



***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,

“Her Nazarites were purer than snow” (Lamentations 4:7).

A question was asked once; how can a young Christian live godly in today's ungodly world? One thing is certain that Satan will use every art and device he can command against a Nazarite. If the Christians mingle with the ways of the world—forgetting their heavenly calling—Satan will leave them alone. For in that condition, as he well knows, they are worthless for God's service and testimony. But if they are awakened to the absoluteness of the Lord Jesus' claims, and walk in the Spirit as well as live in the Spirit, they will soon discover that they will have to encounter the snares of the enemy. It is on this account that the history of Samson is very instructive, teaching us first that the power of God is with the one who is separated unto Him; and second, showing us the character of the temptations to which he is in danger. It is therefore profitable to consider these, that we may be forewarned of the “hidden rocks” that lie in the Christian's course. Now the strength of the Nazarite can only be maintained by walking in communion with God, and in obedience to His word. Samson lost both of these conditions by allowing himself to be governed by the sight of his eyes and by the sway of his natural feelings. The surest sign of backsliding is ignorance of one's own condition, for the backslider becomes gradually habituated to the loss of the enjoyment of the Lord's presence, leaving him helpless in the hands of his enemies. May the Lord keep us near to Himself, in the secret of His own presence, and make us ever watchful against any departure from the way of holiness, that in the constant practice of self-judgment, we may abide always in communion with Him, and in obedience to His word. We need to be constantly in the presence of God, and to cry with the Psalmist, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psalm 139:23).

May the Lord use this issue to help you to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ and may you reflect Him in your life and walk. Thank you for your e-mails and notes of encouragement. We love hearing from all of you. Please keep praying for the Lord's blessing on Toward the Mark.

Yours in our soon-coming Lord,

Emil S. Nashed

Please send your questions and comments to:

Toward The Mark
c/o Wayne Christian Assembly
60 Smith Lane
Wayne, NJ 07470-5354
Attention: Emil S. Nashed

www.towardthemark.org

TOWARD THE MARK

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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"

THE OLD NATURE AND THE NEW

A young man repented to God, believed the Gospel, and knew his sins forgiven. He was so joyful day and night and so full of praise to God for His mercy, that he could scarcely eat or sleep. After a time—genuinely converted to God though he was—he began to discover *in himself* certain things which greatly troubled him. He had supposed that in being born again his stony heart would be changed, and his sinful desires taken away for ever. But he still found within him a tendency towards wrong things. He was in downright earnest, and sought by all means in his power to crush the evil out and to repress these bad tendencies. Alas! the more he tried, the more unhappy he became. When he wanted to do good, evil was present with him. Then came the suggestion, "Ah, you were never *truly* converted, it was all excitement. Give it up." He consulted his minister, who advised him to "strive harder, labour more for Christ, and give more to support His cause." He did this but it did not lessen his misery. He was a mystery to himself and as wretched now as he was happy before. He could not understand why these evil desires should be present with him when he wanted to go on right and keep the Ten Commandments to the letter.

Whilst passing through this experience an explanation of Romans 7 resulted in the removal of his difficulties, and the commencement of a new phase in his spiritual history. Should any reader be passing through a similar experience, may we ask him to turn to that chapter? It contains thirty-three "I's." Whenever a man uses a number of "I's," we may be sure he is occupied with himself. The man described there earnestly desired to keep the law, which is "holy, and just, and good," but in seeking to do so he learned there was something in him,

which was the opposite of holy, just, and good. He found first of all that he had *good desires but no power to carry them out, and evil desires which were ever present with him and which he could not overcome*. Then he discovered that these evil desires came from an *evil nature called "sin" and the good desires from a new nature called the "inward man."* Then by bitter experience he was compelled to come to this sad conclusion, that strive as he may he could neither eradicate nor improve the evil nature. The case was hopeless.

