



# ***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,**

“He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself to walk, even as He walked...and now children, abide in Him” (1 John 2:6,28).

This wondrous pathway of walking in the footsteps of our dear Lord does not require that anything exceedingly difficult be done or call for some special intellectual qualifications. The secret is simply, “Abide in Me.” Of course, it does mean a true knowledge of Him and of subjection to God the Holy Spirit, always through prayerful communion and reading of His Word. Alas, however, we must confess how little we know of this and so we fail to guard against all which would come in between our souls and Him. We fail to abide in Him, which is the reason we are so unlike Him and there is so little for the glory of the Father. If we are entangled in what the devil, the enemy of our souls, offers us and with the many things that fill our eyes, our hearts, and our time (entertainment, sports, etc.), then that is not abiding in Him; therefore, there cannot be much fruit to the glory of the Father. If we are entangled in unholy associations with friends who are not Christians and who do not love our Lord Jesus or if we spend our time with worldly Christians whose ways of living are just like those who do not belong to Christ, then we cannot walk as He walked and be good witnesses for Him. If we are in a path of unrighteousness where we are unable to manifest the love of the Father to His own, then we are not abiding in Him, and there is not much fruit to the Father’s glory in the Son.

May we therefore be stirred by the Spirit’s voice calling us to listen more earnestly to the voice of our Beloved Lord. We are in a day of great privilege; being witnesses of what the world has gone through this past year with Covid 19, the Lord is speaking to all of us that we may have but a few more steps to travel before He comes to take us home. The judgment seat of Christ lies before us, where everything will be fully brought to light as He appraises it. May He give us true spiritual desire to abide in Him. We shall find ourselves in the path of true discipleship, and there will be much fruit to the glory of the Father and the Son, our beloved Lord and Savior.

I trust that you will enjoy the great articles in this issue during the summer months. It is our prayer that the Lord will use *Toward the Mark* to help you to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Him.

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

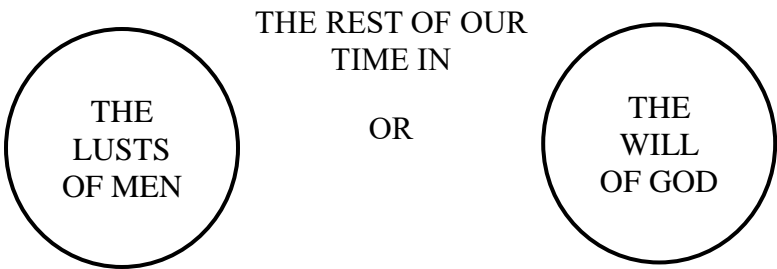
MILK

*"The truth shall make you free"*

***"THE REST OF OUR TIME"***

Let this expression, "the rest of our time," come home to every one of us in its full force. How long it may be, none can say. It may be years, or months, or weeks, or days. It may be brought to a sudden close any day by the coming of the Lord, which is our blessed hope; but, whether long or short, this is all the time we shall have in which to live either in the lusts of men, or in the will of God. Peter puts these two spheres in sharp contrast in one sentence (1 Peter 4:2). Let me set them out clearly before our eyes that we may seriously consider them.

One sphere means death, the other life, and every soul that has been born again by the word of God will gladly agree with that word through Peter, that "the time past of our life may suffice us" to have lived in the sphere of death (v. 3), that "the rest of our time" may be lived to the will of God. But let us see what was necessary before this can be possible. Great moral questions had first to be faced and settled. Questions of justice, of holiness and truth, of our broken responsibilities and the judgment of God.



It was evident that when God created man He had a great purpose in view. The very way in which He made him, and the life and powers with which He endowed him, and that remarkable word in the divine counsels, "Let us make man in our own image, after

our likeness” prove this. It was not God’s intention that this creature of His hand and counsel should become a prey to evil and perish from His sight. In man’s creation, God’s nature and character were involved; the glory of His throne and the joy of His heart were linked up with man.

But man fell—possibly the first day; and how terrible was his fall! Not only was the tempter listened to, and man succumbed in the temptation, but in so doing, *with open eyes*, man became a traitor to his God:—for Adam was not deceived; he knew what he did; he went over to the enemy, carrying with him all the powers with which he had been given; and his race in this alienated state has used them *against* God. So complete is this alienation from the life of God, that the children of Adam, man in his natural state, love the circle of death, and hate the circle of life! Man in his natural state cannot please God: “for the carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Romans 8:7–8). “Men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil” (John 3:19).

What an appalling plight we, as natural men, were in!—prisoners in the circle of death, with heavy penalties against us because of our sins. We were as one lying under a death sentence for grievous offence against the laws of the land. There is no release for him without outraging the justice that imprisoned and sentenced him; there is only one door by which he can pass out of that captivity—the door of DEATH. Thus, men are held in captivity to sin, and held by their lusts in this circle of death, blind to this awful position, and to the fact that after this comes judgment. There we all were!

And there was no help from any creature; nor could man release himself and regain his former innocence or make restitution to the outraged Majesty of heaven. Satan neither would nor could release him, but by the captivity of his wiles might menace the very throne of God. Holy angels could not help, for knowing only

holiness they could but condemn the transgressor. If God Himself did not intervene there was no hope.

