



***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,

“We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen” (2 Corinthians 4:18).

Do we know anything of such an attitude? Have we been looking at the things which are seen today or at the things that are unseen? These things are revealed so that we can look at them. “Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth” (Colossians 3:2). Associated with Him, risen with Him, set your mind on Him. The affections and the mind are distinct things; the Spirit assumes that the affections will follow Christ there, but is the mind there? The cross upon earth answers to the heavenly glory. How fatal the influence of the world that comes between me and the risen, glorified Christ. Are our hearts lingering in the scene out of which He has gone? Or are our hearts and minds set upon Him, where He is in the glory? “Our citizenship is in heaven” (Philippians 3:20). Citizenship was everything to a Roman; it came before the dearest relationship. All that forms our life is in heaven now. How feeble is our grasp of these things! What is the practical power of them? Does everything about us bear witness to them, so that we are only waiting for Him to come, to take us to Himself, in whom all our joys and our hopes have centered while here? Not one thing has been withheld from us, and He is engaged in service for us in the glory, so that there may be no hindrance to our enjoyment of these things. May we be going about this dark world with our faces lit up, or at all events our hearts, with His love. We have found what satisfies us divinely and forever.

Dear Friends,

Our hearts are full of thanksgiving to the Lord who is the Faithful and True. He is our help in years past and our hope for all that is to come. To you, dear reader, who is praying for *Toward the Mark* and to those who are helping in producing this exercise, the Lord knows each one and He is the reward of their quiet labor of love. With the New Year upon us, it is our prayer that you will find *Toward the Mark* helpful for you as you face the daily challenges of school or work, as we are dependent on Him to feed and strengthen His people. Thank you for your overwhelming response and encouragement to this exercise. Please keep praying for the Lord’s blessing on *Toward the Mark*.

Yours in our soon-coming Lord,

Emil S. Nashed

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TOWARD THE MARK

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If you would like to join the mailing list to receive the electronic version of Toward the Mark, simply visit www.towardthemark.org or send an e-mail to toward.the.mark@gmail.com to be added. If you would like copies of older issues, please mention it in your e-mail.

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

MILK

"The truth shall make you free"

GOD'S NEW YEAR!

"This month shall be unto you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you" (Exodus 12:12).

For God to make an entirely new beginning is significant enough to captivate all our attention. His people are in the land of Egypt—to them the land of bondage and death—and it is to such a people that this glad message of God's New Year is sent. The chapters containing this message (12 and 13) are so instilled with New Testament atmosphere that our hearts are captivated by the revelation of the Paschal Lamb, whose blood was to shelter and whose flesh was to nourish and strengthen.

The "Passover" marks a departure in the ways of God. Redemption now becomes the ground of a new relation between God and man. The blessed God brings into view the Lamb of His own providing. Abraham, in a former day, climbed to the top of mount Moriah and witnessed the demonstration of the same glorious truth—a truth, indeed, published at the very beginning in the promise of the woman's seed. As for God's people, they would henceforth be upon entirely new ground, and would walk consciously before Him as a blood-bought people. It is this character of life that is alone suitable for God's New Year.

The message to the people of God was complete. It tells of judgment and safety; of food and discipline and self-judgment. It was truly the tidings of Christ coming into this scene to carry out the will of God. The blood, which was for God, was without on the lintel; whilst within, for the people, the lamb was roast with fire. This was God's gift in wondrous love to His sheltered people. The searching fire of divine judgment brought out from that precious Lamb nothing but the most sweet and acceptable

fragrance for God; and there, too, for the people was nourishment and strength for the journey from the land of bondage to the land of promise. With what delight would the Spirit of God richly engage our hearts with the marvelous worth and work of Jesus. Do we appreciate this most precious Lamb of God's providing? Are our souls being nourished upon the roasted lamb, eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs so that we cannot by any means be mistaken for the citizen of this ungodly world?

For us the message of God's New Year is that we leave behind our affections for the world, the land of bondage and death, the land which denies God and all that is heavenly, and journey, as divinely led and nourished along the path that faith opens up before us. Safe in the knowledge of accomplished redemption; satisfied with the blessed Man now in the glory, who in His unmeasured love came right down to where we were in order that He might have us where He is, let us "eat" and let us "remember," for in so doing we shall not only fill our own souls with delight but will carry such fragrance of Christ as shall extol Him in the eyes of others and bring pleasure to the heart of the blessed God Himself.

S. Thurston

Search the Scriptures!

1. Whose household was carried in the ferryboat?
2. Who was the youngest king mentioned in the Bible?
3. What two epistles compare baptism with burial?

MEAT

"Sanctify them by the truth"

DEMAND AND SUPPLY!

