



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,

“And he left all that he had in Joseph’s hand” (Genesis 39:6).

From the moment Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, left all in Joseph’s care, a blessing came upon everything he had: his home, his business, and even his fields prospered! The Christian today also finds that spiritual prosperity comes when he leaves all in the hand of the “greater Joseph,” the Lord Jesus Christ. Potiphar made that decision. Attracted to Joseph and persuaded that he was worthy of his trust, he committed all his possessions, interests, and affairs to his faithful man.

Have you definitely given all your affairs and concerns to Christ?

Having put all that he had into Joseph’s keeping, he left it there. This is sometimes the most difficult thing to do. Potiphar had a nature similar to ours, and probably worried at times and removed some of his affairs from Joseph’s supervision. Perhaps you have surrendered to the Lord some problem or difficulty that plagued you, but later removed it from His care, only to be weighted down once more by the load of anxiety. Now the Savior is saying again, “leave the matter in my hand!” Dear reader this is a Safe Deposit !

The Lord Jesus is adequate for every circumstance and problem. He wants us to put all that we have of pain or pleasure, profit or loss, into His keeping. He will forgive the sin, sanctify the life, remove the fear, direct the path, and give assurance.

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 praying for the Lord’s blessing on Toward the Mark.

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 would like to receive an electronic version 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"

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED FROM THE BIBLE

PART II

I learn that **God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him shall have everlasting life** (John 3:16), but that to this end **God being a righteous and holy God, the Son of man had to be lifted up upon the cross** (John 3:14-15); **that there He bore our sins in His own body on the tree** (1 Peter 2:24), and **was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him** (2 Corinthians 5:21).

I learn that **He loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing** (Ephesians 5:25-27).

I learn that **the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we might be holy and without blame before Him in love** (Ephesians 1:4).

I learn that **those that believe are sealed with the Holy Spirit, who is the earnest of our inheritance till the redemption of the purchased possession** (Ephesians 1:13-14; 2 Corinthians 1:22); **that by Him the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts** (Romans 5:5); **that we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba Father** (Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6; John 14:20); **that they who have received this Spirit not only cry, Abba Father, but know that they are in Christ, and Christ in them; that thus not only He appears in the presence of**

God for them, but they are in Him who is sitting at the right hand of God, expecting till His enemies be made His footstool (Ephesians 2:6; Hebrews 9:24; 10:12-13); **that they are dead to sin in God's sight, and to reckon themselves so; having put off the old man, and put on the new; alive to God through Jesus Christ (Christ is their new life); crucified to the world, and dead to the law** (Colossians 3:3-4, 9-10; Romans 6:6-11; Galatians 2:20; 6:14).

I learn thus **that if they are in Christ, Christ is in them and they are called upon the manifest the life of Jesus in their mortal flesh** (John 14:20; Romans 8:10; 2 Corinthians 4:10), **and to walk as He walked** (1 John 2:6), **God having set them in the world as the epistles of Christ** (2 Corinthians 3:3), **whose grace is sufficient for them, and whose strength is made perfect in their weakness** (2 Corinthians 12:9).

I learn that **they are converted to wait for God's Son from heaven** (1 Thessalonians 1:10; Titus 2:12-13; Luke 12:35-37), **and taught to do so; and that they have the promise that they shall never perish, nor shall any man pluck them out of Christ's hand** (John 10:29), **but that God will confirm them to the end, that they may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ** (1 Corinthians 1:7-9).

I learn that **they have part in these privileges through faith in Christ Jesus, in virtue of which righteousness is imputed to them** (Romans 5:1-2; Galatians 3:24-26; 3:11, 14; Romans 4:16; Ephesians 2:8; 2 Corinthians 5:7; Galatians 2:20; Hebrews 11:4; Acts 13:39; Galatians 3:9-16; Romans 4:24-25; and many others); **that Christ, who has obeyed even unto death, and wrought a perfect work upon the cross for them** (Philippians 2:8; John 17:4; Hebrews 7:27; 9:25-28; 10:12-18), **is now their righteousness, made such of God to them** (1 Corinthians 1:30), **and that we are made the righteousness of God in Him** (2 Corinthians 5:21); **that as His precious blood cleanses us from all sin, so we are personally accepted in the Beloved**

(Ephesians 1:6), **that as by one man's disobedience many were constituted sinners, so by the obedience of One many shall be constituted righteous** (Romans 5:19).

