



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

April. 2003
Vol.2 . No.2

April 2003

Dear Reader,

“The coming of the Lord draweth nigh” Jam. 5:8

“I, Jesus... the bright and morning star” Rev. 22:16

As a falling stone accelerates as it nears the ground, just so events crowd upon one another as this dispensation nears its end, thus ushering in God’s great purpose. The return of the Lord Jesus to this scene of His sorrows and reproach; His supreme exaltation here on earth, where He humbled himself as no one ever did; His reigning and judging in righteousness in the very place where He was judged and condemned in unrighteousness – this, and much more, was God’s determined purpose from before time began. The fulfillment of that purpose is near at hand. And as the world is in such unrest, how good to see in this closing scene Christ presented not only as the morning star but as “the bright and morning star.” Every thing in the hand of man loses its brightness, but Christ in heaven is beyond the touch of man’s hand. He shines with undimmed glory. With the daystar in our hearts we can watch through the darkness of the night and wait the coming glory, the morning without clouds. The word then to the overcomer is, “hold fast till I come!” The night watch is not over yet, nor will the fallen Christian profession recover itself. The word of comfort is, “until I come.”

As the night grows darker, how much comfort does the soul that loves Him find in looking for the morning star?

I trust that you will enjoy this issue, and 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, New Jersey 07470-5354
Attention: Emil S. Nashed

www.inthebeloved.org/towardthemark.htm

Toward The Mark

<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page</u>
Justification	1
The Choice of Faith	6
The Disappointment of Life	9
Choosing a Marriage Partner (part 2)	11
The Ostrich and the Eagle	15
Questions and Answers	17
The Father’s Love	18

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

MILK

“The truth shall make you free”

JUSTIFICATION

To be justified is to be eternally cleared from every charge that could be brought against us, as seen in Acts 13:39, “By Him all who believe are justified from all things, from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.” The law very effectively proved us to be guilty sinners and thus condemned before God. **Only by Christ can the believer be righteously cleansed forever from every charge of sin so that the sentence of condemnation is eternally lifted off him.**

When we are justified, we pass from the state (condition) and position of condemnation. Thus, condemnation is the opposite of justification just as guilt is the opposite of forgiveness. **However, justification implies more than the negative blessing of us being freed from condemnation: it involves the positive blessing of our righteousness standing before God in Christ.**

We have seen in Rom. 3:19 that all the world stands convicted as “guilty before God.” In v. 20, we are told that the law can only convict. Then in v. 21, God begins to unfold His way of justifying the ungodly. Since “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God,” God manifests His righteousness in all its brightness, condemning the sinner and thus clearing Himself of any suspicion that He in any way condoned their sin. But God’s righteousness is “unto” or “toward all, and upon all those who believe.” (vv. 21-23). Thus, it stretches out its hand towards the unsaved instead of frowning on them, but it rests on the saved as a robe so that they stand clothed in it in the presence of God. In all this, righteousness never loses its proper character.

How is this possible? Mercy might thus act at the expense of righteousness but how can righteousness itself act thus? Well, Christ has been set forth as a “propitiation” or “mercy seat” (v.

23). On the cross, His blood was shed and this was the fulfillment of the type (picture) of the blood-sprinkled mercy seat of Tabernacle-days. **The greatest display of divine righteousness that the world will ever see took place on that cross when redemption was wrought “in Christ Jesus” (v. 24). There, God judged and put to grief His own spotless, sinless Son for us. Of course, the cross also showed God’s love (Rom. 5:8) but if it had not manifested His righteousness, it could not have manifested His love.**

Christ’s death has displayed God’s righteousness in a two-fold way: regarding believer’s sins of past dispensations (3:25) and believer’s sins of this present age (3:26). Before Christ came, God passed over the sins of His people even though He was not as yet perfectly satisfied as to them. Today, He justifies the believer in Jesus. Have all of these dealings been in perfect righteousness? The death of Christ declares that they have been fully righteous! Christ’s death was primarily the offering of Himself to God as a sacrifice of infinite value and fragrance. God was thus satisfied regarding the whole matter of man’s sin. All the claims of divine righteousness were met and satisfied.

Christ’s offering was also for us, for all true believers. We thus are entitled to view Him as our Substitute and to make Rom. 4:25 singular, not plural: He “was delivered for my offenses and was raised again for my justification.” He died and was judged with our sins in view and he was raised again from among the dead with our justification in view. In fact, full assurance of our salvation can not be enjoyed if the meaning of Christ’s resurrection is overlooked. He bore our sins and their penalty in His death but the declaration and proof of our clearance is in His resurrection.