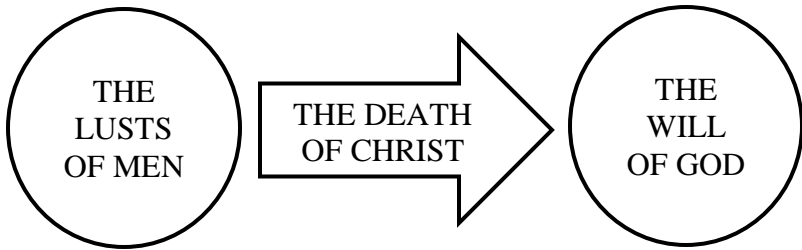
God Himself, then, must intervene, for the stability of His throne was challenged and His rectitude impugned. But what can He do? If He is indulgent to His creatures and passes by their sins, He is not a God of holiness; if He judges the sinner according to His holy justice, His purpose of blessing must fail, and if that happened, could He still be God? May it not be that Satan reasoned thus, and think that he had placed God upon the horns of an awful dilemma? What will God do? How shall He bring men who hate Him and love their sins, to hate their sins and worship Him? How shall He bring them out of the circle of death and place them in the circle of life, and be consistent with His holy character? Out of the inexhaustible treasures of His eternal wisdom and power He could fill the heavens with countless suns, but this question belonged to another realm, it could not be solved by an act of power or dismissed by a word. Justice and love, truth and mercy, had all to be considered. God must be Himself; He must display what He is in regard to the apparent overthrow of all His plans for man. Can He find a way via some agency? Men may compromise, but God cannot; every one of His attributes must stand to the full height of their eternal perfection; His justice must be fully vindicated; truth must be upheld; how then shall love's sweet voice be heard? How shall the heart of God which moved in all His purposes for man's blessing and His own glory have its way? Every intelligence in the universe awaited the revelation of God's way; for on the success of it depended His glory, the overthrow of all evil, and the blessing and peace of every creature subject to Him.

1 Peter 3:18 gives the answer: "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh but quickened by the Spirit." Christ, the only begotten Son of God, the eternal occupant of the Father's bosom, is He who undertook this wondrous work. A word then reaches us from the counsels of heaven: it is the Son who speaks,

“Lo, I come to do thy will, O God; a body hast Thou prepared Me.” And, sent by the Father, He is the evidence to the universe of God’s love to man.

He came into humanity, into the circle of disobedience and death where men were. In true humanity He moved amongst sinful men—the holy One in spirit, soul and body; just as holy in His manhood as He was in His divine glory; just as holy in the manger, in childhood, in ministry, and on the cross of Calvary as He was when He sat upon the throne of glory and made the worlds. This holy One of God came into the circle of death to open, by His dying, a way out of it for us, and bring us to God.

The will of God, which He came to do, carried Him into the sufferings of Calvary. He suffered at the hands of men, but the sufferings that this passage speaks of were not from men. “*He suffered for man’s sin.*” Men could not inflict these sufferings; it was the Lord Jehovah that bruised Him when He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. A darkness that no eye of man could pierce enshrouded the cross, for the woe of the Sinbearer no heart of man could fathom, when from that impenetrable pall came the cry, “ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTHANI!” From the depths out of which the forsaken One cried, we learn the righteously opened way for us to pass out of death into life. There, upon the cross, where His soul was made an offering for sin, God’s love to man was proclaimed in the gift of His Son, that justice and truth might be upheld and that the purpose of God in this to us might come into full effect, in absolute consistency with His holiness. Having suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, His death opened the way out of the circle of death into the circle of life—a way by which men may pass out of the bondage of lust into the liberty of grace to do the will of God. Again, I use the circles as setting before our eyes the way out of the one into the other.



It is faith that carries us along that wonderful way, enabling us to turn our backs upon the lusts of men, and eagerly seek the will of God.

But let us note the fact that DEATH is the only door out of the one circle into the other. This great fact is pressed upon us in the truth of baptism, which is death in figure. “Know ye not that as many of us as were baptized unto Jesus Christ were *baptized unto his death*? Therefore, we are buried with Him by baptism unto death” (Romans 6:2–3). It is this connection that an apparently difficult passage in Peter’s epistle is made more difficult to many by being torn from its context to support mistaken thoughts. From its use as an illustration, and so of secondary importance, it has been exaggerated to the primary position, and the subject obscured by it.

It is clear that in Noah’s day the whole world lived in the lusts of men, as in a circle of death upon which judgment was to fall, and out of which God desired to bring all who would harken to His voice. God’s offer was to carry them through the flood in the ark, while the storm would surge about the ark which sheltered them; it was a figure of Christ’s death. The Spirit of Christ preached this way of deliverance to men through Noah. Noah and his household escaped by this way out of the sphere of death into the sphere of life. Our baptism answers to this. In it we acknowledge that the judgment of God lies upon man; that the only way out from under it is through death, and in baptism we identify ourselves with the death of Christ. We acknowledge that death is our place but rejoice that in the risen Christ we come into the circle of life. We reckon ourselves to be dead to the lusts of men



and alive in Christ unto the will of God. In the resurrection of Christ, we obtain a good or purged conscience, for all our liabilities have been met by the blood of Jesus. When we consider the way that God has taken for our deliverance, can we be indifferent to His will? When we see that Jesus suffered for us that He might bring us to God, can we any longer live unto the lusts of men?

Do not our hearts answer, “The time past of our lives must suffice” for that.

We have received a new life and nature, and power for the sphere of life into which God has brought us. Through death we have been brought into the circle of life, in association with Christ, in peace with God, while we wait in hope of the glory with Him.

How wonderful are God’s ways, how unsearchable His wisdom! He has brought us to Himself in Christ after He had made expiation for sin, so that His ways in righteousness and love have been declared before all intelligences in heaven and earth; the devil has been silenced; his schemes of evil are exposed, and every created intelligence will be compelled to acknowledge the excellence and glory of God’s resources in His Son and bow the knee to Him. Thus, He will fulfil every purpose of His love and find His full delight in the sons of men who shall be brought to Him in full conformity to His own Son, as the First-born among many brethren (Romans 8:29). Even now His triumph over Satan is so great, so that we who know His love gladly turn away from the lusts of men to live the rest of our time to the will of God.

J.T. Mawson

### **SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES!**

1. How many days did it take Laban to catch Jacob after he fled from him?
2. What is the name of the prophetess that lived during Josiah’s reign?
3. Who was hoping that Paul would give him money for a bribe?

## MEAT

*"Sanctify them by the truth"*

### *THE HOUSE OF GOD*

In considering the house of God, it is helpful if we distinguish the various aspects in which the Church of God, the Assembly, those who are the called-out ones, is seen in Scripture. The usual term of assembly or church is really an umbrella expression, if we can so speak. The persons who are the Lord's own, those redeemed by His precious blood, are seen collectively in at least four types:

- The Body of Christ,
- The Wife of Christ,
- The Bride of Christ, and
- The House of God.