I learn that we are sanctified, or set apart to God, by God the Father through the offering of Jesus Christ once for all, and by the operation and power of the Holy Ghost through the truth, so that all Christians are saints (Jude 1; Hebrews 10:10; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Corinthians 6:11; John 17:17-19; 1 Peter 1:22; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Ephesians 1:1), and that in our practical state we have to follow after holiness (Hebrews 12:14; 2 Peter 3:14), and grow up to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, being changed into His image, to whom we are to be perfectly conformed in glory (Ephesians 4:13-15; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 1 John 2:2-3; Ephesians 4:1; Colossians 1:10; 1 Thessalonians 2:12; 5:23).

I learn that the Lord has left two rites, or ordinances, both significant of His death; one initiatory, the other of continual observance in the church of God—baptism and the Lord's Supper (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:12, 16, 36; 9:18; Ephesians 4:5; 1 Corinthians 1:17; 1 Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3; Colossians 2:12; Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-23; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; 10:3-4).

I learn that, when Christ ascended up on high, He received gifts for men, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; and that from Christ the whole body, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, maketh increase of the body, to the edifying of itself in love (Ephesians 4:6-13; Acts 2:33; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Romans 12:6; 1 Peter 4:10-11; Matthew 25:14; Luke 19:13).

I learn that, as the grace and sovereign love of God is the source and origin of all the blessing (John 3:16-27; 1 Corinthians 2:12-4:7; Ephesians 2:7-10; Titus 2:11), so continual and diligent dependence on that grace is that by which we

can walk after Him and to His glory, who has left us an example that we should follow His steps (John 15:5; Philippians 2:12-13; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Romans 12:12; Luke 18:1; 2 Peter 1:5-10; and many others. John 8:12, 10:4, 12:26, 17:10; 2 Corinthians 5:15; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Romans 14:7-8; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Colossians 3:17; 1 John 2:6; 1 Peter 2:2).

I learn from that example and authority of the Lord and His apostles that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are inspired of God, and are to be received as the word of God, having His authority attached to it, and which works effectually in those that believe (Matthew 4:4, 7, 10; Luke 24:25-27, 44-46; John 5:39; 10:35; Matthew 5:17-18; John 20:9; Matthew 1:23; and a multitude of passages. Matthew 26:54; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Galatians 3:8; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Corinthians 15:2-3; 2:13; 14:36-37; Romans 16:26, where it is not "the scriptures of the prophets," that is, at any rate scriptures, but New Testament, not Old; 2 Peter 3:16); and that the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple, discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart, being understood, not by the wisdom of man, but by the teaching of God, being spiritually discerned, they are revealed, communicated, and discerned by the Spirit (Psalms 19:7; Hebrews 4:12-13; Luke 24:45; 1 Corinthians 2:10; 1 John 2:20-27; John 6:45; 1 Corinthians 2:12-14). I learn that, while God alone is immortal in and by Himself (1 Timothy 6:16), the angels are not subject to death (Luke 20:36), and that the death of a man does not affect the life of his soul, be he wicked or renewed, but that all live still as to God, though dead (Luke 12:4-5; Matthew 10:28; Luke 16:23; 20:38), and that the wicked will be raised again as well as the just (John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15).

I learn that every assembly of God is bound by the exercise of discipline, according to the word, to keep itself pure in doctrine and godly walk (Hebrews 12:15-17; 1 Timothy 3:15; Titus 3:10-11; 1 Corinthians 5:7-13).

JND

MEAT

"Sanctify them by the truth"

THE CHURCH PART I

The words "church" and "churches" are mentioned some 120 times in the New Testament, and the same original word, meaning "a calling out" is used. (The only exception is in Acts 19:37 where the expression "Robbers of churches" is a compound word in the Greek.) Quite obviously the subject is one of great interest to the Inditer of the New Testament – the Holy Spirit of God, as also to the men He has used to write the book.

