



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,

“Watch unto prayer” (1 Peter 4:7)

This is one of the greatest needs in the Christian’s life: the need to live in the spirit and habit of prayer. It is the lack of prayer that lies at the root of all our trouble, and there is no remedy but in prayer. The spirit of worldliness and spiritual and moral laxity will never be broken until prayer is restored in its true place in the individual believer’s life.

“Seek, and ye shall find,” what could be simpler than that? And yet the Scripture speaks of it as toil and labor. Prayer demands earnestness of mind and heart. The Lord Jesus as the perfect man is our great example; when in prayer, we read of real labor and agony and sweat of blood. All who follow His example find that prayer is a real labor and travail. The command to watch is linked with the command to pray, and prayer is regulated by the exercise of watching. Prayer is the only means by which we can prevail in spiritual things. A prayerful life is simple, but not easy. **The devil dreads nothing as prayer; he would do what it takes to hinder Christians from praying, either by attack or by keeping us busy in so many activities that we have no time for prayer. He does not fear our prayerless studies and prayerless service, but he trembles when we pray.** Prayers express dependency on God; it is when we pray that He opens our eyes, and that we see things in His light. He touches our hearts and we feel as He feels. Then obedience to His will becomes delight to us; joy, victory, and the sweetness of rest is our portion.

May the Lord use this issue of Toward the Mark to help you grow and be established as you read it.

Thank you for your e-mails and notes of encouragement.

Please keep us in your prayers.

Yours in our soon-coming Lord,

Emil S. Nashed

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I have the pleasure to inform you that a mailing list has been set up for Toward the Mark. If you want to get an electronic version of the magazine, simply send an e-mail to toward.the.mark@gmail.com or visit www.towardthemark.org to be added to the mailing list. If you also want a copy 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"

SPEAKING IN TONGUES

A young Christian told me that he was talking to one of his Christian classmates who told him that he heard that every Christian needed to be blessed with the second blessing and to be able to speak in tongues. I was not surprised for I know that this topic is often talked about among young and older believers alike. I then told him that the **Bible teaches us that every true Christian "is blessed with every blessing in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" the moment the person accepts the Lord Jesus Christ as his or her personal Savior**, as found in the epistle to the Ephesians chapter one. That answer gave him a clear understanding about the matter of blessing. I also told him that I would like to examine the matter of speaking in tongues with him prayerfully in the light of the Word of God and to search the Scriptures to see if these things are so.

"Great" said my friend for I have a lot of questions for you. So, let us begin.

It is obvious that the Corinthians, in chapter 7 of the first Epistle, were writing to the apostle Paul about certain things which were going on in their local assembly. They had some difficulties, to say the least. So we find that chapters 12-14 in this Epistle form distinct sections to deal with the questions they sent to the apostle Paul, among them **the matter of "speaking in tongues" in their local assembly**. Therefore, when these questions come up at the present time, we should not be surprised that we already have the answers that are provided by the Word of God.

We are told that the epistle to the Corinthians was written about the year 59 A.D., when the Church of God was at its

beginning. These questions are being asked again, and the answers the Spirit of God gave then to address the matter are still valid today. Let us therefore take a look at these chapters.

In chapter 12, we learn that the Spirit of God gives the gifts to every believer in the Lord Jesus, those who are members of the body and He gives to each member according to His sovereign will.

Chapter 13, the chapter that speaks of love, almost seems like a parenthesis between chapters 12 and 14. In chapter 12, we have the giving of the gifts to the members. In chapter 14, we have these gifts in operation in the assembly and how they are used. However, chapter 13 shows us the way in which those gifts ought to operate. This way is the more excellent way, the way of love.

Unless the use of gifts given by God is motivated by the love of God in our hearts and love to His people in this world, then the gifts may be operated by self-centered interests rather than Christ-centered interests. **We should learn from chapter 14 that every member of the body of Christ should benefit from these gifts.**

Are you a Charismatic?

We often hear today of the charismatic movement. **It is interesting that the word charisma means "a gift of grace." In one sense every child of God is charismatic, because we read in Romans 6:23 that "the wages of sin is death but the gift (charisma) of God is eternal life." Therefore, each one that believes receives the "charisma," which is eternal life. The word is translated as gift in 1 Cor.12. ("Interesting" he said!)**

Why did the believers speak in tongues book of Acts?