To illustrate this point, think of a man condemned to six months in jail and another man who is permitted to take his place as substitute. When the substitute enters the jail, leaving the offender outside, **the offender might well exclaim that his friend “has been delivered to jail for my offense” but he could not say more at that time.** At any time during that six months, the authorities could righteously demand that the offender himself serve the rest of his term. But, if a week or so

before the six months were up, the offender met his kindly substitute on the street and learned that he has been discharged from prison as a free man slightly early due to good behavior, **the offender would be able to say, “You are released from prison for my justification.”** He would rightly reason that if his substitute was discharged from prison as free from all further liability, then he himself is discharged, free and completely cleared. **In like manner, the resurrection of Christ is the divine declaration of the complete clearance of everyone who believes in Christ.**

Observe that God Himself is both the Source of our justification and the One who justifies us (Rom. 8:33). **The sentence against us as sinners and the declaration of our clearance as believers in Jesus both came from God’s own lips. Therefore, our justification is complete and authoritative.** No one can condemn us. But faith is necessary on our part because only believers are justified. In this sense, we are “justified by faith” (Rom. 5:1). We come under the benefits of Christ’s work only when we yield “the obedience of faith” to Him. He is “the Author of eternal salvation (only) to all those who obey Him” (Heb. 5:9). Faith is the link that connects us to Him and to the justifying merits of His blood.

In Rom. 5:18, we see justification from sin (the root) rather than from sins (the fruit, as in most other passages on justification). The one righteousness of the cross has its bearing “toward all unto justification-of-life” (marginal reading). To understand this passage, we must consider the whole passage (Rom. 5:12-21). By nature, all men are related to Adam as the head and source of their race. By grace, through Christ’s death and resurrection, all believers are related to Him as the Head and Source of that spiritual race to which they now belong; and, consequently, are judicially (legally) cleared from all the previous consequences of our life in Adam. This is a very wonderful thing which is too often overlooked.

Romans thus presents justification as the means for complete clearance from all offenses and from the condemnation which we deserved, as well as from all the condemnation attaching to our fallen Adamic nature since

we, by God's act, now stand in Christ risen from the dead. Blessed be God for such a clearance as this!

Sometimes you hear people speak of the righteousness of Christ being imputed to us. But no such idea is to be found in Scripture. We certainly do find the righteousness-of-Christ: that was absolutely perfect and thus He was qualified to be the "Lamb" of sacrifice on our behalf. But we are justified by His blood, not by His perfect life. **He died for us but He didn't keep the Law for us.** If he had, we would only be standing in a legal righteousness before God – a righteousness that only goes to the length (and the blessing) of keeping the Law of Moses (Rom. 10:5).

However, the righteousness in which we do stand is "the righteousness of faith" (Rom. 10:6-9) which is connected, not with Christ on earth keeping the law, but rather with God raising Him from the dead after He had died for our sins.

Yet in the KJV, we read in Rom 4:3,6 that "God imputed righteousness apart from works" and that "it was imputed (counted) to him for righteousness." What do these verses mean? In Rom. 4, the words counted, imputed, and reckoned occur several times. They are all translations of one Greek word whose meaning is best expressed by the English word reckoned. "Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness," God reckoned or held Abraham to be righteous in virtue of (because of) his faith. This little word "for" is a poor translation. It can mislead by making one think that faith is a substitute for righteousness – something that can be transformed into righteousness. A better translation is that "Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness."

The argument presented in Rom. 4 is that, whether Abraham of old or believers in Christ today, the only way that we can be reckoned righteous before God the Great Judge is by faith without works – not even by all the great and perfect works of Christ as He lived on this earth for about 33 years.

Rom. 4:25 says that Jesus "was delivered for our offenses and was raised again for our justification." Now, some people incorrectly take this verse to mean that just as Jesus died because we were sinners, so He was raised again because we had been justified in His death. The uninspired chapter divisions get us into trouble here because chapter 5 begins right in the middle of a paragraph. We should keep right on reading; "He was raised again for our justification. Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God." The incorrect interpretation makes our justification an accomplished fact when Jesus died and His resurrection to be the consequence of it. But this entirely eliminates our faith from the question and ignores Rom. 5:1. The truth is that our Lord's death was in view of our sins and is the basis for our justification. His resurrection was first, God's declaration that He Who bore the weight of God's judgment against sin is forever clear of it and secondly, it was in view of the clearance of all who believe in Him.