Have you made this discovery? Have you found your utter powerlessness to eradicate or improve the evil nature you possess? Do you see that it is so incurably bad that you can neither alter nor improve it? When you have learned this lesson you will cease saying, "I will be different today and do better than I did yesterday." You will cease to look for goodness where God says there is none. You will say, "In me—that is *in my flesh*—dwells no good thing. After doing my best, after all my striving, trying, resolving, I am forced to confess I cannot keep God's holy law. Oh, wretched man that I am, *who shall deliver me?*" Thank God there is a Deliverer

We must travel onward to the eighth chapter to learn God's way of deliverance. The One who has delivered us from our *sins* by bearing the judgment due to them is the One by whom we get victory over indwelling *sin*. How? "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus *hath made me free* from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin [by a sacrifice for sin], *condemned sin* in the flesh." This means that the old evil nature called "flesh" and "sin" was so bad that when Christ was crucified it was utterly condemned. Cease then to look for any good from it. Paul says, "I am crucified with Christ" (Galatians 2:20). And you, too, must reckon yourself to have died with Christ.

Your language should be:

“Jesus died, and I died *with Him*,
Buried in His grave I lay.”

In the end of Romans 7 we find a man thanking God he had found a Deliverer. For this you must look outside yourself, straight up to a glorified Man who is seated on the throne of the Majesty on high. His name is Jesus. Tell me, is He good enough? “Oh, yes,” you say, “there is everything in Him to delight the heart of God. He is the very opposite of me: He always did those things that pleased God.” Now, let me ask you, if you were perfectly sure that all the goodness treasured up in Him was *now made yours* would you give up yours and rest in Him alone?

That is how the man in Romans 7 got free. He turned away from his “wretched” self, and he began thanking God that in Jesus Christ the Lord he had found a Deliverer. He had come to a sober and right judgment as to self. He had learned to trace everything to its source. His *will* was on the side of the good, and if evil was there he could say, “It is no more *I* that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me” (Romans 7:17). If he serves God’s law, it is with the mind or “inward man.” He had learned to look outside self for power, and that whilst the new nature is powerless, of and in itself, to keep the law, power was vested in Christ for him to draw upon.

Do not imagine that you cannot get out of the wretched condition described in Romans 7. When you have experimentally learned the lesson you will be able to say, “I have learned that I possess two distinctly opposed natures. Before I was converted I had only one, my *old self*, which God calls ‘sin.’ Sinning is doing what *I like* without reference to God. That sums up my unconverted days. Since I was converted I have an entirely new nature called the ‘inward man.’ This has holy desires, but no power in itself to carry them out, I also see that these natures cannot mingle. I cannot *alter* the bad one, or *get rid of it*. Sin has its dwelling place in my flesh, and it will

dwell there until my natural death. I cannot evict it, nor can I reach a point where I can say I have no sin, for 1 John 1:8 says that ‘if we say we have no sin we deceive *ourselves*’ (not God, or other people). I have, however, learned that God has condemned sin in the cross of Christ and that He looks upon me as having died with Christ, so that I am to reckon myself as dead indeed unto sin, and count upon Him as a daily Saviour to care for me, support me, and give me the victory.”

The lessons God would teach you are these:

In you, that is in your flesh, there is no *good*.

All *good* is in Christ.

All the good in Christ Jesus is *yours* (1 Corinthians 1:30–31).

There is no power *in you*.

All *power* is in Christ.

All Christ’s power is *at your disposal* (Philippians 4:13).

Let me add another word. A clear conception of the *doctrine* of deliverance from this state is not exactly the same as an experimental knowledge of it. If you would know this practically you must walk in the Spirit: reckon yourself dead indeed unto sin; do not parley or dally with temptation, but look immediately to Christ.

Distrust yourself wholly. Trust Christ fully for power to walk each moment. Yield yourself to God. Reckon yourself dead indeed to sin. Live by the faith of the Son of God. If you are disappointed in yourself, *God is not*. He knew the worst about you before He met you in grace. Your worst has been provided for in God’s *best*. *Christ is God’s best*. Look to Him, and you too shall be able to thank God for deliverance; but this looking must be a continuous act. Do not ignore the evil in you, look ever, look always to Christ, reckoning yourself dead indeed unto sin and alive unto God in Christ Jesus. He alone can deliver you from the power of indwelling sin, but *He can and will*.

H. Nunnerley

MEAT

"Sanctify them by the truth"

THE SEVENTY WEEKS OF DANIEL

Daniel 9:24–27

This is a most outstanding and unique prophecy in the Bible—*unique*, because it does not come from the pen of an inspired writer, but from the mouth of the angel Gabriel; *unique* because it concerns a great stretch of time; *unique* because it points to an exact date. Indeed it stands in vivid contrast to the second coming of our Lord, of which we are told no man, neither the angels, nor the Son, know the day and hour when it will occur, whilst Gabriel's prophecy tells us the time when the Lord Jesus should die—"be cut off, but not for Himself" (Daniel 9:26).