The Body of Christ represents the believers as those that have a heavenly character. The Body was formed in Acts 2, consequent upon the ascension and glorification of our Lord Jesus Christ, when the presence of the Holy Spirit on earth was dwelling in the disciples gathered together. Thus the Body, composed of every believer and vitally linked to its Head in heaven, is maintained, directed, and controlled. It is generally associated with the place of privilege into which we have been brought by the work of God through new birth and the redemption which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Wife of Christ aspect sees us as His helpmeet, formed out of the Man, bone of his bone; she has her place with our Lord, in view of the world to come and the place of administration into which His work has brought her. Having been given a new nature (at new birth) and a new body (at the Rapture) the wife is introduced in Revelation 19 as having made herself ready: "to present you a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Corinthians 11).

The Bride of Christ has to do with the affections and public display. She is not mentioned directly until Revelation 21; her place is with Christ eternally during God's Day of Rest. She is seen as coming down from God as adorned for Her husband. All the work of adornment is of God's providing, the work of His sovereign grace in providing a bride

for His blessed Son, in contrast with the Wife making herself ready for the Millennium.

The House of God is the dwelling place of God on earth today through the Spirit's presence in the believers. It mainly speaks of our responsibility as living here in this world to represent God and to be the place from which His grace and blessing issues forth toward man, the result being praise to God for all His goodness.

## **IN THE OLD TESTAMENT**

Read Genesis 28:10–22, 31:13, and 35:1–7

The first mention of the House of God in the scriptures is in relation to Jacob and Bethel (Bethel means house of God). As a young man, I was taught that it is often helpful to study the first mention of a subject to understand the key principles associated with it. This is a piece of advice that has proven true. In Genesis 28 we find Jacob brought face to face with God, and there are five main principles for us to note:

1. The Lord's presence is seen and recognized (28:16)
2. "How dreadful [awesome] is this place"—Holiness and reverence in response (28:17)
3. A direct link to heaven—a ladder on earth with its top in heaven (28:12)
4. God's grace and faithfulness are evident (28:14–15)
5. God's testimony is displayed (28:18)

Firstly, there is in the House of God a realization that "the Lord is in this place." His presence and activity are unmistakable. At this stage in his life Jacob did not know God (27:20; 28:21), and although Jacob was running away from his brother, had acted falsely and lied, yet when he is brought into the house of God, he realized the presence of God.

Secondly, when brought before God, there is an immediate sense of His holiness and the awe which His presence brings.

Thirdly, the House of God has a direct connection to heaven with access to it. The ladder was the means by which angels ascended and descended from earth to heaven, and the Lord stood above it.

Fourthly, the grace of God—"the land...to thee I will give it and thy seed. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth" (28:13–14)—is seen in all its plenitude and vastness—the blessing of all the families

of the earth. The faithfulness of God is also apparent: “I am with thee and will keep thee and...I will not leave thee!” What faithfulness to one who was a fugitive, who had nothing and deserved nothing, except punishment.

Finally, God’s testimony is brought to light: Jacob erects a pillar, always a type of public testimony, and pours oil onto it (a picture of the Holy Spirit) and names the place Bethel, the House of God.

In response to God’s promise, Jacob finds himself making a vow, rather than simply accepting God at His word: “IF GOD will be with me...keep me...give me bread...garment[s] to put on and I come again to my father’s house, then shall the Lord be my God and...I will surely give the tenth unto thee.”

During the next twenty years we see Jacob striving day and night without looking to God at all; then God spoke to him, telling him to return to the land of his father and reminding him that He was the God of Bethel, “where thou anointedst the pillar, where thou vowedst the vow.” We find that the work of God in teaching Jacob begins to bear results: he immediately left, with all he had acquired. Still, he had tests before getting to Bethel—first with Laban and then with Esau. Despite the angels of God meeting him and his recognition of the Camp of God, he sought to ingratiate himself with his brother to avoid facing him. The result: Jacob builds himself a house and gets stuck at Succoth with all its attendant problems, although he does build an altar to the God of Israel. But then, God speaks again to Jacob: “Go to Bethel and build an altar unto the God that appeared to thee there.” After experiencing the discipline of God, he acts and, recognizing God’s holiness, he brings his family to order and requires that the strange gods be removed and that they cleanse themselves. This occurs at Shechem, the place of decision, where Joshua would later say: “Choose ye this day whom ye will serve.” This is the place of separation—another feature of the house of God—and now Jacob will acknowledge the God of the House of God: he builds an altar, the place of worship and praise to God. And in the place where he owns God, the Lord confirms his promise to bless. Jacob sets up another pillar and pours oil and a drink offering upon it—praise to God, and in the drink offering, joy in God—that which gladdens the heart of God and man—thus completing the features of the house of God.

Read Exodus 15:2,13; 25:1–10; 29:43–46; 40:34–35; Numbers 5:1–3

We move now from the outline and shadow to the tabernacle in the wilderness, the habitation of God: designed by God and built by man. The children of Israel had been in bondage after there arose a Pharaoh who knew not Joseph. Moses was raised up of God to deliver His people from the yoke of Pharaoh. After Pharaoh refused to let the people go, God demonstrated His power through the ten plagues that came upon Egypt. The Passover was the instrument used by God to accomplish His mighty work of redemption. The Passover consisted of three principal features:

- Protection—blood applied to the houses with hyssop,
- Food—Lamb roasted by fire and unleavened bread, and
- Exodus from Egypt—deliverance by power at the Red Sea and destruction of the enemy.