Careful attention to the Scriptures should leave the honest searcher in no doubt at all as to the divine thought of the Church (or "assembly") and yet in the minds of men there exists all kinds of erroneous ideas as to this immensely important and precious matter. The following comments will be well known to and appreciated by many, but we do well to follow Peter's example in seeking to "stir up...pure minds by way of remembrance."

The first Scripture to which we would call attention is in Matthew 16:18, where the Lord, speaking to Peter as to his confession regarding the Person of Christ, says "Upon this rock will I build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Now it is important to notice the context in which this incident is set. The Lord had warned His disciples to "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees" (v. 6). **The Scriptures throughout speak of Christ, the pre-eminence of His Person and the value of His work. The Pharisees, whilst believing the Scriptures up to a point, refused to recognize the glory and greatness of the One of whom they speak; whereas the Sadducees, who**

denied the resurrection (Matthew 22:29) had no knowledge of the "living God."

Before we can have a right conception of the Church we must be delivered from the conjecture and supposition referred to in the following verses (13-14), and have a clear view of the greatness of the Person of Christ and that which God has established as the result of His death and rising again. Whilst at that moment the resurrection was future, and Peter and the other disciples were slow to understand what the Lord said to them regarding it, nevertheless the truth of it is implicit in Peter's reply to the Lord's question, "But whom say ye that I am?" "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

It is a most blessed and important matter to see that the first mention of the Church stands connected with the thought of what is living. This implies the fact of the resurrection, a sphere which is beyond the conception of the mind of man, and the appreciation of which is dependent upon the revelation of diving Persons. The revelation by the Father to Peter as to the "Son of power...by the resurrection from the dead" (or "by resurrection of the dead") (Romans 1:4). **It is in resurrection that the "gates of hell" (the kingdom of Satan) are robbed of their power, the enemy's stronghold stormed and left defeated. To quote another, "That then, which God founds upon this rock of the unchangeable power of life in His Son shall not be overthrown by the kingdom of death" (J.N.D.).**

We should notice two further points in the Lord's remarks to Peter. Verse 18 reads in the New Translation, "And I also, I say unto thee." **This is a magnificent assertion of the deity of Christ! Who but a divine Person Himself could, in referring to what God the Father had said, add "I also say."** Hence we see that the Church is not built by human hands, it is the work of One who in His Person is "over all, God blessed for ever" (Romans 9:5).

Then we read “I will build My Church.” There is something very precious about these oft-quoted words. **The Church is not only that which Christ Himself builds, but it is His.** We may see in a future article how exceedingly precious His Church is to His own heart. Let us revel in the blessed knowledge that we, through infinite mercy, are part of that wonderful living organism which Christ calls “My Church.”

Notice that He says “I will build.” He does not say, “I have built,” or “I am building.” Whilst during His pathway here in this world Christ drew to Him by the words of infinite compassion persons who would form part of His Church, yet **He did not build the Church when here. The work which he so fully and blessedly completed at Calvary, and His glorious resurrection and ascension to the right hand of God were all in view of the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. It was then, and not until then, that the Church was established. It is of the utmost importance to see this. The Church is not found in the Old Testament.** (The reference in Acts is to a peculiar people to Himself.) **Neither is the Church an addition for, or a continuation of Judaism, it is something completely new, the truth of which was “kept secret” (Romans 16:25) and awaited the Spirit’s day for its revelation, a ministry given particularly, but not exclusively (Ephesians 3:5), to Paul.**

In a future word we hope to show the way in which Scripture distinguishes between that which is built by divine Persons in relation to the Church and that which men have built.

The church has an immense value in the minds of divine Persons, a brief consideration of which truth should serve to give it a large place in our own affections. In Acts, chapter 20:28 we read, “the assembly of God, which He has purchased with the blood of His Own”. The reference to “all the flock”, and the instruction “to feed (or shepherd) the church of God”, would suggest that the personnel rather than the church as a

vessel are in view. Other Scriptures, to which reference may be made later, clearly refer to the church as a vessel. **How blessed it is to realize that every member of this august company has been “purchased” at such cost; what infinite value is thus placed upon each one by God Himself? The deep interest of the whole Godhead is apparent in that one verse of Scripture and the transaction referred to is one which has glorified God in a most wonderful way. We understand that the verb (the “dong” word) “purchased” is one that causes the glory of what is done to reflect upon the doer that is upon God Himself.**

The glory of the whole transaction is His, but the consideration of this would give to us a greater understanding of the value of each individual saint to God.