Law or Grace?

One stands for demand.

The other stands for supply.

One is connected with Mount Sinai (Hebrews 12:18-21).

The other is connected with Mount Sion (Hebrews. 12:22-24).

One is the ministration of condemnation (2 Corinthians 3:9) and of death (3:7).

The other is the ministration of righteousness (2 Corinthians 3:9) and of the Spirit (3:8).

The Mediator of the first was Moses (Galatians 3:19).

The Mediator of the second is the Lord Jesus Christ (Hebrews 12:24).

The one was glorious, even as one may look at the star-filled sky on a dark and cloudless night and see worlds upon worlds, a veritable galaxy of glory.

The other is superlatively glorious, like the rising of the sun. The stars in their millions continue to shine in undiminished splendor, but not one is seen when the sun of our system rises and pours such a glorious flood of light on the scene. "For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth" (2 Corinthians 3:10).

When Moses came down from the holy mount, the skin of his face shone so gloriously that he was forced to wear a veil. The children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which was to be abolished. And even to this day the veil is on their hearts.

But in the case of the Mediator of the better covenant, our Lord Jesus Christ, all the glory of God shines in His face, and so wonderfully is every question settled for God and for us that the believer can look

upon that glory with infinite delight. No veil upon His face, no veil upon our hearts, but we all with open face beholding the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord (2 Corinthians 3:18).

What a contrast! The one was law; the other is grace.

How lightly, with no sense of the responsibility of their act, did the children of Israel say when the law was given, “All that the Lord hath spoken we will do” (Exodus 19:8). Who could keep the law? The flesh in man resented its every ordinance. No one could keep it perfectly, and nothing short of perfection will do for God.

The principle of the law was, “This do, and thou shalt live” (Luke 10:28). It was not, “Do your best,” as people are so fond of saying, but “THIS do”—it was to be 100% or nothing. 99% would not do, it must be perfection...or condemnation.

And seeing the law demanded, and only demanded, its only movement was to condemn, and the only condemnation it knew involved death. It was a ministration of condemnation and death.

Why then was the law given?

It was only given to one nation, but it was given to one nation as a sample of the whole, and it has a worldwide, a universal lesson to teach. Just as an analytical chemist might take a few pounds of material from a rubbish heap weighing thousands of tons in the hope that he might discover something in it of commercial value, some by-product that would pay, but finding nothing but valueless rubbish in his sample, he would condemn the bulk. So we read, “Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God” (Romans 3:19).

There is then no hope from the first covenant. It does its work when it brings us to that conclusion.

Moreover, the law, pure and simple, was never given to man. Along with it the ritual of the sacrifices was given. The former for convenience we call the moral law, the latter the ceremonial law.

What meant these sacrifices, the sin offerings, the trespass offerings, the peace offerings, the burnt offerings? What meant the Day of Atonement? What meant the altars of sacrifice?

They were all types of God's gracious provision for man's need in the atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

You will remember when the law was first given and Moses was returning from Mount Sinai with the two tables of stone containing the Ten Commandments in his hands, he heard the sound of singing. He knew too well what it meant. Israel was breaking the first and foremost commandment, "Thou shalt have no other god before Me" (Exodus 20:3). The singing was the accompaniment to the idolatrous dancing round the golden calf to the blasphemous refrain, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt" (Exodus 32:4).

As Moses neared the camp, and saw what was going on, with rare intuition and courage he hurled the two tables down the mountainside and broke them. **To bring the pure law into the camp in the circumstances would have meant death to all in it.**

Instructed to come up to Mount Sinai to receive the law a second time, he was told to bring with him an ark of shittim wood, and into this ark the tables were deposited (see Deuteronomy 10:1-5).

In this we see that God could only go on with man on the ground of Christ and His finished work, for the ark was typical of Christ.

So we read, "the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith" (Galatians 3:24). JND translation makes the meaning of this verse clearer, "The law has been our tutor up to Christ." It is not that the law brings us to Christ, but that it was teaching its lessons until such time as Christ came. There was a twofold lesson to be learned: first, our inability to keep the law and second, that the system of sacrifice pointed on to the sinner's only hope, Christ and His finished work. Thus the law is a tutor, a schoolmaster, until Christ appears on the scene.

We thus see that the new covenant was not an afterthought, brought in when the old covenant failed. God knew the end from the beginning. The new covenant was in His mind from the very first. "He taketh

away the first that He might establish the second” (Hebrews 10:9). Again, “In that He saith, A new covenant, He hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away” (Hebrews 8:13).

Hence the word new does not merely mean new as opposed to old, but that because the new displaced the old they cannot abide side by side!