In the Passover, God, by His grace, secured a people for Himself on the basis of redemption. The Lamb was slain, and the blood applied to the houses for shelter; the Lamb having been roasted with fire was food for the people and, together with unleavened bread, provided sustenance for their journey. At the Red Sea the people stood still to see the mighty victory which God accomplished, and Pharaoh and his host perished in the water. The people were freed from the yoke of the oppressor and then, for the first time, we find singing. They sing, “The Lord is...my salvation...and I will prepare Him a habitation” (Exodus 15:2). In New Testament language: “We joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:11). “Thou in thy mercy led forth the people which thou hast redeemed, thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation” (Exodus 15:13).

The detail of the construction of the tabernacle and its accompanying furniture, vessels, and priesthood, was communicated by God to Moses on the mountain (Exodus 25 and following). The ground upon which God took up His abode in the midst of the people is made clear in Exodus 29. Directions are given first concerning the construction of the sacred vessels and the furniture, which set out the display of God; second, for the consecration of the priests; third, the detail of the continual burnt offering; and finally, for the vessels necessary to approach God. The essential feature for man’s approach to God must

be on the basis of having the perfections of the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ constantly before the eye and heart.

Necessarily following this is the separation of the tabernacle and the priests to God—our sanctification. Now all is prepared for God to dwell amongst His people: “Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle” (Exodus 40:34–35).

In summary, the dwelling place of God in the midst of His people is based upon:

1. The fragrance of Christ as burnt offering,
2. The One who is dwelling in the midst of His people is the God of redemption, and
3. The separation of the whole system to God on the basis that His claims have been met.

It is well to recall that obedience to God is a fundamental requirement in the building of the House of God—note at least 14 times in chapters 39 and 40 the statement: “as Jehovah had commanded Moses.” Furthermore, holiness and separation from evil is essential (read Numbers 5:1–3).

God was in the midst of His people on earth, and all could approach in the appointed way and with their sacrifices. The only people on earth where God was dwelling—truly a great privilege, but with a concomitant responsibility.

Read 2 Chronicles 3:1–4; 6:1–11; 7:1–2; Deuteronomy 16:11

The next aspect of the House of God is seen in the Temple built by Solomon.

The children of Israel had come through the wilderness and entered into the land of God’s providing. The tabernacle had been set up at Shiloh and was known as the Tabernacle of the Congregation (1 Samuel 2:22), but also as the “Temple of the Lord” (1 Samuel 3:3)—a picture of the house that would later be built in Jerusalem and would be “exceeding magnificent” (1 Chronicles 22:5). Perhaps the preeminent thought in relation to the Temple is the display of the glory of the One

whose temple it is. The construction and detail of the building, just as in the case of the tabernacle, are designed by God, but here communicated to David who gave the complete instructions to Solomon. Solomon built the temple, and the details provide beautiful types for us: the stones prepared before being built into the structure; the abundance of gold, silver, and precious stones; and the varieties of timber. All the work is completed, the Ark of the Lord in its place, and, after Solomon has dedicated and prayed, fire comes down from heaven and consumes the offerings and the glory of the Lord fills the temple.

Again, as He did in the wilderness, the Lord took up His abode in His Temple in the midst of His people whom He had chosen. This was the one place on earth to which the true Israelite turned with thoughts of worship and praise (Deuteronomy 16:11).

It has often been remarked that there are seven kinds of gold used in the temple to illustrate the distinctive divine glories that are seen now in the saints of God by the angels (the all various wisdom of God, Ephesians 3:10) and will be seen in the kingdom. There are also four varieties of wood used in the construction, which in type may reflect our resurrection bodies as seen in the Holy City, which in the Millennial reign will be the dwelling place of God.

Read Ezra 1:1–2; 3:8; 6:14–22

Next, we consider the House of God following the return from the Captivity of Babylon. Following the failure of Israel to stand for God after being led into idolatry and false religious practice, the hand of the Lord finally came in judgement upon the people. Nebuchadnezzar was the instrument employed to discipline the children of Israel. Jerusalem was sacked, the temple destroyed, and the people taken into captivity. But God (who is rich in mercy) had already, through the prophets, promised that the people would be returned to the land so that they could once more have a temple for the Lord. This building was put into the hands of men, and although delay and weakness were evident, yet the Lord, by his servants Haggai and Zechariah, encouraged the people to rebuild. When completed, the children of Israel offered sacrifices and sin offerings and kept the Passover with the feast of unleavened bread, because they had purified and separated themselves and “kept the dedication of this house of God with joy” (Ezra 6:16).

Here there are no outward signs of God's presence. This is in contrast to both the inauguration of the tabernacle and Solomon's temple when fire came down from heaven to consume the sacrifices and the cloud of glory was displayed. Just as the remnant in that day accepted that God was dwelling in His holy temple and that He had accepted their sacrifices, we also accept by faith that God has accepted the work of our Lord Jesus to make us His people and that He dwells in the midst of His people (Matthew 18:20). That this was God's house was confirmed by the Lord through the prophet Haggai: "The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former" (2:9) and by the Lord speaking when here in this world of "my Father's house" (John 2:16), and His final rejection of it as God's house: "Behold your house is left onto you desolate" (Matthew 28:38).

### **IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**

As we follow the House of God, we find that the Lord Jesus referred to a new dwelling for God while here in this world: "Destroy this temple and in three days I will rebuild it...but he spake of the temple of his body" (John 2:19–21). Again, in speaking to Peter the Lord said, "I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18).

Read Acts 2:1–4,11,37–47; 1 Corinthians 6:19; Ephesians 2:22; 1 Peter 2:5

Now, in the day of grace, God began to dwell on earth in an entirely new way as set out in Acts 2. God, in the person of the Holy Spirit, came down "as a rushing mighty wind and filled the house where they were sitting and...cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:2–4).

The believers are viewed collectively as "the building fitly framed together growing unto a holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:21,22) and, at the same time, individually each believer is told, "your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you" (1 Corinthians 6:19). This house of God that begins in Acts 2 continues today and will culminate at the rapture, when the whole redeemed company will be caught up to be forever with the Lord.

We can observe in Acts 2 the same principles that characterized the House of God in its first reference in Genesis are seen now with the House of God in Christianity.