It is no wonder that higher critics and atheists, generally unconverted men, should strive to prove that the book of Daniel was written after the events. But only the blind, and often the wilfully blind, can be deceived by their sophistries; Sir Robert Anderson has replied vigorously, and pulverised their attack in his book, bearing the felicitous title, "*Daniel in the Critics Den*." Certainly Daniel had the best of it in the lion's den in his day, and his critics were devoured, when they were thrown into the den into which their devilish machinations had thrown Daniel. It reminds us of another incident occurring about that time, when Haman erected gallows, fifty cubits high, on which to hang Mordecai, who had excited his anger, but in result was hanged on it himself.

This notable prophecy of Gabriel's tells us when the prophecy dates from, "the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem" (Daniel 9:25). Here we have a date which we are able to fix with certainty. This is stated in Nehemiah 2:1 as occurring in the month Nisan, corresponding to our April/May, in the 20th year of King Artaxerxes. Then we have indicated the

date of the years of King Artaxerxes. Then we have indicated the date when Messiah should be cut off, but not for Himself, after sixty nine weeks from the date of the commandment to rebuild the city.

It is evident the seventy weeks are not literal weeks when one considers all that is to happen within them, "to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy" (v. 24). Also we have one striking instance in Scripture where a day stands for a year. See Ezekiel 4:5–6: "I have appointed thee each day for a year."

Treating Gabriel's prophecy in this way, we find sixty-nine weeks have to elapse between the building of the wall in Jerusalem and the death of our Lord. Counting a year for a day, 69 weeks = 483 years. The prophetic year is made up of 360 days, so 483 years x 360 = 173,880 days, and that answers to the 10th day of the month Nisan in the 18th year of Tiberius Caesar, the Roman Emperor, and is the very day when our Lord rode into Jerusalem on an ass's colt, fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9.

So it was possible for a godly Jew to anticipate the approximate time when our Lord should be born, and still more accurately when He should die. Isaiah 8 indicates His dying in early years when the question is asked, "Who shall declare His generation? for He was cut off out of the land of the living"; and in Psalm 102:24 in the cry, "O My God, take Me not away in the midst of My days." We know that the riding into Jerusalem occurred very few days before our Lord's death by crucifixion.

This accounts for sixty-nine out of the seventy weeks of Gabriel's prophecy. Why should the seventy weeks be broken up into sixty-nine weeks and then the seventieth week by itself?

Let us follow up the prophecy, and see what it tells us. It was under the Roman power that our Lord was crucified. So the

prophecy tells us “the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.” When Jerusalem should be destroyed the prince should not have arrived, but it should be his people, that is the Roman people, who would do this.

Our Lord Himself most vividly prophesied the same event, which was to be God’s judgment on His ancient people for the cutting off of their Messiah, the rejection of His beloved Son. This is very significantly set forth in our Lord’s parable of the householder and his winepress, how the husbandmen stoning and killing his servants, he last of all sent his son, saying, “They will reverence my son,” and how when that occurred “they caught him and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him,” and how nothing was left but to “miserably destroy those wicked men,” and “let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen.” This was all fulfilled when Titus, the son of the Emperor Vespasian (A.D. 70), marched against Jerusalem, besieged it, destroying “the city and the sanctuary” and in time scattering the residue of the Jews among the nations.

But according to Daniel 9:27 we have to wait for the advent of “the prince that shall come.” He is to “confirm the covenant for one week,” that is seven years, and in the midst of the week break his covenant with the Jews, treat it as “a scrap of paper,” causing the sacrifice to cease, and setting up “the abomination of desolation” in the Temple to which our Lord refers in Matthew 24:15 as “spoken of by Daniel the prophet.” When that takes place the “great tribulation,” the time of Jacob’s trouble (Jeremiah 30:7) will occur.

So the angel Gabriel gives us, *firstly*, the start of the seventy weeks, the going forth of the commandment to build the wall of Jerusalem; *secondly* the termination of the sixty-nine weeks as the time of the crucifixion of our Lord; *thirdly*, the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple (A.D. 70); *fourthly*, the beginning of the 70th week, that is, when the head of the revived Roman Empire will make a treaty with the Jew in the land, with the Antichrist, the second beast of the revelation—the first being

the head of the Revived Roman Empire; *fifthly*, the breaking of this treaty, and the outbreak of the Great Tribulation, bringing things in the end, when our Lord shall appear, putting down all opposition; and, *sixthly*, setting up His glorious Kingdom on the earth.