O mind divine, so must it be, That glory all belongs to God;
O love divine, that did decree, We should be part, through
Jesus blood.

The church is infinitely precious to Christ. Whilst the parables spoken by the Lord as recorded in Matthew, chapter 13, have the “kingdom of heaven” in mind, the thought of the church as precious to Christ underlies verses 45 and 46. The New Translation gives verse 46 as “one pearl of great value”. The world around us price oftentimes has but little reference to intrinsic value, but the Scriptures reveal the intimate link between the “great price” which the sufferings of Calvary involved, and the “great value” of the church to Christ. The truth of this is most blessedly seen in Ephesians, chapter 5, “Christ also love the assembly, and has delivered Himself up for it, in order that He might sanctify it, purifying it by the washing of water by the word, that He might present the assembly to Himself glorious, having no spot, or wrinkle, or any such things; but that it might be holy and blameless”. How much is involved in those verses! **He gave Himself; He sanctifies; He will present her to Himself. Love, eternal love, is seen in every moment; love that surrendered all; love that has**

continued its unceasing, unaltered service of devotion; love that will be completely satisfied in having secured its object for its own delight, entirely suited to the presence of God, and in absolute accord with His eternal thoughts.

“According as He (God) has chosen us in Him before the world’s foundation, that we should be holy and blameless before Him in love”. That is the thought of God from eternity, and the result of Christ’s movements in devoted love is that the church is secured in complete correspondence to the mind of God, “glorious... and holy and blameless”. **Thus the Lord secures an object for the joy of His own heart eternally, and that, too, which fully meets the thoughts and desires of the blessed God. How precious the church is to Christ?**

With what delight the Holy Scripture indited those verses in Ephesians 5. The Scriptures had recorded the presentation of Eve to Adam in the beginning of man’s history; a wonderful moment for Adam, and indeed for Eve too. Alas! The subsequent history is well known to us all. The securing of the church for the heart of Christ is something which will abide throughout time and eternity. Eve, as the result of divine workmanship, was peculiarly suitable to Adam in every way, and throughout eternity the church, in holy nearness to Christ will be the joy and satisfaction of His own heart and in Christ and His church will be displayed in a coming day the consummation of God’s eternal purpose.

As we thus consider the value of the church to divine Persons, may the Holy Spirit of God impress upon our hearts the wonder and perfection of God’s eternal thoughts, and cause us to abound in thanksgiving that, as the result of the precious, sacrificial love of Christ, we have an eternal part in that which divine love has secured for its own joy and glory.

F.A. Hughes

Exercise

"Exercise thyself unto piety"

THE PROGRESSIVE STEPS IN THE LIFE OF NICODEMUS

Nicodemus is introduced to us early in the Gospel of John, and we do not see the last of him until near the close. Three times in all he is spoken of, and it does not seem difficult to see an advance in each occurrence.

The most familiar, and may we not say the most important, is when he first came to the Lord Jesus by night (John 3)—apparently from timidity, the fear of man—and acknowledged, “Thou art a teacher come from God!” The Lord’s answer goes to the bottom: “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” It was no question of following a teacher, of acknowledging miracles, but the entire nature of man; he himself needs, must be, born anew, if ever he is to see or enter God’s kingdom—whether in its earthly display for Israel, or the heavenly home prepared for the Church and shared with other saints of former and later ages. How helpless, and in himself how hopeless, is man in face of this great necessity! And what infinite grace of the Lord to present along with this the great fact of the cross, and life through the crucified One, provided in the love of God. John 3:16 is the fitting and divine companion to John 3:3.

Thus Nicodemus is left with our Lord’s full testimony of his need and God’s provision for him. We do not know the immediate effect upon him, but we cannot fail to think it produced deep exercise and searching of heart.