1. The Lord's presence seen and recognized (v. 11)
2. A direct link to heaven (v. 2,33–36)
3. Holiness and reverence in response (v. 37,38)
4. God's grace and faithfulness are evident (v. 39)
5. God's testimony displayed (v. 46–47)

In the first place, the presence of the Holy Spirit is readily recognized by the crowd: “the wonderful works of God.” Second, the Holy Spirit is on earth and the Lord Jesus Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Next they were pricked to the heart, repented, and were baptized, separating themselves from the world which had crucified Jesus of Nazareth, who is raised up and exalted by God and made Lord and Christ. God's grace is seen: “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off.” His faithfulness is evident as the believers “continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, breaking of bread and prayers, and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” Finally, there is a public testimony to God as they continued “daily with one accord...breaking bread from house to house...praising God.”

As the preaching of the gospel progressed and the truth spread, the Lord raised up those to preach and teach, and in Acts we see the gospel spreading from Jerusalem to Samaria and then to the Gentile nations. As this work proceeds, we find that the responsibility of the maintenance of the truth in the hands of men is characterized by failure. The epistles of Paul, in particular, show how this failure is evident. In writing to the Corinthians, the apostle has to admonish them for being carnal, forming divisions, and allowing disorder amongst the saints. He uses this occasion to set before us the truth of the church in testimony here in this world.

### Read 1 Corinthians 3:3–18

In this section, we have the saints seen as builders and encouraged by the apostle to be wise builders. He describes the builders as fellow-workmen and God's workmen; the saints are the result of God's husbandry, they are God's building as a result of the wise working of Paul, who laid the foundation of the building in Corinth. But Paul cautions them, “let every man heed how he builds.” This admonition

gives the two sides of building: The Lord Jesus said to Peter, “Upon this Rock [Himself] I will build my church,” whilst Paul can say, “I laid the foundation” and “let every man heed how he builds.” On the one hand everything that the Lord Jesus builds is absolutely perfect, it can be nothing else; however, what man builds may be defective.

“Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are” (vv. 12–17).

The apostle sets before us three classes of builders:

- Good builder, whose work is good and who receives a reward.
- Good workman, who is saved, but his work is bad and is burned up, and he suffers loss.
- Bad workman, who builds bad material, and both work and worker are destroyed.

The verses make noticeably clear the different types of work: on the one hand, gold, silver, and precious stones, and on the other wood, hay, and stubble. There are those brought into the assembly who are truly saved but others who are not born again, who are without divine life. Such dead persons may be brought in unwittingly, the introducer being deceived. They may be introduced because of erroneous teaching, and the person has only an appearance of life. In the ruin and breakdown of Christendom in the present day, there are those who claim to be preaching the gospel, but alas, it is a false gospel. They may have many followers and an outwardly successful building, but sadly the day will reveal the truth. Just as with the tares and the wheat in Matthew 13, the Lord allows things to continue until the end, every professor in the Lord Jesus is taken on their profession (“the Lord knoweth them that are His”). That is why there are many “ifs” in the apostle’s writings—“if ye continue”—not that continuance will result in the blessing, but rather that it will display the truth of reality, whether in time or at the

Judgement Seat. In 1 Timothy we have the setting forth of the order of the House of God and our behavior in the house.

Two final comments before moving to our next subject: First a word of caution to carefully examine Scripture to be clear about the House of God and in which aspect it is being viewed. Is it the House of God in all its perfection as that under construction by the Lord Himself, or is it the building of man? Second, a word of guidance: Carefully note 2 Timothy 2 and observe the instruction given by the Apostle to his beloved child in the faith, and by extension to us today, that in a great house there are many vessels—and how we are to walk given the many companies of professing Christians and the mass of error in that profession. We are to purify ourselves, separating ourselves from what is dishonoring and to our Master.

*In Him it is ordained to raise  
A temple to the Father's praise,  
Composed of all the saints who own  
No Savior but the "Living Stone"*

Read Revelation 21:9–10,22–33

The House of God continues to grow until the rapture of the saints and is seen in this world as the holy city, Jerusalem, during the world to come as all-glorious. "The Lord God Almighty is its temple, and the Lamb." Here, the thought of the city and the temple have coalesced and, as in the Old Testament God occupied the land in His people, just so the saints of God are the vessel used of God as the city and temple. All of the features of the House of God are seen again in this city/temple: the presence of the Lord (v. 23), holiness (v. 27), a link with heaven (v. 10), God's grace and faithfulness (22:2), and God's testimony (22:4–5).

In the thought of the city we have God's rule in relation to the world to come, whereas in the house it is God's dwelling, and in relation to the land or nation God's blessing. In the world to come all of these features come together, and the universe is a scene of perfect bliss.

*God and the Lamb shall there  
The light and temple be,  
And radiant hosts for ever share  
The unveiled mystery.*

Read Revelation 21:1–9

In its final state the tabernacle of God is seen in the relation to the new earth and dwelling amongst men. “The holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of the heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (Revelation 21:2).

In this beautiful description we have the redeemed people of God, not now as a wife, a helpmeet for the man to administer with Him the millennial kingdom, but as a bride, adorned in all the glories of God, the fruit of the sovereign work of God, for the affections of her husband. This is the character which she will have eternally and is the vessel through which God will tabernacle amongst men during His day of rest. God has desired to dwell amongst men from the beginning, in Genesis coming to man in the cool of the day; He has now fulfilled His desire, and His work is ended in relation to men, His purpose to have a bride for His Son brought to fruition, and men brought by His sovereign love and grace into a place of blessing.

*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.*

JAP

**ANSWERS TO SCRIPTURE SEARCH!**

1. Seven days (Genesis 31:23)
2. Huldah (2 Kings 22:14–20)
3. Felix (Acts 24:26)

## EXERCISE

*"Exercise thyself unto piety"*

### ONE THING I DESIRE

*Psalm 27*

"The Lord is my light and my salvation." Is not that beautiful? "The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?" Why does the Apostle Paul tell us to rejoice? Things were going badly with him when he wrote Philippians, but he is not afraid. If he is not afraid, we are not to be afraid. The Psalmist was not afraid, though there was the wicked one, enemies, war. Because the Lord was light, the Lord was salvation, the Lord was strength: Why should he be afraid?