Speaking in tongues, as we see in the book of Acts, was speaking in known languages (Acts 2:6-11) that were unknown to the speakers but clear and understood by the

hearers. The great Bible teacher J.N. Darby, in his collected writings (Vol. 6), wrote that these known languages spoken by those Jews were a miraculous aid for this occasion, and definitely appropriate for the establishment of Christianity in this world by the means of oral speaking. **He goes on to state that Christianity was rooted in the world by the means of oral speaking. He further writes that it was established by the means of speaking in tongues.**

Is there any mention of speaking in tongues in the Epistles?

It is good for us to note that this matter of speaking in tongues is only mentioned in the first Epistle to the Corinthians (one of the early letters the apostle wrote) and that this is the only place where the matter is taken up in any detail. In the second Epistle, the prison Epistle, there is no reference to it.

I wonder why? Is it because that after a few years the practice simply came to an end? Let us examine this closely! I said to my friend, “Shall we”?

The apostle goes on to say if there is prophecy, it shall fail; if there are tongues, they shall cease; if there is knowledge, it shall vanish away. **If we look at this verse closely, we will notice that the words used for both prophecy and knowledge, “it shall fail” and “it shall vanish away,” are the same words in Greek.** The meaning behind this word is that somebody or something else had come in order that this thing will be done away with. Now prophecy in itself and in its original form was that which God gave first in New Testament times concerning the revealing of His mind and His will while the Bible was not yet complete. Knowledge in relation to revealing His mind and His will could not fully be known until the written Word of God was completed. **But now, all that can be known of our God is known in the Word of God under the leading, the guiding, and the instruction of the Holy Spirit.**

“**So what about tongues?**” said my friend!

The interesting thing is that the word “cease” that it is used to describe what will happen to tongues is a different word than that used for prophecy and knowledge. **The word “cease” means that tongues will come to an end of themselves when they have accomplished the purpose for which they were intended.** Now when we look at Acts 2, we find that the speaking in tongues by the disciples was used by the power of the Spirit of God to unfold and to establish the truth of God concerning His church in this world. **What the apostle Paul was saying was that tongues would cease of themselves when they fulfilled their purpose and the full revelation of God was complete** and when the apostles themselves, toward the end of the first century, were no longer living. Christianity became an established entity here in the world and that which was needed to get it established in this world was no longer needed. **The Spirit of God carefully uses this specific word to indicate that the speaking in tongues will come to an end (as they have).** It is instructive also to note in the following verses that He said, “we know in part, we prophecy in part,” but He does not say we speak in tongues in part. **The tongues are left out, because tongues came to an end by themselves after they served their purpose.** “But when that which is perfect shall come,” is referring to the complete revealed Word of God, the Holy Bible, and all that we need as we go on in this life’s journey we find in the Word of God.

In the following verse, he described the church in Corinth as in its childhood; they spoke as children and they thought as children. However, as the church grew and matured things that were normal for children would not be suitable for mature persons. The Corinthians were acting like children who like to show off.

“*How about the tongues of angels?*” asked my friend!

In 1 Corinthians chapter 13, the apostle writes that if he could speak in tongues, not only in every known language but even in

the tongues of angels if there is such a thing, **(by the way, every time you read in the Bible of angels speaking, they spoke in languages that man could understand)** but did not have love, he was nothing more than a clanging cymbal.

Can I speak to God in tongues?

It is very clear that most of the activity in chapter 14 is manward. Only in verses 14-17 are activities Godward.

The rest, as we said, are activities of the saints of God for the people of God. But in verse two we have a man who spoke in tongues, not unto man, but unto God. It seems he had a language that was unknown to the listeners. Let us apply the test of Acts 2 to see if it was correct for this man to speak in tongues. It must be a language that could be understood, if not by others, at least it must be understood by the person that speaks other wise he can not edify himself (verse 4). **But in this verse the only one that understood was God. Why speak to God in tongues, for God knows all the languages?** (that made sense said my friend) Again, we learn from Acts 2 that in **speaking in tongues they brought a message from God to man, but this man in verse two was doing the reverse. He was speaking in tongues to bring a message from man to God.**

What does it mean to prophecy?

The apostle said to them in verse 5 to, “Follow after love and to desire spiritual gifts, but I rather that ye may prophesy.” Now what is prophecy? Prophecy brings the soul into the presence of God. **Prophecy is not only telling the future (*foretelling*) but as we see in the New Testament, it is (*forthtelling*) or declaring the mind of God to His people in the present moment.** You may notice that in this chapter there are a number of contrasts between prophesying and speaking in tongues. Prophesying is mentioned 14 times; speaking in tongues 16 times. The main thing that the apostle is concerned about in writing this chapter is the edifying of the saints; or building them up in the things of God.