We next see Nicodemus a member of the Sanhedrin, or council of rulers (John 7:50-52), where many of the Pharisees were seeking to make away with the blessed Lord. The

opposition and enmity had been steadily increasing. Every act of power, every word of truth and of grace, instead of softening their hearts, only made His enemies more determined to compass His destruction. Here at the Feast of Tabernacles, where His words of grace were so clear, and His testimony so unequivocal, they sent officers to arrest Him. Returning without Him, the officers, in answer to the question, “Why have ye not brought Him?” reply, “Never man spake like this Man!” Again the Pharisees seek to put contempt upon Him: “Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees, believed on Him?” As though to answer their question, one of their own council speaks out, pleading at least for fair treatment for the Lord. And if they were willing to give a fair, impartial examination of His acts and words, there would be but one result. Here at least **Nicodemus comes out openly and claims the fairness which the law of God demanded when one was accused. He refuses to join in the persecution of one who was not proven guilty; may we not well believe he would have gone further and say how He was innocent?**

But human and satanic hatred will not be denied. They must go on to the full accomplishment of their awful hatred. The holy Lord, to accomplish His Father’s will, does not use His divine power to thwart their wickedness; indeed, He had come into the world to effect redemption by the sacrifice of Himself, and so goes to the cross without a murmur. Blessed Lord! Well could it be said of Him, “Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.” And so He goes on until the last prophetic word written of Him is accomplished, and He can say, “It is finished!”—finished all the predictions of His death, all the types and shadows, all the demands of a holy law broken by us; all that the glory of God required justly to let His infinite love and grace flow out to lost, guilty man. **All was provided for this—all was finished.**

But there, in the eyes of His enemies, is the lifeless body of One whom they branded as an impostor and a malefactor. It was the

hour of apparent triumph for Satan and his dupes. The world had its way. **But just here at the time of the greatest darkness, the faith of Nicodemus shines out brightest. He, along with Joseph of Arimathea, identifies himself with a rejected, crucified, lifeless Christ! By so doing, they proclaimed their faith in Him, and their separation from those who had rejected Him.**

And so may we not think of Nicodemus as identified with the fragrant spices which he brought? Like Mary’s, the perfume was not only the tribute of love and devotion to the Lord, but a witness of a faith in Him which had at last shaken itself free from all fear of man, and in the darkest hour, apparently of the Lord’s defeats proclaimed Him as the Victor, and offered the sweet savour of His victory as a worship and thank offering.

S. Ridout

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES!

1. Who burned Joab’s barley field?
2. What king exempted the priests from paying taxes?
3. What local assembly (church) was Silas from?

Rest

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

THE RESTRAINTS OF DIVINE LOVE

LUKE 2:7, JOHN 18:12, JOHN 20:25

Part one of this article appeared in the October 2009 issue but we felt that it was best to put the whole article in this issue for your edification (the editor)

There are two references in the Old Testament to a sacrificial victim being bound, in Genesis 22:9, Abraham is said to have "bound Isaac his son," and in Psalm 118:27 "bind the sacrifice with cords." These words seem to bring before us the power of divine love that would never turn aside from carrying out what that same love had determined. When the Lord Jesus said, "Father save me from this hour," He then referred to the divine cause that had brought Him to this hour.

In the above mentioned scriptures there are three things that humanly speaking held the Lord Jesus. As to His Godhead glory, nothing could hold Him in as He is omnipotent, but divine love had planned a pathway that had to be trodden that would end in the death of the cross.

Having laid aside His glory, or emptied Himself of the exterior display of His glory and having taken His place amongst men, **He accepted the restrictions of humanity** in order to bring the grace of God that had come into this world in His person to such as you and I. In order to become our high priest according to Hebrews 2:14 He took part in that condition that was our natural lot, but apart from sin, in order that He might experience all the conditions that manhood involved. So when He was born perfectly naturally of a woman He was, "wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger." Those swathing bands showed that He was truly a little child and needed to be kept warm and protected just as any newly born baby would need, but it speaks so much more. He was even then "God over all" but had come

right where we were in order to lift us up to where He is eternally.