But if there is anything else in which your confidence is placed, failure will follow. Your confidence should be in the Lord. If in the Lord, He will prove sufficient no matter what the circumstances may be; we are only a poor feeble people, so our joy and strength and confidence must be in the Lord alone. He will prove sufficient whatever happens, and if we tell Him our troubles, He will give us the peace that passes understanding. "One thing" engaged Paul, "one thing" the Psalmist desired. "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in His temple." Is that what we desire? Is that what we seek after? We may be very nice Christians, speaking after the manner of men, and know very little, or nothing, of "beholding the beauty of the Lord."

It is everything to have the Lord before us. You need not isolate yourself; if you are in school, at work or at home, or anywhere else, you can get alone with the Lord. The great lack today is we so little dwell in the presence of God, so as to see the beauty of the Lord.

Then we are to "enquire in His temple." It is the place of light where we get guidance. Why is it that one Christian says a thing is right, and another says it is wrong? It is just this, one or other of them is not in the light of the temple. It is not enough to have Scripture at our fingertips. We may be well up in our Bibles, may know our Bible wonderfully, and still know nothing about guidance in a difficulty. We must get into the presence of God if we are to get real understanding of

the Scriptures and light from God as to our path. Differences of judgment are because we dwell so little in the presence of God, and we are so much formed by one another. We run to one another and say, “What do you think about this?” and “What do you think about that?” We must get alone, the door shut—the door of our hearts, these poor foolish hearts of ours that go out here and there—that God may speak to us, like Mary sitting at the feet of Christ, and hearing His word, that God may make His mind clear to us. That is what the Apostle Paul did. He dwelt so in the presence of God that he had the mind of God in a wonderful way when many were otherwise minded. He was in a time of trouble, but nothing troubled him, nothing made him afraid.

The Psalmist said, I will offer in Thy tabernacle sacrifices of joy. Why? Because he was in the presence of God. In spite of the difficulties, in spite of the enemies he could rejoice and sing. In myself I am a poor thing, and I need the Lord every day and every moment of my life, and I cannot get on without Him. Glorious as my position is in Christ, glorious as the prospect is before me, yet in myself I am a poor thing; so, feeling my weakness and the condition of things I turn to God, not being able to bear them alone, and I pray, “Teach me Thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path because of mine enemies.” We are such poor things, and we need Him every moment. Whoever forsakes us—and the dearest may forsake—yet the Lord will be sufficient. “Wait on the Lord be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.” If we get into the secret of God, if we get alone with Him, so that He can speak to us and we can hear His whisper, then He comforts our hearts with His complete superiority to everything, and then we can turn to others and say, Be of good courage. Do not fear. If you trust in man, be afraid. If you are trusting in circumstances, be afraid. If you are trusting in some grand things that are going to happen, be afraid; but if you have got the Lord before you, you need not fear. Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thy heart. Wait, I say, on the Lord, be much with Him, and know what it is to be shut in with Him, and hear His voice, in that region, so to speak, where the voice of man does not penetrate, and then we can be strong for God in this scene, and invite others to be of good courage, because the Lord is the Lord, and nothing can disturb Him.

## REST

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

### THEY WORSHIPPED HIM

*Matthew 14:16–33*

The chapter I have read brings out the lovely features of Christ, as He passed through the scene where you and I have to walk. You will see how at the close of this chapter there is developed that which I believe He looks for above everything else, namely, that appreciation of Himself which leads to worship. The first worship meeting in the New Testament was in a stable (2:11). The next in a boat at the end of a dark night (14:33). The first was the homage due to Him as King; this as the Son of God.

We have what led up to it brought before us from verse 16. John's disciples learned the great tenderness—the deep sympathy of the heart of Christ in their sorrow. If we turn to Mark 6, where the same incident is recorded, you will find in verse 29 that these disciples when their master was dead took up his corpse and laid it in a tomb. There is no mention there of their coming and telling Jesus, but we read the apostles gathered themselves together and told Him all things they had done and taught. That is to say, at the very same moment, down two separate roads, but coming to the same blessed Person, were two very different companies. Down one road came a company of dejected, disappointed disciples, who were heart-broken because all their hopes were shattered; they had lost the one whom they had followed and on whom they had leaned. You can understand their feelings as they came and told Jesus.

If you are in sorrow, in trouble, in difficulty, imitate them. They went and told Jesus. There is pressure, sorrow, and trouble all round, and you cannot escape it—you cannot be in a world like this and escape it. If you have escaped it up to now, it will come. What are you going to do? When it comes, and your heart is broken, just go and tell Jesus, tell Him the smallest thing as well as the greatest.

At the same moment up come twelve men full of energy and life and vigor, and they come back and tell the Lord "Oh, we have had a

splendid time; even the very devils have been subject to us.” They are a company of disciples flushed with victory.

Picture these totally different companies together, one sorrowful and despondent, the other successful and rejoicing. Mark what the Lord said to them: “Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while.”

It seems to me that the company of mourners and the company of rejoicers are just taken aside by the blessed Lord at the same moment; He says, “You come into a desert place with Me.” Ah, brethren, it is a great thing to get alone with Him, it is that by which He preserves us.

Are you broken-hearted? He will comfort you. Are you flushed with success in His service? Be quiet. He quietens us down and teaches us that His own company is better than the most brilliant service or success that He could give us. How those broken-hearted mourners learned the grace, the tenderness of Christ, as He took them apart, and they found a desert with Jesus a place of the deepest blessing.

The sympathy of the Lord not only comes out here, but the way He is able to support in sorrow. Hebrews 9 says, “He is able to succor”; Hebrews 4, “He is able to sympathize;” and Hebrews 7, “He is able to save.”

Able to succor? Yes!