Thus, our Lord was delivered to death with our sins in view and was raised again with our justification in view. But the justification of each individual person only becomes effective as (and when) they believe.

F.B. Hole

Meat

“Sanctify them by the truth”

THE CHOICE OF FAITH

“Arise and go up to Bethel, and dwell there”

It is a day of lawlessness in thought as well as in act. People give free rein to their imagination and foolish reasonings (which seems to be the meaning of the word “inventions” in Ecc. 7:29); and to this our attention should be directed; not in the way of answering them by counter reasonings, but by seeking to reach the heart’s affections, and the conscience, as to what is due to God and to Christ. The more we have the sense of grace in our souls (the whole work of salvation of God towards us), the more we shall seek to draw nigh to Him in the deep sense of our need of being kept in an evil day.

The time is short for learning practically what Christ’s path was. **But in a day of outward “toleration” and indifference, it is more than ever a matter of choice,** and God gives His blessing with it. **“Mary** hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her.” **Ruth** chose too; a parting kiss could not satisfy her. She clave to Naomi in her sorrow, and a full reward was given to her. **Caleb** pursued a quiet suffering path of faithfulness to God, walking by faith, and when the proper time came, he used his privilege of choosing Hebron, where the field of Macpelah was. Faith works by love, and avoids reasoning. The apostle prays, “that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all intelligence, that ye may judge of and approve the things that are more excellent” (Phi. 1:9-10).

In the ordinary matters of this life, as to our circumstances, etc., faith’s path is not to choose, but to give oneself quietly over to God’s ordering for us. Lot, in self-confidence, chose for himself, pitched toward Sodom, and

then went into it. The first warning God gave him had no effect upon him; he was delivered at that time by his uncle’s intervention, but he had no mind to leave Sodom. When the wicked city was at length destroyed, he lost everything, and the beautiful plain he had coveted became a burning fiery furnace. **Abraham**, through his humiliating experience in Egypt, learned the first lesson of the wilderness – not to have confidence in himself. Being thus consciously incompetent to choose, he was glad that God should choose for him, and he was blessed.

In spiritual things, the contrary holds good; God expects us to choose what is most excellent in the path which He graciously opens up to us (Eph. 5:15-17). We have not to seek anything dazzling or out of the way, nor to put forth any remarkable effort that would attract attention or make other people talk about us. We have simply to walk heartily and joyfully in the Lord’s path, having our hearts set on things above where He sits, and receive what He sets before us. **Ruth** had not to go out of her way to leave her country and cast in her lot with Naomi. The link had been formed quietly and naturally, and she held to it, minded not to leave or give up that which God had set before her; and so she could say to Naomi in quiet confidence, “Thy God shall be my God.” Nothing could be more unpretentious. There was no self-assertion, no brilliant resolution or vow as to the future, only a quiet settled purpose to cleave to that which was already hers through grace, at a time when death seemed to have ruined all her prospects.

So with **Caleb**. He had been sent as one of the spies, had gone forth in obedience, traversed the land from south to north, right up to Lebanon and back again, and he clung to the promise: “Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance...” He had then a right to pick and choose his inheritance in all the best of the land given to the fathers. **And after forty-five years of patience he chose,** with its suburbs, that city where the sons of Anak lived, and where the spies felt with terror their own insignificance. It is the only city mentioned in Num. 13 as being in the land, and was the home of the giants. During seven years’ conflict, Joshua and all Israel had left those giants alone; yet Caleb ventures to say, “If so be the

Lord will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the Lord said." **It was simple faith, preserving to the end in the humility, and withal the boldness, which faith gives – no pretension, no boasting, but the quiet confidence of one who walked with God.** And the "fields of the city and the villages thereof were made his forever" (Jos. 21:12). The "first lot," given to the sons of Aaron, the priest, was the city itself. Such is the choice of faith, working by love; and love must have its object, known to the soul and enjoyed. Without such an object, holiness is not possible for us.