What then is the new covenant?

It is not a covenant between God and man—God demanding and man lightly saying, “All these things will we do.” It is a covenant between God and Christ in which man is blessed in sovereign grace, no demand made, but a ministration of righteousness and of the Spirit—righteousness, setting the believing sinner in God’s presence in favor; the Spirit, enabling the believer to respond. We read of the Apostle Paul and Timothy, “God...hath made us able ministers of the new testament” (2 Corinthians 3:6). The word testament and covenant are the same in the original.

What then are the terms of the new covenant?

It was promised in Old Testament times, and Paul refers to it as something familiar to his readers.

Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Ezekiel 36:24-36 enlighten us. The new covenant is to be made publicly with Israel, the fulfilment of God’s unconditional promises to Abraham, 430 years before the law was given. For this Israel must be gathered back to her own land, and the public ratification of the new covenant will be coincident with the millennial reign of Christ.

Its terms are:

- New Birth
- Forgiveness of sins
- Gift of the Holy Spirit.

The sprinkling of clean water upon the people is symbolic of the new birth. This is followed by what emphasizes it, that is, a new heart and a new spirit granted to them.

But the reader will say, these three blessings are what believers know now. Exactly! The death of Christ is the righteous foundation of the new covenant. Unless that atoning death had settled the whole question of sin righteously for God, He had no ground on which to act in grace.

New Birth is evidently God's sovereign act. As the Durham miner put it bluntly, "No man can born himself again." And yet God must have a righteous ground for this, and He finds it in the death of Christ. A new heart, a new spirit is thus given.

Forgiveness of sins could not be procured by keeping the law. On the face of it, when a man needs forgiveness, it is a proof that he has broken God's law. Forgiveness of sins can only be on the ground of faith in Christ and His finished work.

The Holy Spirit is given as the seal of all this: "In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise" (Ephesians 1:13).

Of course, the believer in this dispensation of the heavenly calling gets a fullness of blessing which the saint of the earthly calling does not enter upon, blessed and glorious as that is. Yet all believers, of whatever dispensation, have this in common, that their blessing is on the ground of the death of Christ, which enables God to bless in righteousness.

There is no demand here it is supply. It is not law but grace. God takes the initiative in sovereign grace—"the wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8). Forgiveness of sins is ministered when the sinner believes in Christ, and the Holy Spirit (given in a special way in the Christian dispensation) is given as the seal of this.

Lord's Day after Lord's Day, when we respond to the dying request of the Savior in the remembrance of His death, we have before us His own words concerning the cup, "This is the blood of the new testament [covenant] which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28).

What a day it will be for this world when that new covenant shall be publicly inaugurated; when, "He'll bid the whole creation smile,
And hush its groan."

Meanwhile we Christians enjoy its blessedness, though our blessings reach still further beyond.

A.J. Pollock

EXERCISE

"Exercise thyself unto piety"

"WHAT DOEST THOU HERE?"

This question appears twice in 1 Kings 19, and is addressed to Elijah, who was in a wrong place having fled from Jezebel. Sadly, he sought to justify his position.

I believe it is necessary for all of us to take stock sometimes of why we are where we are. This may involve where we are geographically, but primarily where are we spiritually, in the testimony. In the garments of the high priest, the names of the children of Israel according to their birth were inscribed upon the two onyx stones which were put upon the shoulders of the high priest, but upon the breastplate their names were inscribed according to the place God allocated them sovereignly.

I believe we all have a place in the testimony that is according to the mind of God, and it is necessary that by study of His word, and dependent prayer, we each seek to be where the Lord would have us to be. **This place may be brought about by circumstances, such as where I was born and brought up, like Timothy, but there comes a time when I must make sure that I am now in such a place by faith and conviction.** We read in Hebrews 11:24–26, “By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter: choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season: esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.”

Great man that Moses was, yet he failed just once, and we can ask him the question as to why, in Deuteronomy 3:27 he is on the top of Pisgah having been told, “Thou also shall not go in thither.” So, he besought the Lord, and says in chapter 3:25,

“I pray thee, let me go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon,” and the answer that he received was, “Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter.”

How difficult it was for Moses, having led the people all through the wilderness for forty years, to consider where he was, and the reason why he was there, yet he accepted the word of the Lord, “let it suffice thee.” There may be some very grave lessons that we must learn in seeking to be where the Lord would have us to be.

Let us consider the apostle Paul in prison at Rome, why indeed was he there? But in Philippians 1:12, he writes, “But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which have happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel.” Having served the Lord so faithfully for so many years, he now finds himself in a Roman prison and yet is able to see the benefits of his position. There was a divine reason why he was where he was. How much has come down to us from that prison: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, in the which he unfolds the truth of the mystery, which had been hid from all ages, whereof he had been made a minister, “to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.”