Able to sympathize? Yes!

Able to save? Yes! to the very end.

What the Spirit of God puts in such striking language with regard to His priesthood, we see in all His blessed life down here. I have no doubt He bore in His spirit all the sorrows He took away when He was on earth, thus qualifying Him to be the great and blessed High Priest which by grace your soul and mine know Him to be.

Think of His wonderful compassion. He sees the multitudes and He want to bless them. Oh, what a heart He had; what a tender heart! I do not doubt God has told us of this incident to encourage us and stimulate us, as well as to rebuke us. He has compassion on this huge company; He healed their sick, and when it was towards evening the disciples come, and the suggestion they make to the Lord is most appalling. “Send them away.” “Send the multitude away, that they may go into



the villages and buy themselves victuals.” It was a most inhumane proposal. Think of it. Five thousand men, and I suppose three times as many women and children, and the disciples say, “Let them go and get food for themselves,” forgetting they might die whilst in search of it. “Ah,” says Christ, “give ye them to eat.”

Are there hunger and misery round about, brethren? The Lord’s word is, “Give ye them to eat.” “Oh, but I have nothing.” Quite true. That is exactly what they said here. “We have here but five loaves and two fishes.” What did that mean? They left the Lord out. “Oh,” but you say, “we would not do that.” No, I do not think you would in words, but sometimes practically we do leave Him out; we do not count on our resources in Him.

They bring the five loaves and the two fishes to Him, and although they had been so callous, how blessed it is to see the gracious way of the Lord with them. He took them into partnership in this happy work of meeting the need of this hungry multitude. This He does as Israel’s Shepherd leading them in green pastures. He makes them sit down on the grass in ranks by fifties and hundreds. Why was that? In order that nobody might be passed over. Everybody got attended to. The twelve minister to their need, the five loaves and two fishes grow as they are carried round, and the multitude were all fed, their need met, each blessed.

We have displayed here love, sympathy, compassion, and power, as He makes those five small loaves feed that empty multitude. The disciples meanwhile are told to cross the lake whilst He dismisses them in His own inimitable way. I have no doubt He did this to rebuke them. They had been saying, the multitudes must go and get on as best they can. Now the Lord says, “Go, get aboard the ship, and look after yourselves.” That is what they deserved, I need not say. If He left us in the lurch, it is what we deserve oftentimes. But though they were alone on the storm-tossed lake, He had them in His thoughts. He went on high to pray, spending the night in intercession.

The Lord Jesus constrained the disciples to go into a ship to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. I should like to have been there and seen Him dismiss them.

Ah, those disciples—so like us—if they had had their way, there would have been five thousand witnesses against Christ scattered through the country that night. They would all have said, “We were hungry, and He could not, or would not, help us a bit.”

The sun was setting when the blessed Lord sent them home bright and happy, full and satisfied, so many witnesses of His compassion and of His power.

We, like the disciples, have to cross the angry waves of trouble and difficulty, want and woe. How blessed to know He thinks of us; He ever liveth to make intercession. We may forget Him, but blessed be His name, He never forgets us, His priestly care is ever over us.

After interceding on the height He descends and walks on the water to meet them. As they saw Him, not recognizing Him, fear took possession of them; but by and by, in a way they had never seen before, they have brought before their souls the glory of His Person. I think they read Deity in Him as He walked on the water that night, and when He comes near, and they are full of fear and fright, mark what He says: “Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.”

This is what we might call the music of His voice.

Are you in trouble? Are you in difficulty? Are you in distress? Are you under pressure? “Yes,” you say, “I know what that means.” I wonder whether you know what it is to hear His voice saying to you in the midst of your deepest troubles, “Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.” There is no music like the music of His voice, when He comes near to us in a moment like that. Now this is the Jesus that you and I are to know—full of power, full of cheer, delighting to banish our fear.

Peter now speaks: “Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water.” “If it be Thou” I do not think implies doubt, but what was moving in that disciple’s soul was the charm of the company of Christ. We not only get the music of His voice at a moment when difficulties press, but we are privileged to reach Him, to be found in His company.

“Come.” Ah, the authority of that word on Peter’s soul! We find that when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water to go to Jesus—a most touching scene. We see that feeble disciple walking on the water. Perhaps somebody says, “Oh, but you know he

sank.” True, but why point to that? Why do you not draw attention to the wonderful fact that he walked? He walked on water as really as his Master so long as his eye was fixed on Christ. It was divine power, of course, that sustained him there. Whether the water be stormy or whether the water be smooth, neither we nor Peter can surmount the waves unless sustained by divine power. It is as impossible in the trough of the sea as on the crest of the wave.

How could we walk on either? If the water were like a millpond, how could we walk on it? We could not. There are no circumstances under which any saint can walk rightly unless he is sustained by the blessed grace of Christ. That is the whole point. “Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water.” Well, out he comes, and you tell me he sank. Yes, he sank; but I will tell you what, he sank so near to Jesus that the Lord had only got to put out His hand to touch him.

Beloved fellow-Christians, set your hearts on getting so near Him that if you are in danger of sinking you will sink within touch of His hand. The Lord lifted him up, He will lift you up.

The next thing is they get back to the land. John’s Gospel tells us that the moment they get into the boat they are back to land. This gospel tells us that the moment they got back into the boat they fell down and worshipped Him.

What led them to do that?

They had discovered His sympathy, His compassion, the tenderness of His heart, the glory of His Person, the charm of His company, and the authority of His word, in the way He sustained and upheld the one that looked to Him. The effect on the company was they worshipped Him and said, “Thou art the Son of God.”

In the sixteenth chapter Peter confessed Him as the Son of God. The Father revealed the glory of the Son of God to him, but in the fourteenth chapter there were a dozen others who confessed Him Son of God, who were bowed in His presence, in the discovery of His worth and beauty and tenderness and grace, and they worshipped Him.

This confession of the glory of His Person flowing from the lips and hearts of those disciples is the first united burst of worship to the Son of God we find recorded. Let us seek to perpetuate it.