So what should a person that can speak in a known language that is not known by those around him in the local church do?

As we see there are a few contrasts we see in this chapter between prophesying and speaking in tongues. “He that speaketh in tongues speaketh to God and not to man.” In verse 3, however, he that prophecies speak to man so all may get the gain, and the result of speaking the Word of God in languages is that the hearer understands. They will obtain edification, exhortation, and comfort. So, by edification the saints are built up; by exhortation they are stirred up and by comfort they are bound up. In verse 2 it seems that the person who was speaking in tongues was not interpreting, therefore the Spirit of God put some regulations in regard to this matter so order would be maintained and not confusion. **Therefore, unless some one is present to translate the person who is speaking in this way, he should be silent in the church** (compare vv. 3, 13, 27).

For what shall they profit from your speaking if they don't understand it?

It is also clear that the apostle in this chapter is talking to believers, those who are gathered in an assembly in a certain locality. So the apostle again underlined the matter of understanding when he said, “If I come to you speaking in tongues what shall I profit you?” **Then he uses the illustration of the trumpet to further emphasize the importance of clarity and understanding, otherwise how could the listeners say “Amen” to the utterance if they did not understand it.**

The apostle, who apparently knew many languages, said that he would rather speak 5 words that others would understand and benefit from, than 10,000 words that no one could understand. In that, **I see that it is 2,000 times better to speak in a language that the people of God understand than to speak in unknown tongues.** So he tells them to grow up in verse 20 and in chapter 13:11 and to stop being like immature children.

In verses 14-16 we see first that the person who is speaking, praying, or singing in tongues must know what he is saying otherwise he is speaking in tongues to gratify himself only, since no one present can translate. That person must sing and pray with the Spirit and with understanding.

Another thing we learn from these verses is that praying, singing, and speaking are normal functions that have been going on in local assemblies since the beginning of the church.

“Did you know that Speaking in tongues is not for the believers but it is a sign for the unbelievers?” I said to my friend!

The apostle made clear in verse 22 that speaking in tongues is a sign for those who are **unbelievers** as he refers to Isaiah.28:11-12. At Corinth, it is clear that speaking in tongues was taking place among the believers; but the Spirit of God is showing them that speaking in tongues is not for the benefit of believers. **So let us apply the test of Acts 2 again. Does it apply? Yes, it does. The word of God went out to unbelievers and 3,000 people were saved.**

So, in conclusion, if any man thinks he is a prophet or spiritual let him see that this is **the commandment of the Lord**. It carries not only apostolic authority but the supreme authority of the Lord.

E.S.N

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES!

- 1. What group of converts burned their books of magic?**
- 2. Who was the first hunter named in the Bible?**
- 3. Where were Joseph's bones finally buried?**

Meat

"Sanctify them by the truth"

THE DEVELOPMENT OF EVIL

"THE MYSTERY OF INIQUITY" 2 THESSALONIANS 2

We hardly need to be reminded that iniquity is at work in the universe, but we do need to face it since it has affected us as well as the world around us. We may profit from a consideration of its commencement, its development, and its end, as scripture refers to these matters, for our encouragement, as those who have experienced its effects in our own lives, and who have seen desolation in the lives of other men.

1. **Sin was introduced into the universe by Satan.** There should be no doubt of this in our minds. The Lord Jesus said of him that he was a murderer from the beginning, (or, the outset), and that he is a liar, and the father of it; i.e. its source (Jn. 8:44). The apostle John writes; "The devil sinneth from the beginning" (1 Jn. 3:8). Iniquity began its awesome career of damage, destruction, and death in his person. It is usually assumed that Satan was the highest created being, the passages in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 being thought to refer to him. If this is so, the outset of iniquity affirms that very sad truth that the greatest privilege does not save from the most disastrous fall. The two passages referred to would put this angel at the peak of created intelligences. Though some of the language is mysterious or even obscure, as we read it we have the impression that this is a word-portrait of an immensely favored and supremely intelligent being. Yet he sinned. We are left in no obscurity about the character of his wrong-doing. Solomon lists seven things which the Lord hates, and the first two are distinctly of Satan: "a proud look and a lying tongue" (Pro. 6:17). In Isaiah 12, the person described is heard to say, "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God...I will be like the Most High." Such pride would be bound to lead to trouble. The repeated assertion of his own will ("I will" is said 5 times) emphasizes the speaker's determination to do his own will and not God's. In the parallel passage in Ezekiel 28, we see that the

person written of there was also haughty in spirit, and said, "I am God; I sit in the seat of God." He said so because his heart was "lifted up" (v. 17). All combined to inflate his opinion of himself and cause him to sin so grievously before the Lord. The consequence of such self-exaltation was that he was cast down from the dizzy eminence to which he had aspired (Isa. 14:15; Ezk. 28:8, 16, 17). "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall," is a truth which Satan had not learned, but which we would do well to notice (see Pro. 16:18).

