking light, he was told at once that before anyone could see the kingdom of God he must be born again - anew, or from the outset. New birth was not needed to see a Man performing miracles; but to see the kingdom of God introduced in this spiritual way by Jesus, a completely new work was needed in the soul. Moreover, when he sought further light as to how these things could be, he was assured that this work could only be brought about by the word of God and by Spirit. These are agents which God uses to do a work, which not only opens the eyes of men, but begets within them a new moral and spiritual nature which fits them for entrance into the kingdom. Other servants are used to substantiate these things. James tells us in his epistle, “Of His Own will begat He us with the word of truth” (1:18). Peter also tells us, “Being born again...by the word of God” (1 Pet. 1:23). James has mostly in mind the source; Peter rather emphasizes the agents; and John adds a further point, what it is in its nature - spirit.

The result of this work is shown in its completion in Jn. 3:16. Those who are born anew by the word and the Spirit believe on the Son, and thus enter the kingdom where they obtain Salvation and Eternal Life through the Son. It may be verse 3 presents the beginning of this work and verse 5 its continuation, for we can hardly think that one who is born anew and sees the kingdom does not enter it. However, it is certain that only as one is born

again by the word and the Spirit can one enter; no other person will find a place in this kingdom who is not thus wrought upon by God. This is the true kingdom and all in it are of God: John does not present the kingdom dispensationally as a sphere of profession, be it true or false. As we have said, this is the kingdom in its vital and spiritual form; and only those born of God and having believed the gospel are sealed by the Spirit and have part therein. It is not the **sphere** of the kingdom but the kingdom itself which is in view in this chapter.

This is the aspect of the kingdom referred to in Rom. 14:17, “For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.” It is into this kingdom God has brought us by begetting us anew and giving us of His Spirit. If in the meanwhile we are linked **outwardly** with much that is spurious in the sphere of the kingdom of heaven, the fact remains that we are the true children of the kingdom, living and moving in the power of the Spirit of God. It is our privilege to walk subject to His will, manifesting clearly that we are such, being marked by righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

**G. Davison**

## SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES!

1. Which apostle is mentioned most in the Bible?
2. In what city were the believers first called Christian?
3. What is the musical instrument most referred to in the Bible?

## Exercise

*“Exercise thyself unto piety”*

### AMBITION

Have you ever been really thirsty and felt you must have a long drink? Well, what would your choice be? A good cup (or mug) of the best English tea, well brewed and hot – most refreshing! Or perhaps your choice would be a long draught of your favorite flavored drink, well cooled in the fridge. David felt like that when he was in hiding – a stirring story (2 Sam. 23:15). But more importantly, that is what the Lord looks for in the last church in Rev. 3, Laodicea. And what does He get? A lukewarm drink, neither hot nor cold, and He will spit it out of His mouth. Nauseating, isn't it?

**Let us look at a remedy for this condition– Ambition.**

**The Apostle Paul uses the word “AMBITION” three times in his epistles. Here are the Scripture references:**

1. “**Study** to be quiet, and to do your own business” (1 Thess. 4:11). Our business, needless to say, is the furtherance of the Lord's interests.
2. “We **labor**, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him” (2 Cor. 5:9).
3. “I have **strived** to preach the gospel, not where Christ is named” (Rom. 15:20).

J. N. Darby's translation of the underlined words:

1. **Seek earnestly**
2. **Zealous**
3. **Aiming**

These are alternative translations of the same Greek word.

**Now consider the outcome of two lives lived with opposite DRIVING FORCES.**

One was SAUL, a young man (Acts 7:58) who witnessed the triumphant martyrdom of Stephen, a moment which evidently left a deep mark upon him. His whole course in life was changed completely. You can read of his new ambitions. In very truth he could say, “Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord” (Phil. 3:8). The same thing happened to the Scottish reformer John Knox; he

witnessed, and was greatly affected by the martyrdom of George Wishart in St. Andrews (burned at the stake in 1546). And what an influence Knox had in Scotland; sadly almost completely forgotten today.

The other was KING SAUL, the first king of Israel; given to the children of Israel when they rejected God's rule under Samuel (1 Sam. 8:5). They desired a King to reign over them – “like all the nations.” What a lowering of the standard! And the Lord gave them King Saul.