Finally we have often heard it said there must be at the most seven years between the Rapture of the saints, and the Appearing—the coming of the Lord *for* His people, and His coming *with* them to set up His Kingdom on earth. This, however, if dogmatically stated, rests on a misunderstanding of Gabriel’s prophecy. The prophecy tells us that the last “week,” ending in the coming of the Lord to reign upon the earth, will not begin till the covenant is made between the Head of the Roman Empire and the Jews in the land. Have we any light when this will take place? We read in Revelation 16:16 that the gathering together in view of the battle of Armageddon will take place under the sixth vial—the description of which is given in Revelation 19:11–21. So we gather that the seven seals, providential judgment on the earth, must first run their course, and the most of the trumpets and vials, for it is only when we come to the sixth trumpet that we find the preparation for a great battle, the number of the horsemen being the staggering number of 200,000,000; and in the sixth vial when “the way of the Kings of the east might be prepared.”

When the predicted covenant for seven years is made, then and not till then will the godly Jew be able to know how long it will be before the longed for deliverance will arrive, though even then the day and hour will not be known.

A.J. Pollock

Search the Scriptures!

1. Who was the first prophet mentioned in the Bible?
2. Who built a temple for Baal in Samaria?
3. What high priest was called by Paul a “whitewashed wall”?

EXERCISE

"Exercise thyself unto piety"

CHRISTIAN AMBITION

The three short Scriptures to which I want to draw your attention are as follows: 2 Corinthians 5:9, 1 Thessalonians 4:10–11, Romans 15:20.

The translators of the Authorized Version for some reason used three different words, "labour," "study," "strived," to translate one word which occurs in the Greek of each of these passages. We are told that there is also in English one word which they might have used, but did not, the word "ambition."

It is to that one word that I desire to call attention, and to emphasize in the three places where it occurs—the only three in the New Testament, I believe. Let us read the verses, supplying the word referred to.

"Wherefore *we are ambitious*, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of [acceptable to] Him."

"We beseech you...that *ye be ambitious* to be quiet, and to do your own business."

"Yea, *so have I been ambitious* to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation."

If these are matters the apostle was anxious about as to himself and others, it goes without saying they are important for us.

An ambitious man is usually a self-seeking man, whether for power or position, for wealth or fame. Self lies at the bottom of all his endeavours. Everything is looked at in the light of his objective, and is made to bend towards attaining it. But from the above Scriptures we can see that there is an ambition which may enter the Christian life, giving definite purpose and aim to it, without these self-seeking features.

A man of the world without ambition lives a purposeless and aimless life, and even by his fellows is not appreciated. The apostle Paul lived no such life, nor did he desire that others should. Hear him say, in Philippians 3, "One *thing* I do," for like an athlete he was forgetting the things behind and stretching forward to reach the goal. Yet it is not enough to have desires for we read, "The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat" (Proverbs 13:4). We must have energy to pursue and attain what we desire.

The Christian life is no mere drifting with wind and tide, but rather sailing against them. What are we set for? The great determining factor in reaching our object is not so much the strength of the storm as *the set of the sails*.

Our blessed Lord was wholly set for the will of God, and we know the strength of the winds that blew to drive Him from His course. It was as though all the winds of woe escaped from their caverns and rushed to hinder Him. But, "Thy will *be done*,"—cost what it may—was His answer to it all. Such was the lovely devotion of that lowly life of purpose. Let us then remember that it is not our environment but our purpose that will determine our course.

Now consider the first of our Scriptures. The apostle's ambition was as to his personal state, and that in relation to the Lord. Above everything he desired to be *personally* agreeable or well-pleasing to the Lord. This was not exactly his service, though it would give colour to it. It was not what he wished to be under the public eye but rather under the eye of Christ. Under the public eye the church in Ephesus appeared to be a witness for Christ and to show great energy in service; but under His eye they were a company of backsliders. The Lord had this against them—their love for Him was not what it used to be! Was this being agreeable to Him? It grieved Him sorely, and indicated a fall, from which there was no way of recovery save repentance.