2. **It seems certain that when the devil rebelled he dragged armies of celestial beings with him in his fall (2 Pet. 2:4).** We are given scarcely any information about these rebel angels or of their revolt against the authority of the Almighty Lord. However, we are given some details concerning the malevolent enemy of God and his attempts to seduce men from allegiance to God. It must be assumed that since he fell, irrecoverably, he determined to do all in his power to damage or destroy what God was working out. His astuteness is unquestionable, and in his assault on the first pair, the weapon he used was the very temptation which had brought about his own ruin; that is pride and ambition. He had wanted to be as God, equal to the Most High. He had said, "I will ascend." He lied to the woman and suggested that if they ate of the fruit which the Lord God had prohibited they would become as gods; it will open your eyes to new vistas, you will know good and evil. So she took of the fruit and ate, and she offered it to her husband and he also ate of it, thus permitting iniquity to gain an entrance into the human race. Satan and his armies of evil spirits had been cast down; now Adam and his wife, fallen from their innocent estate, were driven out of Eden into the great world to begin their struggle for existence against the forces of evil ranged against them. But they were not left on their own; God had provided a way of blessing even for them, which Abel took in faith, and was eternally blessed.

3. **Outside the protective seclusion of Eden, human life began in a sinful society.** Means of having harmonious relations with God had been provided; God had clothed our first parents with coats of a skin and **it is clear that Abel knew of a means of approach to God by an acceptable offering.** However, very soon evil began to make its presence felt among men. **False worship, murder, robbery, violence**

and corruption filled the lives of men. The whole range of man's ideas, the whole character of his ways, the whole time of his life was filled with evil (Gen. 6:5). The pride of men was asserted in that they did what they chose to do without reference to the will of God (Gen. 6:2). The men were big in their own sight and stood to their own reputation (Gen. 6:4). It was in days such as those that Enoch walked with God. Very likely he trod a lonely path, for the mass of mankind, it seems, were bent on doing their own will. In time God swept away this society by a flood, with the exception of Noah and his family.

4. **In spite of the devastation of the world by the deluge, immediately afterwards evil began to spread rapidly among men. Paul's first chapter to the Romans may give us some idea of the kind of world it speedily became. Men were willful, immoral, murderous and malignant.** Every kind of iniquity was practiced and, as Scripture says, it filled their lives and their thoughts. It was evidently in this period that any pretence of piety was abandoned and idolatry was introduced; at any rate it is not mentioned before the flood. **So God called Abraham out of the society of the day to be His worshipper and to be a witness in an impious world. But sin soon came into the Hebrew society, and instead of the nation being a witness for God, the Lord's name was evil spoken of because of their wicked behavior.** So the nation was judged and their territory reduced. The commonwealth was split into two nations, then one was deported and the remainder at a later date. **This was followed eventually by universal dispersion. The people who had been lifted up so high were brought down in shame.**

5. **The descent of the Holy Spirit to baptize the believers into one body and to link them with their ascended Lord may be thought to guarantee the maintenance of right conditions and preserve the church from any decline into evil. It has, however, been remarked that all the inspired writers of New Testament epistles, with the exception of James, affirm that there would be departure from the truth and some write of the great iniquities which are to arise during end times. So it is not surprising that not long after the formation of the earliest of the assemblies, evil began to enter.** The history of the church, outwardly, had been a succession of failures and disasters, of divisions and of wickedness. The Revelation gives

us, in chapters 2 and 3, a succinct account of the progress of evil, and its final phase as developed in Laodicea is appalling. **The assembly has been so poor a witness that the Lord removed the lampstand of the earliest of its phases, and the final assembly of the seven is so nauseating to the Lord that He will spue it out of His mouth.** It could be said, therefore, also of Laodicea, “How art thou fallen!”