Elisha is another stirring example of the simplicity of faith's choice, showing how the soul is held, as by a chain of gold, in the path of God's ordering and blessing. "As the Lord liveth and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee," was the simple answer to the test (and no ordinary test), applied three times to him; and it ended in the expression of acknowledged communion, followed by the thrilling sight of the prophet going up to heaven without dying, and the reception of the double portion of the Spirit as he gathered up the precious mantle which fell to him.

"Draw nigh to God," James says, "and He will draw nigh to you." May it be increasingly our portion, and the more so as the world is carried away by its talk and vain glory, that we may find our joy in serving Christ in obscurity, content with His approval until He come, having the eye and the heart set on that which is unseen and eternal.

Patient suffering for Christ's sake will have its reward when He comes. If the world is against us, we know it was against Him, and hated Him. **In the path of faith, the opportunity to choose for Him will be given**, when the needed discipline of the soul has been duly carried out. Caleb lost nothing by waiting forty-five years. Moses had to wait forty years after his choice was made, before he was sent of God to help his brethren (Heb. 11:24-26). **May we each of us know more what it is to keep the word of Christ's patience.**

W.J.L

Exercise

"Exercise thyself unto piety"

THE DISAPPOINTMENTS OF LIFE

"This Thing is From Me" (I Ki. 12:24)

The disappointments of life are in reality only the decrees of love. I have a message for thee today, My child. I will whisper it softly in thine ear, in order that the stormclouds which appear may be gilt with glory, and the thorns on which thou mayest have to walk be blunted. The message is but short – a tiny sentence – but allow it to sink into the depths of thine heart, and be to thee as a cushion on which to rest thy weary head: "This thing is from Me."

Hast thou never thought that all which concerns thee, concerns Me also? He that toucheth thee toucheth the apple of Mine eye (Zch. 2:8) Thou hast been precious in Mine eyes, that is why I take a special interest in thine upbringing. When temptation assails thee, and the "enemy comes in like a flood," I would wish thee to know that "This thing is from Me." I am the God of circumstances. Thou hast not been placed where thou art by chance, but because it is the place I have chosen for thee. Didst thou not ask to become humble? Behold, I have placed thee in the very place where this lesson is to be learned. It is by thy surroundings and thy companions that the working of My will is to come about.

Hast thou money difficulties? Is it hard to keep within thine income? "This thing is from Me." For I am He that possesseth all things. I wish thee to draw everything from Me, and that thou depend entirely upon Me. My riches are illimitable (Phi. 4:19). Put My promise to the proof, so that it may not be said of thee, "Yet in this thing ye did not believe the Lord thy God."

Art thou passing through a night of affliction? "This thing is from Me." I am the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief (Isa. 53:3). I have left thee without human support that in turning to Me thou mightest obtain consolation (2 Th. 2: 16,17).

Has some friend disappointed thee? One to whom thou hast opened thine heart? “This thing is from Me.” I have allowed this disappointment that thou mightest learn that the best Friend is Jesus. I long to be thy Confidant.

Has someone said false things of thee? Leave that, and come closer to Me, under My wings, away from the place of worldly dispute, for I will bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and they judgment as the noonday (Psa. 37:6). Have thy plans been all upset? Art thou crushed and weary? “This thing is from Me.” Hast thou made plans and then, coming, asked Me to bless them? I wish to make thy plans for thee. I will take the responsibility, for it is too heavy for thee, thou couldst not perform it alone. (Ex. 18:18). Thou art but an instrument and not an agent.

Hast thou desired fervently to do some great work for me? Instead of that thou hast been laid on one side, on a bed of sickness and suffering. “This thing is from Me.” I was unable to attract thine attention while thou wast so active. I wish to teach thee some of My deep lessons. It is only those who have learned to wait patiently who can serve me. My greatest workers are sometimes those who are laid aside from active service in order that they may learn to wield the weapon of prayer.

Art thou suddenly called to occupy a difficult position full of responsibilities? Go forward, counting on Me. I am giving thee the position full of difficulties for the reason that Jehovah thy God will bless thee in all thy works and in all the business of thy hands (Deu. 15:18). This day I place in thy hand a pot of holy oil. Draw from it freely, **My child, that all the circumstances arising along the pathway, each word that gives thee pain, each manifestation of thy feebleness, may be anointed with this oil. Remember that interruptions are divine instructions. The sting will go in the measure in which thou seest Me in all things.** Therefore set your heart unto all the works that I testify among you this day. For it is your life (Deu. 32:46, 47).