How do *we* stand in regard to this very thing? It would seem that the apostle is anxious to show us that our spiritual state is far more important to the Lord than the amount of our service. It is all too easy to camouflage a low spiritual and moral state by greater activity in service, or by adopting what appear to be lofty ideals.

There is a decided sidelight thrown on this point by that verse in Mark 3, which tells us how the Lord chose the twelve to be “with Him” before He sent them forth to preach. It is *with Him* that we get our spiritual state affected and toned up; and a thing that I have been made to feel for myself is that high pressure work in the service of the Lord is not necessarily the best thing for the soul.

Let us make it our ambition to be well-pleasing to God. Under the law there was not only the meat offering (Leviticus 2), but also the new meat offering (Leviticus 23:16–17). The former typified what Christ was personally to God, a savour of delight—not His work but His life of perfect fragrance. The latter typified His people, presented in the power of the Holy Ghost. It is our privilege to form a part of that, and to reflect some of those moral excellencies that shone so brightly in Him. This, again I say, is not service, though it would colour and give character to it.

In the second Scripture Paul speaks of another ambition, for which he would like to see young converts in Thessalonica distinguished: this not exactly in relation to themselves but their testimony towards them that are without. They were to abound in love one for the other, and pursue a quiet, godly, unobtrusive life in their daily business. This would stand out in sharp contrast to the men of the world who were seeking to overreach each other rather than love each other, and to be constantly in the limelight, as people say. Here he puts an honour upon those who glorify God amid the discipline of everyday business life.

Grace teaches us how to do this, as the apostle tells us in Titus 2. To live “soberly,” in ourselves, “righteously,” in regard to

others, “godly,” piously in relation to God, will take the hum-drum monotony out of life, and cause us to be approved even of men (see Romans 14:18). Their Christianity was to be seen in its work-a-day clothes—not in *books* but in *boots*.

Others were showing a bad testimony in these things and, sad to say, were finding an occasion for it in the sweet hope of the Gospel—the coming of the Lord. They were not working at all and thus they became busy in Satan’s employ, busybodies in other men’s matters. To be doing nothing in the way of work is always bad for spirit, soul, and body. He exhorts them to a steady, quiet, close walk with God, and to let it be *their ambition*.

When He exhorts them to be *quiet*, he does not mean them to be dumb or silent. It is quiet in contrast to ostentation, feverish bustle, and excitement. You don’t need to draw attention to yourself, and yet you can speak of the Lord while doing your own business, thus showing a light in the midst of darkness, “They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word” (Acts 8:4). They just went “gossiping” the Word; keep it to themselves, they could not. Don’t let your business hide your light. Nor is it necessary to thrust it in people’s faces. Just let it shine!

In the third Scripture Paul tells us of his ambition in connection with his service. He did not wish to merely hold evangelical views, but to be evangelistic *practically*. His ambition was not only to have evangelical sympathies but to be aggressively evangelistic in spreading the truth of the Gospel, where he would not be building on any other man’s foundation.

You may say, I suppose you are now speaking in favour of missionary work. Yes, but missionary work has not the limit which we often put upon it. More correctly, we speak of it as evangelizing. Doubtless the apostle had before him what we call missionary work among the unevangelized masses of heathen; and may God multiply a thousandfold those who have the

ambition to visit such places, where there is no fear of building on any other man's work.

But let me plead and pray for another form of the same ambition, to be found in fields a little nearer home. The pioneering work is as much needed today in where we live and work as it is needed anywhere; for there are tens of thousands of baptized pagans to be found, as there are unbaptized pagans in the dark places of the earth. What are the congregations that enter the churches today listening to? Anything but the Gospel in the vast majority of cases.

The apostle Paul used to plant assemblies; that is, he preached the gospel and taught the believers to gather together in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then Apollos would sometimes come along and water what he had sown, and God gave the increase.

Has this died out? And if not, could we say that we are conspicuous for it? Has it been one of the ambitions of our lives? *Of course* difficulties will present themselves but faith sees an opportunity in a difficulty, whereas indolence will seek an opportunity to escape the difficulty.

What I would plead for then, and what I am sure the Lord would approve of, is that the Christian young people get it as the burden of their hearts to go forth with the gospel. Let them carry it to towns, schools and universities enshrouded in darkness, while in many cases boasting in their light and intelligence, but poisoned with the evil of modernism. Let them not wait so much for invitations here and there from other builders, who may indeed have more zeal and courage than themselves, and yet present them with none too good a foundation on which to build.