6. Meanwhile iniquity goes on developing in the world, recently at such an alarming rate that even the godless are dismayed by it. We are aware of this and do not need to be reminded of it; it is there before our eyes in all its boldness. Impiety and impurity abound in literature, in the press, in broadcasting, and in men’s lives in general and the accelerating tide of evil grows apace. **The presence of the church, even in its broken and feeble condition, represents a dam which holds back, to some degree, the rising tide of iniquity.** The Holy Spirit, though often grieved and quenched, indwells believers and dwells in the assembly. When the assembly is ruptured and the Holy Spirit ceases to abide on earth, the dam being removed, iniquity unleashed will sweep the world. **The mystery of iniquity which has been working secretly for so many centuries will explode into open and violent activity and the condition of the world, bad though it is now, will be vastly more iniquitous. Men will openly blaspheme God, and a man will assume divine honors and demand human worship as though he were God. The consequences of all this wickedness in the world are unthinkable. The Lord Jesus will bring it all to a sudden end by the glory of His appearing, and evil with its iniquitous leaders will be put down.**

7. The period following the suppression of evil will be one of universal blessing. The Lord’s kingdom will be inaugurated, and a thousand years of peace, prosperity and plenty will ensue. It may be imagined that this wonderful “Utopian” period will effect a change in man’s nature and that, at last, he will have learnt the lessons which so many generations failed to learn; that he will see that sin is deadly, and that he will give it up. Nothing of the kind will happen. **At the end of the millennium, as we call it, the Lord will release Satan from his prison and he, as malevolent as ever, will insinuate his evil lies into the thinking of the men of that time, and once more a multitude of men, untaught by the blessings of a thousand**

years of divine rule, will rebel against the Lord and will try, yet again to shut the Creator out of His own creation and will seek to establish their own will. This outburst of iniquity will also, thanks be to God, be subdued, and a final judgment session will decide the fate of all who have refused to submit to the rule of God. These will be committed to their final state and their iniquity with them, and all will be confined, eternally, in the lake of fire.

The blessed truth for us is that the Lord Jesus bore our sins in His own body on the tree. The Lord “laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” **We shall not have to answer eternally, in a place of torment, for our sins because He answered for them, on our behalf, at that place of immeasurable suffering, Calvary.**

J.Barnes

ANSWERS TO SCRIPTURES SEARCH!

1. The Ephesians (Acts 19:19)
2. Nimrod (Genesis 10:9)
3. At Shechem (Joshua 24:32)

Exercise

"Exercise thyself unto piety"

Christian living

We would like with God's help, to take up some of the special dangers or besetting sins to which young Christians (and old ones as well) are liable, and respecting which it may helpful to see what scripture has to say. "To be forewarned is to be forearmed," and these papers are written in the earnest hope and prayer that they may be practically used in pointing out and guarding against some of those sins and failings which so often ruin a walk otherwise consistent, and bring reproach upon the name of Christ. It is by our action in small matters that the world judges us—not by the amount of knowledge of scriptural principles, but by our application of them in daily life

Part 4

Deceit and Lying

This is one of the special sins connected with the tongue, that unruly member which no man can tame. Over and over again it is emphatically forbidden and condemned by the God of truth (Col. 3:9; 1 Pet. 3:10; Pro. 24:28; Pro. 12:22, etc).

No Deceit in Christ

When Peter speaks of the life of the Lord Jesus as an example for us to copy, he emphatically points out that no deceit was found in His mouth. Those who are deceitful are therefore evidently most unlike Christ. As we write for those who are professedly children of God, in looking at a few examples of this fearful sin in Scripture, we will only take those where a child of God, or at least, a professor, is concerned.

Lying Through Fear

We find in Gen. 18:15 Sarah telling a direct lie through fear. How often is this the case, resulting from having done or said something we are ashamed of. It may be a right thing, we are thus ashamed of Christ; or, it may be a wrong thing, and we are ashamed of being found out. In either case a lie slips from our lips ere we are aware. The radical cure for this is not to do what we are ashamed of; or, if the thing is right, not to be ashamed of what we do. If, however, we have slipped into sin, let us not add to it by another, but just as the lie is about to leave our lips, let the thought, GOD HEARS ME, instantaneously arrest it. A lie to screen oneself is, perhaps, the most contemptible kind, despised alike by Christians and men of the world. Having thus looked at it, let us resolutely avoid it, even in the smallest things, and never lend our tongues to such mean deceit.

Lying for Our Own Advantage

The next instance is in Gen. 27:19, when Jacob tells a direct lie for his own advantage—another despicable variety of this hydra-headed sin. Mark too, Jacob was a child of God, and the result is that through the next thirty years of his life he suffered from the consequences of his sin, by which too he gained nothing, for God would have given him all in due time. Have any of my readers fallen victim to this sin? Making haste to be rich, or improve their position, or in selfish motives, told a lie? If so, I am sure they have suffered since; and there can be no real restorations until that lie is confessed not only to God but to man. Too often, alas, one lie leads to another, as in Jacob's case; and once embarked on this fatal course, who can tell what the end will be? O beloved reader, I plead with you; never, never allow yourself to tell a lie for your own advantage. Think for one moment what a horrible denial such a sin is of all that Jesus ever was or did.