W.T.P. Wolston

## *PRICELESS IN VALUE—YET A FREE GIFT!*

A heavy splash was followed by many ripples and then the water below the pier was still. David Morse, a missionary, crouched low on the pier, his eyes riveted where a stream of little bubbles rose to the surface from deep under the water. In a moment, his old friend Rambhau, an Indian pearl diver, appeared and clambered onto the dock, grinning.

“Look at this one, my friend,” said Rambhau, as he took a big oyster from between his teeth. “I think it will be good.”

Morse took it and pried it open with his pocketknife. “Rambhau! Look!” exclaimed Morse, “It’s a treasure!”

“Yes, a good one,” shrugged the diver.

“Good! It’s perfect, isn’t it? Have you ever seen a better pearl?” exclaimed Morse, turning the pearl over in his hands.

“Oh, yes, there are better pearls, much better. I have one...” his voice trailed off. “See here—the imperfections—the black speck here, this tiny dent. It’s not even round, but good enough as pearls go.”

“Your eye is too sharp for your good, my friend,” lamented Morse. “I would never ask for a more perfect pearl!”

“It is just as you say about your God,” answered Rambhau. “To themselves people seem without fault, but God sees them as they really are.” The two men started down the dusty road to town.

“You’re right, Rambhau, but God offers a perfect righteousness to all who will simply believe and accept His free offer of salvation through His beloved Son.”

“No, my friend. As I’ve told you so many times, it’s too easy. That is where your religion breaks down. Perhaps I am too proud, but I must work for my place in heaven. Do you see that man over there? He is a pilgrim, perhaps to Bombay or Calcutta. He walks barefooted over the sharpest stones—and see—every few paces he kneels down and kisses the road. That is good. The first day of the new year I shall begin my pilgrimage. All my life I have planned it. I shall make sure of heaven this time. I am going to Delhi on my knees.”

“Rambhau! That’s crazy! It’s nine hundred miles to Delhi! The skin will break on your knees, and you will have an infection or disease before you ever get there.”

“No, I must go to Delhi. The suffering will be sweet, for it will purchase heaven for me.”

“Rambhau, my friend, you can’t! How can I let you do this when Jesus Christ, by His death and resurrection, has already done all to purchase heaven for you?”

But the old man could not be moved. “You are my dearest friend on earth. Through many years you have stood beside me. In sickness and want you have often been my only friend. But even you cannot turn me from this great desire to purchase eternal bliss. I must go to Delhi.” It was useless. The old pearl diver could not understand, could not accept the free salvation of Christ.

Later one afternoon Morse answered a knock at his door to find Rambhau there.

“My good friend!” exclaimed Morse. “Come in.”

“No,” said the pearl diver. “I want you to come with me to my house. I have something to show you.”

The heart of the missionary leaped. Perhaps God was answering his prayers at last. “Of course, I’ll come.”

Inside Rambhau’s home, Morse was seated on the chair where many times he had sat explaining to the diver God’s way of salvation. Rambhau left the room to return with a small but heavy strongbox. “I have had this strongbox for years,” he said. “I keep only one thing in it. Now I will tell you about it. I once had a son.”

“A son! Rambhau, you never said a word about him!”

“No, I couldn’t.”

As the diver spoke, his eyes were wet with tears. “Now I must tell you, for soon I will leave, and who knows whether I shall ever return? My son was a diver, too—the best pearl diver on the coasts of India. He had the swiftest dive, the keenest eye, the strongest arm, the longest breath of any man who sought for pearls. What joy he brought to me! He always dreamed of finding a pearl beyond all others. One day he found it, but in his desire to get it, he stayed under too long. He lost his life soon after. All these years I have kept the pearl, but now, my friend, I am giving it to you.”

The old man, shaking with emotion, worked the lock on the strongbox and drew from it a carefully wrapped package. Gently folding back the cloths, he picked up a mammoth pearl and placed it in the hand of the missionary. It was one of the largest pearls ever found off the coast of India, and it glowed with a luster and brilliance Morse had never seen. It would have brought a fabulous sum in any market.

For a moment, the missionary was speechless and gazed on the pearl with awe. “Rambhau! What a pearl!”

“That pearl, my friend, is perfect,” he replied quietly.

The missionary looked up quickly with a new thought.

“Rambhau this is a wonderful pearl, an amazing pearl. Let me buy it. I will give you ten thousand dollars for it.”

“What do you mean?”

“Well, I will give you fifteen thousand dollars for it, or if it takes more, I will work for it.”

“My friend,” said Rambhau, as his whole body stiffened, “this pearl is beyond all price. No man in all the world has enough money to pay what this pearl is worth to me. I could never sell it. You may only have it as a gift.”

“No, Rambhau, I cannot accept it that way. Perhaps I am too proud, but that is too easy. I must earn it.”

The old pearl diver was stunned. “You don’t understand at all. Don’t you see? My only son gave his life to get this pearl, and nothing you would do could ever earn it. Its worth is in the life-blood of my son. Just accept it as a token of the love I have for you.”

For a moment, the missionary could not speak. Then he gripped the hand of his old friend. “Rambhau,” he said in a low voice, “don’t you see? That is just what God has been saying to you.”

The diver looked long and searchingly at the missionary and slowly he began to understand.

“God is offering salvation to you as a free gift. It is so great and priceless that no man on earth could buy it—millions of dollars are too little. No man can earn it—in a thousand pilgrimages you could not earn it. It cost God the life-blood of His only Son to make the entrance for you into heaven. All you can do is accept it as a token of God’s love for you, a sinner.

“Rambhau, of course I will accept the pearl in deep humility, praying that I may be worthy of your love. But won’t you accept God’s great gift of eternal life, in deep humility knowing it cost Him the death of His only Son to offer it to you?”

Great tears were rolling down the face of the old man. The veil was lifting. He understood at last. “I see it now. I could not believe that His salvation was free, but now I understand. Some things are too priceless to be bought or earned. I accept His offer of salvation.”

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

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8,9).