I would plead too for whole-hearted young men, who will turn their business journeys into opportunities for reaching the people with the Word. How blessed we shall be if we make each ambition of the three our own!

A. Cutting

REST

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

HE IS ABLE

"But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, **save** me" (Matthew 14:30).

- "Wherefore he is able also to **save** them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25).

"And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; **help** thou mine unbelief" Mark 9:24).

- "For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to **succour (help)** them that are tempted" (Hebrews 2:18).

"When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, **he groaned in the spirit**, and was troubled, And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. **Jesus wept**" (John 11:33–35.)

- "For we have not an high priest which cannot be **touched (sympathies)** with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as [we are, yet] without sin" (Hebrews 4:15).
- "**Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need**" (Hebrews 4:16).

Jeffrey Brett

THE SEEING EYE!

“The hearing ear and the seeing eye, the Lord has made them both” (Proverbs 20:12).

The Bible tells us that God’s eternal power and divine nature are clearly seen in the things that He has made. One of the most obvious displays of His creative power is the human eye.

Even Charles Darwin conceded that “to suppose that the eye, with all its inimitable contrivances for adjusting the focus to different distances, for admitting different amounts of light, and for the correction of spherical and chromatic aberration, could have been formed by natural selection, seems, I freely confess, absurd in the highest possible degree.”

Nonetheless, having abandoned his Christianity, Darwin was obliged to appeal to the “absurd” to account for the origin of the eye by random change and natural selection.

The Eye is a Living Camera

The eye is essentially a living video camera of extraordinary sensitivity. Like any good manmade camera, the eye has a black interior to prevent light scattering, and an automatically focusing lens and adjustable diaphragm to control the light. And like the most sophisticated modern digital cameras, the eye has a light-sensitive layer (the retina) that can adjust to a wide range of brightness.

But unlike any camera made by man, the retina can automatically change its sensitivity to brightness over a range of ten billion to one! The retina’s light-sensitive cells (photoreceptors) can perceive a range of light, from bright sunlit snow to a single photon (the smallest unit of light). The eye also has the amazing ability to assemble and repair itself, unlike manmade cameras.

Looking Out a “Window”

It is said that a camera is no better than its lens. How good is the lens of the human eye?

Actually, the human eye has two excellent lenses—the cornea and the lens proper. During our development in the womb, embryonic skin over the developing eye turns into a clear window. To be so crystal clear, this special type of skin lacks the blood vessels, hair, and glands in most other skin, though it contains many nerves (and is highly sensitive to touch).

Although we tend to think of the cornea as a protective window rather than a lens, it really functions as a lens. In fact, the cornea is about four times more powerful in bringing light to focus on our retina than the lens itself.

The “Rubber” Lens

The lens proper, like the cornea, is also derived from embryonic skin and is marvelously transparent. Unlike the fixed cornea, however, the lens can change its focus. This automatic focusing function allows us to quickly focus on any object we look at. Most cameras focus by physically moving their hard lenses, but the lens of the eye is flexible like rubber and can quickly focus by changing its shape.

Since man’s fall into sin, much of God’s original creation is now less than perfect, and so the lens loses flexibility with age, reducing both its clarity and its ability to focus.

Your Brain is Showing

While the cornea and lens develop from embryonic skin, most of the eyeball develops in the embryo as a bud from the brain. Think of it, you can actually examine part of someone’s brain just by looking them in the eye!

The eyeball buds off the brain in just the right position for it to look out through the lens and cornea. It would be a shame to

have eyes in our head, but no windows in the skin to look out through.

The Muscular Eye

We don't generally think of our eye as a muscular organ, but this small orb has some of the busiest muscles in the body. There are two sets of muscles inside the eye. One set opens and closes the iris diaphragm, admitting different amounts of light. The second set of muscles is attached by "strings" to the perimeter of the lens and changes its shape during focusing. There are also three pairs of muscles attached to the outside of the eye. These muscles rotate the eyeball so we can look in different directions without moving our heads. Basically one pair of muscles works like reins on a horse to aim the eye left and right. A second pair of muscles, attached to the top and bottom of the eyeball, aims the eye up and down. Finally, a third set of muscles rotates the eye like a doorknob. The purpose of these last two muscles is to keep our vision level when we tilt the head from side to side, so we don't get dizzy. (The Lord thinks of everything!)