Lying to Cover a Sin

Passing over several, we come to David, who was guilty both of murder (1 Sam. 11) of the most fearful character and of lying, by which he sought to cover up an awful sin, thereby making it

twice as bad. Oh, how often some previous sin is the cause of a long course of deceit and lying. Beloved friends, let us, above all things, seek to be straight with God, with our fellow men, with ourselves and would we fall into sin, never, never, seek to cover it up by another, still worse than the first. A course of deceit positively blights the souls, destroying all simplicity, all joy, all communion. The result of these sins in David's case was a course of sufferings almost unparalleled in their severity, from the hands of his own children. Let not us, therefore, think to escape the all-searching eye of God.

Lying from Habit

We find in 1 Kings 13:18 a prophet of God lying in a most wanton manner, without any apparent reason. We find such characters now, even among God's people—some who apparently have no regard for the truth, and find it easier to tell a lie than to avoid it. The only remedy when the disease has so developed is to go straight to God, and cry to Him for strength and daily watchfulness to overcome it. One such case I remember. I noticed that a person was almost always silent, and one day asked the cause. He said that he had been so addicted to lying that he was determined now not to speak at all if he could not speak the direct truth; and, therefore, he seldom opened his lips, and always considered well before he spoke. Deep-rooted sins require some such radical measures.

Two Solemn Cases of Lying

In the New Testament the two solemn cases, one of lying and the other of deceit, in Peter and Ananais, stand out above all others. Peter, forewarned by the Lord, yet strong in his own strength, told three lies to save himself, actually going the length of denying the Savior while He was standing dumb before His accusers. Such sins are, alas, not unknown even now. Many of us are ashamed of showing our colors, and when suddenly asked an unexpected question, through fear of shame, are betrayed into a lie, to the triumph of Satan and the grief of our Lord. Let us watch earnestly against this; and, if entrapped,

let us follow Peter in his path of restoration. It is remarkable to see that the very one who fell himself, is so perfectly restored as not only to be able to charge home the very sin to the Jews (Acts 3:14), but was also chosen by God to be the executor of His justice on the flagrant deceit of Ananias. This too was a wanton sin—a course of deceit being practiced merely to give others a false impression of his generosity, and to appear other than he was. This, alas, is another common variety of this sin. Anxious to stand well in the eyes of our fellow men, rather than those of God, we do not hesitate sometimes to descend to deceitful practices to appear to others better than we are, and so to get praise from men that we do not deserve. Surely, such a course needs only to be named to be condemned by every upright heart. All these instances have been selected from the lives of professing children of God, and will well repay careful consideration, giving, as they do, striking illustrations of the main causes of deceit and lying among Christians. Lies may be told without using the lips; we may act so as to deceive, and seek to excuse ourselves because we may have not said what is untrue. This is worthless subterfuge, and will not stand before God for a moment. All such refuges of lies will He sweep away.

The only way to be happy before Him, and to be in any degree like Christ, is to turn our backs firmly and resolutely on deceit in every shape and form by word and deed; and determine, in God's strength, that we will earnestly seek to say and do nothing that is not absolutely true, thus saving ourselves from reaping the bitter fruits of shame and sorrow that will some day follow. May God help each one of us that is tempted by this sin to overcome it in His strength, and to learn to abhor and hate it because it is so hateful to Christ, and so dishonoring to His name.

“The lip of truth shall be established for ever; but a lying tongue is but for a moment.” Pro. 12:19.

A.T.Schofield

REST

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

LOVING KINDNESS

Psalm 36:5-10

We have been engaged with the sphere where the constraining love of Christ is known, and I wish to follow that then in using this Psalm as a description of how that love has reached us and what it has brought us into. I have passed over the opening verses where the sinful character of man is outlined; assured that all in this company have been awakened to that fact, and have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. We have movements described here, beginning with Jehovah in the heavens, and reaching down to the sinful sons of men in this world, with a view to constituting them righteous. The section which I have read begins with mercy, and ends with a people once sinful but now constituted righteous in the divine estimation.