Now look at the END of these two men:

**PAUL** - “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto them also that love His appearing” (2 Tim. 4:7).

**SAUL** - “Behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly” (1 Sam. 26:21).

**Our beloved Lord** does pay good wages:

- 10 cities – Lk. 19:17
- 5 cities – Lk. 19:19
- Many things – Mt. 25:21, 23

And much more, of which we cannot now speak particularly.

**Although we have emphasized the benefits of a right choice we would fail in our duty if we did not also warn of the serious consequences of a wrong choice. The word of God reads, “If anyone build upon this foundation” (that is, our Lord Jesus Christ) which means if you are converted; if you build “wood, hay, and stubble,” if you spend your time in wrong teaching and on your own pleasure, it shall be revealed in fire, and if that work is consumed both you and I will suffer loss. We shall be saved but “so as by fire” (1 Cor. 3:12-15). You will understand therefore why we appeal to you to make the right choice.**

The Lord graciously grant that you carefully consider the matter, and the results, and also make the right choice! The Lord bless you each and all.

**D.W. Paterson**

## REST

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

### "BE OF GOOD CHEER"

The spirit of God tells us that "in the last days perilous times shall come" (2 Tim. 4:1). The word translated "perilous" is *chalpos*, and the dictionary gives the meaning as: "hard; hard to do, or deal with; difficult; hard to bear; painful; grievous; harsh; fierce; savage." Does not this word very accurately describe the condition of our present day? As we look around us we might well be discouraged, cast down, filled with fears and forebodings.

**But if one little Greek word can so accurately describe the spirit of the present day, there is another little Greek word that can heal the wounds of fear and sorrow and discouragement caused by all that is about us. That little word is *Tharseo*, or as our Lord loved to use it, *Tharsei*, for it is a favorite of our blessed Lord; indeed with one exception it is reserved entirely for His use. He used it time and again when He was on earth, both to man and woman; and He used it once again after His return to the Father in the Glory. Eight times we find it in the Greek New Testament. We find it in every Gospel, and in the Acts of the Apostles; and if I mistake not, He whispers it to His tried saints even in the present day. Sure I am that you and I may take it for ourselves.**

My father often had to use a seal in his work, and he loved this word so much that he had the Greek letters of it engraved on the seal he always used, so that he might ever be reminded of its message. As a little child I loved to watch the hot, red sealing wax, as he sealed his important letters; and when a little older, loved to trace out the strange Greek letters, which he told me meant:

### **"CHEER UP"**

So this word was my introduction to the Greek New Testament. Do you wonder I love it?

The word has been translated: "Be of Good Cheer" or "Be of Good Comfort," as we generally find it in the Authorized Version of our Bible; but others prefer, "Be of Good Courage," or "Be Confident!" or "Take Heart!" or (as I love it best), "CHEER UP!" But it has the meaning of all these.

**The first time we find it in the New Testament is in Mt. 9:2**, where He says to the man sick of the palsy, "Son be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." **We find it next in the 22<sup>nd</sup> verse of the same chapter.** He is using it here to a woman; and that is not by accident. The Lord would have us each - man or woman, girl or boy - learn this word for our very own selves. Here He says, "Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole."

**We find it for the third time in this same Gospel. (I think Matthew loved this word). See chapter 14:27.** It was a dark, stormy night, and the disciples were far out on the sea, and the wind was contrary, and for hours they had been battling with the wind and waves. It is at such a time this word sounds the sweetest. The disciples were toiling in rowing. They were alone, without their Lord in the boat. But unknown to them, He had been watching them in their toil and fear, though they had no idea He was doing so. Then they saw a strange sight. Someone walking on the water, and coming near to them. They were troubled and cried out with fear. So would you and I, had we been in their place. Then straightway, Jesus spoke to them. What did He say? "*THARSEITE!*" "Cheer Up! It is I; be not afraid!" Or, as the old Wycliffe translation so beautifully puts it: "I am nyl ye dread."

**We find it for the fourth time in the same story, this time told by Mark (6:50). We find it next in Mk. 10:40, spoken to the blind beggar Bartimaeus when he cried to the Lord for mercy.** Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called; and they call the blind man, saying unto him, "Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee." This is the only time in the New Testament when this word is not spoken by the Lord Himself; but used in directing a needy one to Him.