Found in J.N. Darby’s Bible

REST

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

GOD’S BEST

CHOOSING A MARRIAGE PARTNER

Part 2

In these articles we would like to show to all who are unmarried that there is a better way than the world would teach to find a marriage partner. ‘God’s way’ is the way of true blessing

CHOOSING A PARTNER THE SCRIPTURAL WAY

“For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall be joined unto his wife and they two shall be one flesh” (Eph. 5:31).

There is only one ideal for marriage running right through the Scriptures, and that is one man joined to one woman. Nowhere do we get the idea that we should try various partners before choosing the right one. We see that the selection of a partner was often made by parents, or sometimes as a reward; but the suggestion in the New Testament is for two people to come together of their own free will; yet also in the will of the Lord. “She is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord” (1 Cor. 7:39). This is the usual practice in the Christian Church and is in line with Scripture.

Marriage is for mature people; men and women (not boys and girls) who are able to form a separate family unit, independent both in financial and moral responsibility.

“Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife and they shall be one flesh” (Gen. 2:24).

Our natural desires can easily lead us into a wrong, even dangerous position. Especially when we are young it is easy to become so convinced that we have found the right one that our judgement becomes blurred if not blind. There have been many who through an impetuous decision have been led into a sad relationship or led away from a path of devotion to the Lord and obedience to His Word.

From 1 Th. 4, it is clear that competition between two people for one partner is hated by God. This is something we should consider carefully. “That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in the

matter” (v. 6). Many romance stories involve two men competing for the love of one woman or vice versa. This should not be so with those who seek to be guided by the Lord in these matters.

In Pro. 30, Agur talks about three things that are too wonderful for him; one of these is “the way of a man with a maid!” The romance of choosing a partner and the way this happens to us as guided by God is something very special for the different individuals involved. Our Lord spent all night in prayer before He chose His disciples; and to be guided into the will of God we need to be similarly exercised in prayer.

There is a different role for the man and the woman in these things. The man has the responsibility to take the initiative, the woman has the responsibility to respond, or not, as the Lord may lead. The man therefore has the duty to wait patiently upon the Lord before intervening in the life of a sister; and the woman to prayerfully wait upon the Lord to provide her with His choice.

The term “falling in love” is often used when a couple start to be friendly; this can be superficial, and we should be wary of this concept as it gives the idea of uncontrolled emotion. We could easily be led by our old nature in a mere infatuation simply because of physical attraction, because of being continually in another’s company, or even because of undue pressure from those around us. Some like to act as matchmakers, encouraging couples who they think are suitable for each other. This is a dangerous game and has had many sad results.

The love of the marriage relationship is an act of will under the guidance of our Master. An intelligent and permanent decision, which is taken in mature consideration of the issues involved and which will endure through every pressure and circumstance which might otherwise cause a couple to “fall out of love.” The Lord has decreed that marriage is for life, and if we want the Lord’s blessing we must follow his instructions. It is the lie of the devil that we can be happy with someone else. We must reject his subtle whispers.

GOD’S BEST

The question arises: “Will I get married and to whom?” The pressures around us from our peers, parents, and the world in general are often very strong. Young people are expected to have a boyfriend or girlfriend from a very early age, and if they do not they are seen to be failing. A relationship with a girl or boy may also be used as an expression of ego and superiority in young people who want to be seen with a partner. It may just be the done thing, “everybody else does it, so I’ll do it too.” We have to realise, too, that young people

have natural desires to be with members of the opposite sex of their own age. The fear of being “left on the shelf,” apparently unwanted, with the real stigma that this may bring can also lead some to be desperate to marry someone.

How does the young person steer himself or herself through this minefield? - Let’s answer a few questions.

Firstly the Christian is a person who has committed his life to the Lord Jesus Christ and come under His lordship and direction. If in our hearts we have truly yielded to Him then our own desires or indeed the plans of those around us are of no account. Only His will shall be my aim and only His will is BEST.

DOES GOD WANT THE BEST FOR ME?

If I trust the matter of my marriage to God will I have to make do with somebody that no one else wants? Will I ever get married? Will I perhaps miss out on a lot of fun? Let us think about our God! “All things work together for good to them that love God” (Rom. 8:28). “Let the Lord be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of His servant” (Ps. 35:27). “Delight thyself in the Lord; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass” (Ps. 37:4-5).