He had stooped into a place of dependence and, during His pathway for thirty years, He never once departed from that place. We read as to His youth that He was subject to His parents (Luke 2:51). At the banks of the Jordan at the beginning of His public ministry He went under the waters of baptism to take His place with a repentant remnant of Israel and the heavens were opened and the Father's voice declared His delight in that perfect pathway of thirty years. Being lead of the Spirit through the wilderness and for forty days being tempted of Satan, He never departed from dependence on God. He could have turned stone into bread but you and I cannot. He could have cast Himself down from the temple without any harm to Himself but that would not have been natural to men. He could have taken the kingdoms of this world from the hand of Satan, as many men since then have tried to do, but that was not an act of dependence upon God. On every temptation He only used what is available to us, the word of God.

During His pathway He walked on the sea, He commanded the wind and stilled waves, He healed the sick, the lame and the blind but every miraculous act was for the benefit of others, never for Himself. He hungered, He was weary, He wept. He felt compassion and sorrow and at the end of His sinless life, endured pain and abuse. When offered something to ease the physical pain of crucifixion He refused it because divine love had planned a pathway that would plumb the depths into which sin had brought us. Only thus could the power of God's love be seen to be greater than all that sin had brought into this world.

Passing over the brook Cedron from the garden of Gethsemane the Lord Jesus was met by Judas and the band of men from the chief priests and officers with their lanterns, torches and weapons. He goes forth knowing what was about to happen and said to them "Whom seek ye?" The glory of His person is seen

both in His knowledge of what was about to happen as also in their going backward and falling to the ground when in answer to their words “Jesus of Nazareth” and His saying “I AM.” Had He not delivered Himself up they never would have been able to take Him. **But once again we see the “cords of love” that lead Him onward in the path that His Father had planned.** He indeed would drink of that cup which He had taken in perfect obedience from His Father in the garden.

Isaiah had prophesied many years before “He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth.” So He allowed them to take Him and to bind Him and to lead Him away. How unnecessary were those cords, “the cup which my Father giveth me shall I not drink it,” He had said. He had come forth to do the will of His Father and the hour had come when the pathway which love had planned was to draw to its end and nothing could turn Him away from what that pathway involved. It was not the cords that bound him as a prisoner and neither could they force Him to go with them, but love demanded it. “This commandment have I received from my Father.”

Only Thomas speaks of the nails that humanly speaking held the Lord Jesus to the cross: “Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails.” Not all victims of crucifixion were actually nailed to a cross, some were just bound. But to show their hatred of the Jews, the Romans usually nailed them in crucifixion. So even in this act the Lord Jesus took the place of the “despised and rejected of men.” Once again it had been testified before concerning the sufferings of Christ in Psalm 22:16, “For dogs have compassed me, the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.” Also in Zechariah 12:10, “and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced.”

Of old it had been said, “Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” Not only did they make a crown of thorns, the result of

sin entering into the world, and put it upon His head, but they also hanged Him on a tree. Before the curse could be removed it had to be endured and crucifixion perfectly fulfilled these prophetic scriptures.

But once again, it was not the nails that held the Saviour to the tree. In mockery the chief priests said, “Let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe on Him,” and He could so easily have come down but divine love had planned otherwise. One of the malefactors who were crucified with Him said “If thou be Christ, save thyself and us,” but that was impossible:

*Himself He could not save, love's stream too deeply flowed,
Himself in love He gave, to pay the debt we owed.
Obedience to the Father's will and love to us did all fulfil'.*

When Thomas was confronted by the Lord with the words “Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing,” he answered and said, “My Lord and my God,” May it be that by meditating upon these restraints of divine love, a similar response of adoration and affection will be produced in our hearts, for His name's sake.

Jeffrey C. Brett

ANSWERS TO SCRIPTURES SEARCH!

1. Absalom (2 Samuel 14:28-33)
2. Artaxerxes (Ezra 7:4)
3. Antioch (Acts 15:34)

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q. What does it mean to be pure in heart (Matthew 5:8) and how could I have such a heart, for though I am a Christian I feel the sin in my heart and I know it is not pure all the time?

C.J.