**Then we find it in Lk. 8:48; but this time the reading is doubtful. It is the same story we saw in Mt. 9:22. Jn. 16:33 is the last recorded time our Lord uses it on earth, and it seems to be wonderfully fitted as a parting message to us all, as He prepared to leave this world and return to His Father. "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." What a word for us today! So, be of good comfort! Be of good cheer! Cheer up! The Lord says it! "I have overcome the world." This is His message to you, to me, for today.**

**The last time we hear it in the New Testament is in Acts 23:11.** Paul had used a rather clever device of his own to divide the Jewish council, setting the Pharisees and the Sadducees against each other. In Acts 24:21 he seems to confess that he had been wrong in doing this. We can well suppose that the night following, lying there in the Roman prison, too sad and discouraged to sleep, Paul was deeply regretting what he felt had been a dishonour to the worthy Name by which he was called. Then the Lord Himself comes and stands by him. He does not call to him out of Heaven. He

does not use a vision, or send an angel to carry His message. No! He Himself comes right down into that prison, and stands by His grief-stricken servant; not to upbraid him: no, indeed! But to say once again that well known and well loved word: “*Tharsei!*” “Cheer Up, Paul!” I think that transformed the dungeon into Heaven itself.

**It may be that you and I are at times sad, discouraged, cast down, filled with fears and dread: perhaps we have failed, and dishonoured the One we love. It may well be that at such a time we will hear His voice, the voice His own sheep know so well, and in tones of love, of hope, of confidence, we will hear Him call our name (for He calleth His own sheep by name) and we will hear Him say:**

### **THARSEI! ... CHEER UP**

“Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,  
The clouds ye so much dread  
Are big with mercies, and will break  
In blessings on your head.”

**G.C.Willis**

### **ANSWERS TO SCRIPTURES SEARCH!**

1. Paul mentioned 185 times
2. Antioch of Syria (Acts 11:26)
3. The Trumpet, referred to over 100 times

### **YA-LUEN**

“How many children here go to the foreigner’s Sunday School?” Thirty-eight pairs of Chinese hands were raised. The Communist men were very angry when they saw these Chinese children raise their hands.

“Foolish children!” said the men. “You are being taught lies. They teach you to pray for your food, and then thank God for it when you receive it. What ignorance! It is man’s hard work that provides his needs. Do not continue to go to Sunday School. If you do you will be punished!”

Most of the children promised the men that they would not go to Sunday School again. But one boy, Ya-Luen, aged nine, was from a Christian home and he wanted to let his light shine for Jesus. He stood bravely alone in the face of the increasing anger of the threatening enemies of the Lord and His people. At last the men angrily thrust Ya-Luen into a dark room and locked the door behind him, leaving him there for the night, without his evening meal. “Pray if you want to!” they laughed. “See if your Jesus will feed you there!”

Ya-Luen was a normal little boy, and he had looked forward to his supper, but the Lord took away all sense of hunger. He felt as though he had just finished eating. As he curled up on the floor to sleep the darkness seemed warm and friendly about him. He wasn’t alone. The presence of the Lord Jesus was more real than he had ever experienced before. With real comfort in his heart he curled up on the floor and was soon sound asleep.

“Now, boys and girls,” called the cruel men the next morning, “we’re going to open the door and see one frightened little boy! He won’t be so anxious to be a follower of Jesus after this!”

Everyone fully expected to see a terrified, tear-stricken face; and the bad men wanted this to be a lesson to all the children. But they were completely unprepared for the sight of the little boy who stepped out with his face shining like a sunbeam.

“I slept so well, for I could feel the Lord Jesus was there taking care of me.” Ya-Luen told the men happily. “And I still feel full – as if I just had a big meal of chicken with my rice!”

As the other children listened to Ya-Luen’s testimony they became brave enough to follow his example and let their lights shine for the Lord also. Even adults, who later escaped over into Burma, told how Ya-Luen’s testimony had helped them to bravely stand in the face of cruel persecution.

Pray for many in such places of testing today, and for ourselves also, should we be tempted to deny our Lord to please men. Pray that we will stand true to Him, and like Ya-Luen, obey God rather than man at any cost.