Just think of it. Everywhere we turn our gaze, twelve separate muscles (six on each eye) move in perfect coordination for us to see the object we're looking at. If our eyes are even slightly misaligned, we see double. This remarkable coordination is like a marksman so accurate with a pair of pistols that he can make only one bullet hole every time he fires both guns!

We Even Have Window Wipers and Washers

Our eyelids not only protect our eyes and cover them when we sleep or blink, but also serve as window wipers for the cornea. Deep under the upper eyelid, toward the side of the head, each eye has a special reservoir of eye-washing fluid called the lachrymal glands. These glands secrete a watery tear fluid that has just the right acid level (pH) and osmotic (concentration) properties. The fluid also contains special enzymes that keep the

eye clean of things that cause infection, and it has special oils to reduce evaporation. It also gives our cornea a smooth surface for optimum vision.

If you look very closely at your eye, you will notice a small opening on the margin of your upper and lower eyelids near the nose. These holes, called puncta, are attached to pumps that remove the tear fluid as it flows across the eye and drain it into the nose. This continuously flushes our eyes of debris and keeps our cornea from drying out (which can cause blindness).

When we produce too much tear fluid (as in weeping), the layer of liquid over the cornea can get too thick, affecting our vision. As the tear pumps remove the tear fluid and drain it into our nose, we get the sniffles. If too much tear fluid accumulates for our pumps to keep up with it, tears overflow and roll down our cheeks.

We humans are the only creatures God created that can cry emotional tears. We are also the only object of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, who came into the world to save us from the wages of sin. What a wonderful comfort that our Heavenly Father has promised to wipe away all our tears of sin, pain, and sadness.

"And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying...for the former things have passed away" (Revelation 21:4).

Answers in Genesis Magazine

Answers to Scripture search!

1. Abraham (Genesis 20:7)
2. Ahab (1 Kings 16:32)
3. Ananias (Acts 23:3)

SUPPOSE IT IS TRUE AFTER ALL!

Two friends were talking on religious topics. They discussed the question of punishment for sin in a future life. They settled to their own satisfaction that there was none. They decided that hell was a myth. They argued that there was no need for God or a Supreme Being since scientists say that the universe and life and man could have come into being through “natural” causes. And they agreed that even if there were a God, He would be a God of love and thus could not consign His creatures to everlasting punishment.

Then a Christian, who had been a silent listener to the discussion asked:

“Suppose it is true after all?”

The question fell on the ears and hearts of the other two with crushing force.

Suppose it is true after all that the God of the Bible is real and living? Would you, a mortal being, be willing to risk your eternal destiny by arguing against the eternal “God, who cannot lie” (Titus 1:2)? “He who does not believe God has made Him a liar” (1 John 5:10).

Suppose it is true after all that “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1)? When you stand before the Creator-God on the day of judgment, what reason will you offer for having given all the glory and credit for the beauties and glories of the earth and the universe to the impersonal “god” of chance and nature rather than the personal Creator-God? Scientists, in fact, do NOT have a reasonable explanation for the origin of the universe. If the universe exploded into being via the “Big Bang,” they cannot explain where the original matter and energy came from. This is just a feeble attempt to replace the eternal, personal Creator-God with an eternal but impersonal matter-energy-god. Many scientists, and others too, would prefer to believe that a personal God does not exist; that way they are free to be their own “gods,” living their lives however they please, without having to worry about what God thinks

Suppose it is true after all that hell is a reality? A skeptic sneeringly asked, “Where is hell?” The ready and true answer came, “At the end of a Christ-rejecting life.” Let me ask you: What lies at the end of the path you are now treading? The Scripture says, “It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27).

Suppose it is true after all that the Lord Jesus is the only Savior, and His death and resurrection provide the only means by which you can be fitted for God’s presence? Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6). What if you ignore Him and leave Him out of your life? “How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?” (Hebrews 2:3). “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life...He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:16, 18).

Suppose it is true after all? How terrible will be your doom if you “die in your sins” (John 8:24). Dear friend, flee to Christ and be saved. “Anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:15).

Be assured that IT IS TRUE, for all who place their trust in Christ for salvation. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved” (Acts 16:31).

Act upon it today!