A. Dear C.J.,

In the passage you refer to we are reading of the principles which govern those who are in the Kingdom of Heaven, that is, it is our moral standing as believers here in this world. The question of our sins is not here; we are already, as believers, forgiven and stand before God in all the righteousness of Christ. Because God is pure there must be purity of heart to appreciate Him, that is, to see Him. The thought of natural seeing is not here, but rather the appreciation in our soul of the glory and moral excellencies and beauty of our blessed Lord.

As we are occupied with the person of the Lord we are transformed from glory to glory and so our heart has a greater appreciation of His wonderful character and attributes and this effects a change in our heart to make us purer.

Now the fact that one recognizes sin and failure is a most encouraging sign of a tender conscience. We must not be occupied with the failure, but having confessed it, then be taken up with the glorious Man who has lived here in this world for the glory of God and who now has given to us the power so to live, as those who “put off the body of the flesh...buried with Him in baptism...raised with Him through faith of the working of God...” (Col.2:11-12). “If therefore ye have been raised with the Christ, seek the things which are above where the Christ is sitting at the right hand of God...” (Col 3:1). It is in this way that we will have a pure heart, that is an undivided heart. The hope of His coming also has a purifying effect upon us...“even as He is pure” (1 John 3:3).

With warm love in our Lord Jesus,
JAP

THE ENDLESS SONG

Part II

“Praise the Lamb!” At once awaking,
The gathered hosts their voices throng;
Loud and wide - each tongue partaking -
Rolls renewed the endless song.

Grateful incense this, ascending,
Rises to the Father’s throne;
Every knee to Christ is bending;
All the mind in heaven is one.

All the Father’s counsels claiming
Equal honours to the Son;
All the Son’s effulgence beaming -
Glory of His Father’s throne.

By the Spirit all-pervading,
Radiant hosts unnumber’d round,
Breathing glory never-fading,
Echo back the blissful sound.

Joyful now the wide creation
Rests in undisturbed repose;
Blest in Jesus’ full salvation,
Sorrow now nor thralldom knows.

Rich the streams of bounty flowing-
Common blessings from above,
Life and holy joy, bestowing -
Tell of God’s unwearied love.

Hark! the heavenly notes again!
Loudly swells the air-borne praise;
Throughout creation’s vault, “Amen!”
“Amen!” responsive joy doth raise.

J. N. Darby

SERIOUS THINGS TOMORROW

Many years ago there lived in Greece a ruler named Archias. A very selfish man, he lived only for pleasure and cared little or nothing for the needs of his people. Many hated him, and at last some plotted together to kill him. Archias knew nothing of the plot, but a friend in Athens heard of it. Immediately, he wrote a letter to the king warning him of his danger and pointing out a way to escape. The vital message was on its urgent way. Archias was busy holding a great feast when the messenger arrived, but since he came all the way from Athens with an important letter, he was admitted at once into the presence of the king.

Last Chance

“My lord,” he said, “your friend earnestly begs you to read his message at once as it speaks of serious things.” Archias, merry with wine, bent on pleasure, was in no mood to read the letter then. Never guessing what it contained, he laughingly cast it aside, exclaiming as he did so, “Serious things tomorrow?” Then he returned to his pleasure. Poor man. His tomorrow never came. No further warning was given. His evening’s pleasure came to a sad and abrupt end. At the height of the feast, those who had plotted against the king rushed forward and killed him. Perhaps you are enjoying good health and looking forward to an evening of fun and pleasure. Thinking about your soul is too serious for you to consider just now, and like Archias, you say, “Serious things tomorrow!” But stop! Tomorrow may never come. This may be your last night on earth. What if God should say to you as He said to a prosperous farmer long ago, “Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee” (Luke 12:20).

A Crucial Warning

You may not like such serious thoughts, but Satan, the enemy of your soul, is trying to persuade you to stop reading this article and forget its warning. Meanwhile, God is sending you a warning of coming judgment and at the same time pointing out a way to escape. That way is through Christ crucified on the cross for you. In those three hours of darkness He bore the judgment of God against sin – a judgment that you and I deserved. He died; He rose again; He is seated now at God’s right hand in heaven. Through Him God now offers a free pardon to all who will believe. The pardon states: “Be it known unto you therefore...that through this man (Jesus) is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him all that believe are justified from all things” (Acts 13:38-39).