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**Q:** *Can you explain John 6:53, “Except ye eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood ye have no life in you?” Is this a reference to the Lord’s Supper?*

**A:** If we read the context of this quotation (vv. 50-58), we find that the Lord speaks seven times of eating Himself or of His flesh as the living bread, and three times of drinking His blood. The thought is to “take into oneself,” to appropriate, to make it my own; and this is done by faith. As I take in the Lord (eat) I make Him mine, He becomes food and drink for my body. The body is strengthened – it has life, and this life is eternal (v. 54). It is good to notice that the word “eat” in verses 51 and 53 is better translated “shall have eaten” (J. N. Darby translation); that is a once-for-ever eating, and life is the result. But then in the following verses it is “eat,” a continual and regular appropriating. So, “I have eaten the flesh,” that is, I have accepted the Lord Jesus as my Savior and taken Him as Lord into my being, for the obtaining of life; and now in the habitual “eating Him” I sustain that life, here in this world: “The just shall *live* by faith” (Gal. 3:11). In order to keep my Christian life healthy I must keep it fed, and this is done by “eating the Lord Jesus,” that is reading His word and learning of Him, meditating upon Him and so taking Him into my being. Notice that this leads to the thought of resurrection (v. 54) and the world to come (v. 58). Is it not wonderful to know that because the Lord Jesus is living now at God’s right hand, I have life; and that life is the same life He had when here in this world, which He has now in the heights of glory, and which I will display in the day of coming glory when He will reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

By comparison, eating the Lord’s Supper has rather the thought of remembering Him in His absence, until He come, and introduces the thought of public testimony. “This is my body, given for you,” brings in the assembly; it is a collective act, whilst eating of His flesh is individual.

**J.A.Pickering**

## PATIENCE OF HOPE

O Jesus, precious Savior, oh when wilt thou return?  
Our hearts, with woe familiar, to thee our Master turn.  
Our woe is Thine, Lord Jesus; our joy is in Thy love;  
But woe and joy all lead us to Thee in heaven above.

We ponder the long story of this world’s mournful ways;  
We think on holy glory, with Thee, through endless days.  
We see God’s gracious order all spoiled by man below  
See all around disorder; meek hearts beset with woe.

Where’er we ope’ the pages, in which – Thy wondrous Word –  
Man’s path through varied ages is given us to record,  
Of failure, ruin, and sorrow the story still we find;  
God’s love but brings the morrow of evil in mankind.

To Thee we look, Lord Jesus, to Thee whose love we know;  
We wait the power that frees us from bondage, sin and woe.  
We look for Thine appearing, Thy presence here to bless;  
We greet the day that’s nearing, when all this woe shall cease.

But oh, for us blest Savior, how brighter far the lot,  
With Thee to be forever, where evil enters not!  
To see Thee, who’st so loved us, then face to face above,  
Whose grace at first had moved us to taste and know thy love!

With Thee, O Lord, forever, our souls shall be content;  
Nor act nor thought, shall ever; full joy with Thee prevent.  
Thy Father’s perfect favour our dwelling-place shall be ;  
And all His glory ever shines forth on Thee and us.

Oh, come then soon Lord Jesus; in patience still we wait,  
Await the power that frees us - our longed-for heavenly seat!

**J. N. Darby**

## IT WORKS

A Christian student at a prestigious college met a student in his advanced Math class who scoffed at the idea of anyone putting faith in the Bible. He said, “A good many books of the Bible have no name of the writers attached to them. How can you have any confidence in a book whose authorship is so uncertain, and the subject of so much debate?”

“Who wrote the multiplication table?” asked the Christian. “I don’t know,” replied his classmate. “What a person you are,” exclaimed the Christian student, “you believe it and use it, and yet don’t know who the author was.”

The infidel was hard put to find a reply. He recognized his difficulty, but thinking he saw a way out, he said,

“But the multiplication table works.”

“Doubtless,” replied the Christian student, “and so does the Bible. It works.” It is the Word of God, it is the living Word. It has the answers to man’s questions and the solution for his problems. The author of it is God the Holy Spirit. It is light for the path and food for the soul, try it and see for your self. Do not take my word for it, read it and you shall see what I mean!

How true this is as tens of thousands, nay millions of true Christians all over the world and down through the centuries, have found out. “The Gospel...is the POWER of God unto salvation to every one that believeth” (Rom. 1:16). Everyone, without exception, who has really trusted the Savior the Lord Jesus Christ, can testify to the truth of this. **It works.**

“Thy Word is truth” John 17:17b