"Thy mercy, O LORD, is in the heavens." This word "mercy" is the same word as that which is translated twice in this Psalm as "loving-kindness." It appears to be a compound word which can be translated as mercy; love; kindness or, as here, loving-kindness. That mercy was toward us in the heavens. It is the fruit of the love of God, and this had its beginning in the heavens. One is reminded at once of the great chapter where the sinful need of mankind is so clearly stated, Ephesians 2. In that chapter the mercy of God, springing from His great love, shows the attitude of God towards us as sinners, and as the fruit of the great blessing He has brought us into sovereign mercy. He will one day show His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

That mercy began in heaven and was toward us, but how was it to reach us? That brings us to the second statement, "Thy

faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds." **At one time I thought this reaching was upward, but now I see it is downward. The word "reaching" is in italics, but a movement downward is obviously in view. It suggests the downward movement of our Lord Jesus Christ in order to bring that mercy to us, and to demonstrate the faithfulness of God. Promises of blessing for mankind had long been made through the prophets, and it may have seemed as time lengthened that God had forgotten His promises.** We have but to turn to the first chapter of the New Testament to see how God has implemented them: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham" (Mat. 1:1). Then further down that same chapter "Behold, a virgin shall be with child" (v. 23). **Here in the first chapter of the New Testament we see the promises of God fulfilled.** Taking those promises in the order in which they were historically given, we read that **Jesus Christ was the seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham, and the seed of David. The birth of Jesus Christ was the fulfillment of all three.** Thus we see that Matthew, chapter 1, is an outstanding witness to the faithfulness of God. Reaching to the clouds would involve the downward movement of our Lord Jesus to reach us in mercy.

"Thy righteousness is like the great mountains." We read in the margin, "the mountains of God (EL)", a title which means "The Mighty God;" the word great does not refer to the mountains but to God. This statement obviously reaches down to earth, and involves the Son of God moving through this world in moral elevation as suggested by the mountains. **Five times in the gospel by Matthew we read of the Lord being on a mountain. Does it not assure us that as moving here in Manhood, His pathway through this world was one of moral elevation?** This righteousness, as seen in Him while here, was manifested in every step of His pathway.

But if the righteousness of God was to reach us in blessing, another step was necessary, and that step is in the next

statement. “Thy judgments are a great deep.” Reference has been made to the book of Job, and I also call attention to one interesting feature found in that book. Elihu speaks of God’s showing man what was righteous – that came to light in the pathway of our Lord – but he adds, “He will render unto man His righteousness” and that could be only as a result of the work upon the cross (Job 33:23-26). So we read of “a great deep,” the place to which Christ went with a view to bringing men into righteousness before God. The result of that stoop has secured preservation for man and beast. We know from Romans, chapter 8, that both man and the whole of the groaning creation will yet share in this recovery in the world to come. Such then have been the movements of Christ in His love.

If such have been the movements downward, there is to be with us a movement upward, as the blessed answer to it all. Already we are beyond the judgment of God as having believed the gospel; moreover we are constituted righteous through the cross of Christ; soon we shall meet the Lord on the cloud and enter heaven with Him, to be for ever with the Lord. We shall thus be in the place where mercy had its beginning and we shall be there forever.

“How excellent is Thy loving-kindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings”, (v. 7). **The first effect in us when we came to appreciate this loving-kindness was that we put our trust in God.** Under the shadow of His wings implies that we are eternally safe. Well may the apostle write, “the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance” (Rom. 2:4). As a result of our trust in God we are saved and brought into the circle of abundant satisfaction, as we read, “They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house.” In the details of the offerings we learn that the fat was always for God; it was His portion of that which speaks of Christ. **Thus we are brought to enjoy the pleasure of the Father in His well-beloved Son; surely the region of satisfied desire.** He who is the “bread of God” is also the “bread of life;”

He is food for God and food for His people. Then we read “Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures.” **Bread sustains and water satisfies, and we have both abundant sustainment and abundant satisfaction in the house of God. This becomes available to us in our gatherings, for the house carries a collective character. Someone said to a brother, “Meetings, meetings. Why you would think we should die without them.” “Yes,” said the brother, “I believe I would.” It is in fellowship one with another that we enjoy these blessing to the full.**

“With Thee is the fountain of life” (v. 9). **The fountain of life is with God, but He has not held back, it is flowing toward us all. It is life in the power of the Holy Spirit, “living water” as our Lord called it.** The fountain is with God, and the Spirit fills our souls with the love of God, and “in thy light shall we see light.” John tells us in his epistle that we are in the light and are walking there. Both life and light are available to us in the power of the Spirit of God, and added to this is “loving-kindness” (v. 10). **Who but the Son could have made life, light and love available to us?** He who came down from heaven to do the will of Him that sent Him. This involves the gathering of all those whom the Father has given Him, and we are in that company today. Can we doubt that the Son moved down to secure this company, and produce from them worship to His Father? Whilst it has resulted in such wonderful blessing for us, the outcome is that our hearts are led in praise and worship to the Father, the Source of all.