Likewise, what great lessons he had to learn. Having been caught up into paradise and hearing unspeakable words, which it was not lawful for him to utter, and then because of it, “lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given unto me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure,” and then, like Moses, “For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.”

As to what this “thorn in the flesh” was, we are not told but W.E. Vine’s comments on it are helpful: Paul’s “language indicates that it was physical, painful, humiliating; it was also the effect of Divinely permitted Satanic antagonism; the verbs rendered ‘that I should not be exalted overmuch’ and ‘to buffet’ are in the present tense, signifying recurrent action, indicating a constantly repeated attack.” So greatly was he affected by this that he “besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:8–9).

His request, as that of Moses, was not granted, but instead he got something that was greater and was thus able to accept the wisdom that saw what was necessary and to prove “My strength” despite his own weakness.

How difficult it is for us when circumstances and afflictions, that never go away, and constantly cause us pain, suffering, anxiety, and exercise, come into our lives, to accept that there is a divine reason behind these things and that there is a divine resource available, through grace, to overcome and to continue in the path of faith.

Let us ask the question, “What doest thou here?” to John, on the Isle of Patmos in Revelation 1:9–10: “I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day.”

He does not refer to himself as an apostle, but as a brother, and was sharing the tribulation that others were enduring and which were perfectly in keeping with the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ: “tribulation worketh patience” (Romans 5:3). There was, again, a divine reason why he was in such isolated and restricted circumstances which, in a lesser degree, many saints of God are in today “for the word of God and for the

testimony of Jesus Christ.” He was where he was because of the word of God and this is a reason that we all have to understand, but also that there is a testimony that we in our day have to maintain, as he was.

“In the Spirit” and “the Lord’s day” are very vital and practical truths. I can only understand where I am in the testimony by being led by the Spirit and the word of God, submitting to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and by practically answering to these truths.

Finally, let us reverently apply our question to the Lord Jesus. In John 12:27–28, we read, “Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name.” Why, at the end of a perfect life, in which God had been glorified, has He to consider what lay before Him and which caused His soul to be stirred and agitated, and to request that He be saved from “this hour.” He answers Himself and recognizes that there was a divine cause involved, a cause that we can never enter fully into now, but will eternally enjoy, all that that cause had planned. **“Father, glorify thy name.” His request could not be answered if the purpose of Divine love was to be brought about, so in perfect submission and obedience, He moved forward and endured what that hour involved, and because of it, the Father’s name will be eternally glorified.**

Jeffrey Brett

REST

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

ASSURANCE AND PROTECTION!

Uncertainty as to the future, and discontent with present conditions are the chief features of the world as we know it; and it is not pessimism but the truth that says, no man or group of men, no party, nations or league of nations has any practical remedy for things as they are. We have no intention of wasting our time or space in proving this; we have no need to, for it is being proclaimed from every house top. But it is our intention to urge upon our Christian friends that they need not be uncertain or discontented, for full assurance and satisfaction lie in the knowledge of God—in what He is and what He will give.

He has said, “I AM Alpha and Omega...I WILL GIVE unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely” (Revelation 22:6). “I am Alpha and Omega”—the A and the Z. He was the first to speak and He will have the last word about everything. We may rely with an absolute assurance on His word. He has spoken to us in His beloved Son, our Savior; and His voice has not driven us from His presence trembling with fear, but has drawn us to Him. How could we help believing on Him who sent our Lord Jesus Christ into this world to speak to us His words of salvation, of reconciliation, and eternal life. They have given us a great and sure hope, and we know, having heard and believed them, that the Tabernacle of God, which John saw in vision in this chapter, is our everlasting abode. To dwell with God, who is now not a stranger or an unknown God, but well known to us in Jesus’ love, is our destiny. We are not uncertain.

God will not go back on His Word, for the “I AM” changes not, and He “willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us” (Hebrews 6:17-18).

Yet it seems easier to trust about eternity than about time, and many who have no fear as to what lies beyond death are greatly troubled about present circumstances and what tomorrow may bring forth. But this should not be. The word of the Alpha and Omega is surely enough for us. “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things.” If His love has been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost that is given unto us, we cannot doubt Him. He may, and often does, use our circumstances in the way of chastisement, in order that we may be partakers of His holiness and weaned from the world, but He will not leave us nor forsake us as we pass through the trial. Thus has he said, and He will most certainly be faithful to His spoken word. He would deny Himself if He were not. He would not be Alpha and Omega.