The more we get to know and trust our Father, the more we experience that He gives only good gifts to His children. He knows whether or not we are best to be married, and He knows how we will be able to serve Him best. So if we are to remain single we know that His will is best – indeed, in 1 Cor. 7, Paul says that to remain single is better. If He wants us to be married He will have prepared a partner for us before we were born and He knows best how to bring us together.

IF WE DO IT GOD’S WAY, WILL IT BE BORING?

God created all the good things we associate with courtship: love, joy, happiness, and the physical and mental attraction of the opposite sex. Only as led in the will of God will these things be enjoyed to the full if we leave the choice of our partner to God: His choice and in His time.

Young people, with all the pressures you face are you prepared to go this way?

As a young man I had many lessons to learn. I thought I knew all the answers, but at the age of seventeen I came to realise that I needed to completely rethink my attitude to this subject. I came to the conclusion that God knew what was best for my life and if He wanted

me to be married He would guide me to the right person when His time was right. I did not want to do anything that would prevent my receiving His best. I realised that God knew how to give me a wife, if that was His will, so I determined that I would not in any way commit myself to anyone until I was sure it was the Lord's will. (I was sure that in such an important matter I would not be in any doubt.) I made a simple rule for myself that I would not go out alone with or show attachment to any girl until I was sure of God's will. This way I avoided being carried along by a momentary whim.

I am sure that it will be different for each one of us, but God rewarded me beyond my wildest dreams with a lovely wife, a romantic coming together, and a oneness of feeling and purpose for which we constantly thank Him. We often spend hours reminiscing over the way we came to know each other and it gives much pleasure to see the way the Lord works. In giving these personal details I would be the first to admit much failure on my part, but of this I am sure - having committed my way to the Lord, He did not fail me.

As we have seen, the ideal of Scripture is that there should be one man joined to one woman, and I would love to be able to say to my wife that I have never shown affection to another, but through self will and lack of understanding that is not so.

God knew that I needed a wife and that we could serve the Lord better together than apart, and His will is best. Pray to God to show you His way; don't decide what you want and then pray about it. Pray that He may make His mind clear to you and then you will be able to thank Him when He gives the answer.

Brian Warnes

"Doth not even nature itself teach you"

THE OSTRICH AND THE EAGLE

The Ostrich: Job 39:13-18

"The wings of the ostrich beats joyously – But is it the stork's pinion and plumage? For she leaveth her eggs to the earth, and warmeth them in the dust, and forgetteth that the foot may crush them or that the beast of the field may trample them. She is hardened against her young ones, as they were not hers; her labor is in vain, without her concern. For God has deprived her of wisdom, and has not furnished her with understanding".

In this portion our attention is called to the lack of wisdom illustrated in the ostrich; a creature with the form of a bird, but without power to leave the earth.

While other birds take refuge in flight when hard pressed, this one, it is said, buries its head in the sand. How like the mere profession of such as have the "form of godliness" but deny the power of it in their lives. Pressed as to matters of eternal judgment, they refuse to face the facts, and shield themselves by earthly things - the shifting sands of time. Such never see things from God's point of view, but only from man's.

As for the ostrich itself, so for its offspring: "She leaveth her eggs in the earth... without fear." Without "the fear of God," which is the "beginning of wisdom," **those who refuse to own their responsibility to God as to themselves will also refuse to own it as to their young.** Such build their "house upon the sand," and the storm soon to burst upon this scene will prove their "labor in vain." Such leave their offspring "in the earth" in danger of destruction by the evil walk of others who cross their path, or by the subtle doctrines of that "beast" that "goeth about seeking whom he may devour."

The Eagle: Job 39: 27-30

“Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make his nest on high? He inhabiteth the rock and maketh his dwelling on the point of the cliff, and the fastness; from thence he spieth out the prey, his eyes look into the distance; and his young ones suck up blood; and where the slain are, there is he”.

In this portion God calls our attention to a bird having a God given wisdom, typical of the true child of God. The eagle also has power to leave earth and see things from lofty heights - God’s point of view. “She dwelleth and abideth on the rock.” The “house built upon the rock” abides. From her lofty sphere “her eyes behold afar off,” and foreseeing evil, she provides against it. She herself feeds not upon carrion, but upon the “slain,” **the death of another affording life to her and her offspring. In that separated place her young are made to know the value of the blood.** “Whose eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood,” said our Lord, “hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day” (Jn. 6:54).