David in the Psalm asks that loving-kindness and righteousness may continue to the upright in heart, and we can be sure that these things will continue as long as there are those in this world who value and desire them. Through the love and mercy of our God we have been drawn into this wonderful circle. **May we appreciate it fully by eating of this rich provision and drinking of this living water. Sustained and satisfied we shall then rise in moral superiority to the blandishments and attractions of this world, and our hearts will respond in praise and worship to our God.**

G. Davison

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q. I read a passage of the Scripture the other day that puzzled me a little. It is Roman 11:26. What does it mean that all of Israel will be saved? I'd appreciate any help. M.C.

A. Apart from the dispensational truth that one finds in the scripture regarding Israel, especially the references we see in chapters 9-11 of Romans, it is good for us to understand that in a coming day there will be a remnant that will be considered the true Israel that God had in mind.

The Blessed God will deal again with Israel as a nation when the assembly is no longer on earth; however, the salvation of all Israel pertains to the faithful remnant.

The prophet Isaiah mentions the word remnant at least 15 times; I will quote just one here: "Unless Jehovah of hosts had left us a very small remnant..." (Isa. 1:9). Also read Isaiah 10:20-22.

The apostle Paul quotes the above references in Rom 9: 27-28, "Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved." So when he comes to chapter 11:26 he has in mind the remnant. Also keep in mind that Paul takes up the subject from God's divine purpose when he declared in chapter 9:6, "For they are not all Israel which are of Israel."

I hope this will be of a little help.

Much love in Christ

JA

THE SOUL'S DESIRE

I'm waiting for Thee, Lord, Thyself then to see, Lord;
I'm waiting for Thee, at Thy coming again.
Thy glory'll be great, Lord, in heavenly state, Lord;
Thy glory'll be great at Thy coming again.

Caught up in the air, Lord, that glory we'll share, Lord;
Each saint will be there, at Thy coming again.
How glorious the grace, Lord, that gave such a place, Lord;
It's nearing apace, at Thy coming again.

We'll sit on Thy throne, Lord, confessed as Thine own, Lord,
Of all to be known at Thy coming again.
But glory on high, Lord, is not like being nigh, Lord.
When all is gone by, at Thy coming again.

The traits of that face, Lord, once marred through Thy grace,
Lord.

Our joy'll be to trace at Thy coming again;
With Thee evermore, Lord, our hearts will adore, Lord.
Our sorrow'll be o'er at Thy coming again.

But, better than all, Lord, to rise at Thy call, Lord,
Adoring to fall, at thy coming again.
With Thee, clothed in white, Lord, to walk in the light, Lord,
Where all will be bright at Thy coming again.

Forever with Thee, Lord, and like Thee to be, Lord,
Forever with Thee at Thy coming again.
I'll live in Thy grace, Lord, I'll gaze on Thy face, Lord,
When finished my race, at Thy coming again.
I'll talk of Thy love, Lord, with Thee there above, Lord.
Thy goodness still prove, at Thy coming again.

J. N. Darby

THE EAGLE AT NIAGARA

A gentleman standing by Niagara Falls saw an eagle swoop down upon a frozen lamb encased in a floating piece of ice. The eagle stood upon it as it was “drifting” on toward the rapids. Every now and again the eagle would proudly lift his head into the air to look around him, as much as to say, “I am ‘drifting’ on toward danger, but I know what I am doing; I will fly away and make good my escape before it is too late.”

When he heard the falls he stopped and spread his powerful wings and leaped for his flight; **but alas! alas! while he was feasting on that dead carcass his feet had frozen to its fleece.** He leaped and shrieked and beat upon the ice with his wing until the ice, the frozen lamb, and the eagle all went over the falls and down into the chasm and darkness below.

This is a real picture of every one who has begun to live his life, enjoying all that it has to offer without thinking of the eternal destiny ahead, intending to stop before he goes too far. But he is too busy feasting on the carcass of sin until it is too late to repent and turn to Jesus for salvation. And with a fearful cry, “**TOO LATE,**” he falls into hell where he will be tormented for ever and ever.

The Bible has good news for you. It tells you: “..behold, now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation”. 2 Corinthian 6:2

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved”. Acts 16:30, 31.

Do it today before it is too late!