To whom can we go but to Him? “It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes.” No matter how well meaning and honest they may be, they are not equal to the unravelling of the universal tangle. And this is because God is not the beginning of their schemes, nor His glory the end of their measures. The world is not ready for the fulfilment of the prayer, “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” and it is because of this that the Christian who sincerely prays that prayer must stand apart from the world and its politics. If he does not, he will be involved in the confusion and uncertainty of the world; but if he trusts in the Lord, he will be kept in peace. “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee.”

It gives great confidence and quietness of spirit to know that God is over all, and that He can, and does, control the waves of evil, saying, “Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further.” And in this confidence the Christian becomes an intercessor on behalf of all men, and is of the greatest service to his day and generation. This is God’s will for His children, that “supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority: that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty” (1 Timothy 2:1–2). As long as the Church is on earth, God will keep His hand upon affairs and make all things work together for the good of them that love Him. It must always be so, since He is the One who has said, “I am Alpha and Omega.”

It is “Alpha and Omega,” whose word is infallible and final, who proclaims, “I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.” He is the giving God, He delights to give; it is His very nature. He does not withhold His gifts even though men are unthankful and unholy. We praise His goodness as we think of His kindness to men, but what tongue of men or angels can tell the love that led Him to give His Son? This was His “unspeakable gift.” Thanks be unto Him for it, forever.

But the greatest of all gifts did not exhaust His giving. He still gives and must do so forever. He gives of Himself, not for now, but to the thirsty, for He is Himself surely the fountain of the water of life. And he that drinketh of this water shall never thirst. “The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost that is given unto us.” And we do not here separate Father, Son, and Holy Ghost from each other in this infinite outpouring of the fullness of divine love. The Father is the Source, the Son has fully revealed it, and is the channel by whom it has reached us, and the Holy Ghost makes it a living reality to us, who apart from His work in us would be forever dead to it.

Here is satisfaction, and the heart that knows it could not be discontented even though his poverty were as deep as that of the Son of Man who had not a place to lay His head. What has the world to offer as compared with this? Its best is vanity and what it gives, it gives with a grudging hand; but here we have heaven’s fullness offered freely and the only condition is thirst on the part of the recipient.

Let us thank God that in days of uncertainty and discontent we may rejoice in full assurance and complete satisfaction.

J.T. Mawson

Answers to Scripture Search!

1. David’s (2 Samuel 19:16-18)
2. Joash (2 Chronicles 24:1)
3. Romans (6:4) and Colossians (2:12)

THREE APPLES!

They say three apples have changed world history: the apple in the Garden of Eden, the apple that fell on Isaac Newton's head, and Apple, Inc. Steve Jobs, the co-founder and CEO of Apple, Inc. had an uncanny knack for anticipating technological change. Apple and its “iProducts” are at the forefront of the IT revolution that is changing the way we use and communicate information. As for Isaac Newton's apple, it didn't really fall on his head but it did make him think, “Why should that apple always descend perpendicularly to the ground?” His laws of gravity—and work in the other branches of science—date back to the 17th century but are still at the core of our understanding of the universe.

What about that first apple? Well, the Bible calls it the “fruit” of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. When Adam and Eve ate it, they did what God had told them not to do, “for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die” (Genesis 2:16; 3:6). It was their disobedience—not the fruit—that had this deadly effect. Why? Because sin—doing our own will—separates us from God, the source of all life. This is by far the biggest change of the three and the Bible sums it up this way: “just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin...death spread to all men, because all sinned” (Romans 5:12).

Some of us are Apple users, some are not. Most of us recognize Isaac Newton's scientific genius, but we get through life without understanding the details of his discoveries. However, each and every one of us is personally involved in the change that happened in the Garden of Eden. We may ignore it, deny it, mock it, but we can't escape it and its consequences. Again the Bible says, “There is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account” (Hebrews 4:13).

Steve Jobs died of cancer when he was only 56. He famously said about facing death, “You are already naked. There is no reason not to follow your heart.” If you're inclined to take his advice—after all he was right about so much in the world of computing—listen to the Bible first: “The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it?” (Jeremiah 17:9). It's what got us into a mess in the first place! No, we need to turn from self to Son: God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who loves us so much that He “suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God” (1 Peter 3:18)

God has every right to judge us but He is “longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). He is pleading now: “Be reconciled to God. For He [God] made Him who knew no sin [the Lord Jesus] to be sin for us [you and me], that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Corinthians 5:20-21). Isaac Newton said of the universe: “This most beautiful system could only proceed from the dominion of an intelligent and powerful Being.” He was right, and this most beautiful salvation comes from the same source.

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved” (Acts 16:31).