Those who value the One who was slain and who shed His blood for them dwell and abide on the Rock upon which He is building His assembly; those who by His grace live a holy life, walking in His footsteps in separation from the influence of the world in all its forms, whether religious, political, or moral: they are renewing their strength like the eagle. They are the ones who will share in his rule when he comes to reign as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q: Why would God use magic to show Samuel to Saul when he went to visit the medium in 1 Sam. 28?

Stuart B.

A: My dear brother,

From Deu. 18:10-12, we learn that God hates the practice of magic. So why would God allow such an incident to take place?

There are those who question if there was a real appearance of Samuel through the woman that had a familiar spirit (or spirit of Python, a serpent) for various reasons. Two of these reasons are: 1) the refusal of God to communicate to Saul, and 2) that Samuel was not actually seen by Saul (I Sam. 28:14)

Was it then a mere deception?

I do not think so, but believe this actually occurred for one simple reason - the woman cried with a loud voice, recognizing that Saul had deceived her.

The lesson we need to learn is that God is sovereign and He allows things to take place, so that He can convey a message to man. For example, God allowed Satan to touch Job because God wanted to take away the spirit of self righteousness from Job (42:6). In Num. 22, God used Balaam’s ass to see the angel of the Lord and to rebuke Balaam. Lastly, in I Sam 28, he allowed the medium to let Saul communicate with Samuel to confirm the following: 1) God had departed from Saul and become his enemy (v. 16); 2) God rent Saul’s kingdom and it was given to David (v. 17); 3) he was disobedient to God (v. 18); and 4) judgment would be executed upon him (v. 19).

For additional help, read I Sam. 15, particularly verse 23.

Yours in Him,

J.A

The Father's Love

Blest Father, infinite in grace,
Source of eternal joy;
Thou lead'st our hearts to that blest place
Where rest's without alloy

There will Thy love find perfect rest,
Where all around is bliss;
Where, all in Thee supremely blest,
Thy praise their service is!

Eternal love their portion is,
Where love has found its rest;
And filled with Thee, the constant mind
Eternally is blest.

There Christ, the centre of the throng,
Shall in His glory shine;
But not an eye those host among
But sees that glory Thine.

Thy counsels too in all Thine own,
Fulfilled by power divine,
Spread wide the glory of Thy throne,
Where all in glory shine.

Yet deeper, if a calmer joy
The Father's love shall raise,
And every heart find sweet employ
In His eternal praise!

Nor is its sweetness now unknown
Well proved in what it's done;
Our Father's love with joy we own,
Revealed in Christ the Son!

J. N. DARBY

The Professor's Flask

A Christian man told us the following true story:

“Several years ago, when I was attending college, we had an atheistic professor named Dr. Lee who hated God and the thought of prayer. **Every year, just before the end of the school year, Dr. Lee would give a lecture against prayer.** He would step in front of his lecture table and hold up a two-quart glass flask. There was a concrete floor in the classroom. **Then he would say, “Now if there’s anyone here who believes in prayer, I’m going to ask you to stand and pray that when I drop this flask it won’t break.** I want you students to know that all your prayers will never prevent this flask from breaking when I drop it on the concrete floor. I’ve been doing this for fifteen years, and the flask has always broken.” **A few weeks before the end of the school year, another Christian student came and asked me to pray that Dr. Lee’s flask would NOT break.** So the two of us prayed for a few weeks, and my friend asked me to especially pray that he would have the courage to stand up to the professor on the day of the lecture.

The day came when Dr. Lee would give his usual lecture against prayer. The moment came, and **Dr. Lee said, “Is there anyone here who still believes in prayer?”**

The Christian student stood right up and said, “Dr. Lee, I do”

“My, this is real interesting, isn’t it?” sneered Dr. Lee. “We’ve got a fellow here who believes that God can answer prayer! Do you want to pray?”

“Yes, I do!” replied the Christian student, and he prayed, “Dear Lord Jesus, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. For thy honor and thy name’s sake and for the honor of thy servant who puts his trust in you, don’t let the flask break. Amen.”

Dr. Lee took the flask, held it out and opened his hand. God changed its course and drew it in. Instead of falling straight down, the flask hit the toe of Dr. Lee’s shoe and rolled over. And it did not break! The class laughed at Dr. Lee, and for the rest of the years that he taught at that school he never again lectured against prayer. “The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down; and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day” (Isaiah 2:11).