



# *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,

**“Wherefore, having girded up the loins of your mind, be sober and hope with perfect steadfastness in the grace which will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as children of obedience not conformed to your former lusts in your ignorance” (1 Peter 1:13–14).**

In the world today, young people are looking for role models but experience pressure to model themselves upon men and women promoted through the ungodly media. Persons either whose lusts have controlled their behavior or whose ungodly intellect has caused them to deny God or hate Him. They use their abilities and resources to turn society away from what God in His grace offers to mankind.

The social media also uses peer pressure to influence young Christians’ minds to conform to the world’s standards, which is what our classmates and colleagues are doing.

But, young Christian, we have a model! The Lord Jesus! He is One who lived a life of obedience and dependence and left an example for us to follow His footsteps so we can have the victorious life for which every single person in the world yearns.

God has nothing less for us down here than walking in the steps of His own dear Son. The obedience of Jesus Christ our Lord was not a single act, but a life of constant obedience. He was obedient even unto death, and that the death of the cross. God is not seeking from us any legal obedience as those who are under the law, but having given us His Spirit, He desires us to walk in the power of the Spirit in the steps of Jesus. It is in obedience to God’s will that we enter into His mind and by obedience that we manifest our faith in Him. The truth is only really held in the measure of our obedience to the will of God.

We are to be kept moment by moment in a state of dependence, yet reckoning on the constant grace and help of our God. There is no blessing, joy, comfort, or success where there is not dependence on the Lord being exercised.

**It is by reading the Word of God, the Bible, that the Spirit of God will display Him as our Model so that we can learn *about* Him and we can learn *of* Him.**

**Thanks for your notes of encouragement. We love to hear from all of you.**

**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"*

### **FOUR ASPECTS OF THE LAMB!**

Let us look at four different aspects of the Lord Jesus Christ under His title of "Lamb." Turn first to John 1:35–42. John the Baptist says, "Behold the Lamb of God." Now, a man's ways declare what the man is, and as a lamb is the symbol of meekness, gentleness, and lowliness, so the blessed Lord Jesus was characterized by these qualities. Listen to His own words: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest to your souls." A meek man is a self-denying man—one who never stands up for his own rights, even supposing he had any. We read the man Moses was meek above all men who were upon the face of the earth, and yet Moses was but a contrast to the Lord Jesus, the Lamb of God. Moses "spoke unadvisedly with his mouth," but the Lord could challenge His enemies with the question, "Which of you convinces me of sin?" There was no guile found in His mouth. He was meeker than Moses.

#### **THE WALK OF THE LAMB**

A review of the path of the Lord Jesus is most refreshing to the heart: To trace His pathway, and notice all His acts and ways, draws forth the heart in praise and worship; and it was the walk of the Lord that drew forth from the Baptist the exclamation, "Behold the Lamb of God." He "looked on Jesus as he walked." His soul was constrained to own Him as such by the moral beauty and more than human dignity of His walk. Thus the Lord's ways told out who He was. He was the Lamb of God. His life proclaimed His divinity. In ministry, to hold forth the person of the Lord Jesus always brings a blessing with it.

We have Him first as dwelling with the Father from all eternity. "The Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." Then, in view of the work of redemption, we can hear the voice of the blessed Servant of God and man saying, whilst still in the council-chamber of heaven, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God;" and then, becoming

incarnate He did not despise the virgin's womb, nor the manger at Bethlehem, nor the circumstances of shame and suffering incidental to His path of self-renouncing love; and, yet a babe, He is recognized by aged Simeon in the memorable words, "Mine eyes have seen Thy salvation."

Again we see Jesus, at twelve years of age, in the presence of the ancients, "hearing them, and asking them questions." Years elapse, and we find Him baptized of John in Jordan, and a voice from heaven saying to Him, "Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased." And lastly, we have His wonderful testimony of three years and a half, in which He continually went about doing good. He became a man that He might reveal the Father. Now, the effect of John's testimony was that two of his own disciples heard him speak, and followed Jesus: A certain result from such ministry.

#### **THE WORK OF THE LAMB**

We have the second aspect in verses 29–34 of the same chapter. "Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world." It is the same introduction so far, only another element is brought in—that of sin-bearer. He was God's Lamb, the Lamb provided by God in order to meet God's claims. You will never understand and really enjoy the Gospel until you see the source of it to be in the heart of God. Hence we read, that "God so loved the world." You may think of your sins or demerits, if you will, as bringing Him, but it was God Who gave Him. The love is on God's side, and He gave His Son. It was not the death of Christ that procured the love of God, but just the reverse.

Now sacrifice attaches to the word lamb in Scripture, and the Lamb of God became the sin-bearer. The Lord Jesus bore the sins of believers, and He was also "made sin" for them; but here we read of the "sin of the world," a wider thought than either the sins or sin of believers. The death of Christ reaches farther in its effects than the salvation of believers. Thus we read, in Colossians 1:19–20, "Having made peace through the blood of his cross, to reconcile all things unto himself; whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now has he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death."

Here all things in heaven and on earth are to be reconciled by the blood of the cross, whilst believers are already reconciled through the same blessed means. So, in Hebrews 9:23, “the things in the heavens must be purified.” This helps to explain the expression, “sin of the world.” The work to accomplish this has been done, only we wait for power to make it good. In the millennium, righteousness will reign; but in the new heaven and the new earth it will dwell. And in them we shall see the full results of the cross—the reconciliation of all things, and the everlasting expulsion of sin from those new scenes and that new creation where “all things are of God.”

Meanwhile, through the work of the Lamb of God, the forgiveness of sins is preached, and whosoever, by grace, believes in Him is justified from all things; and not only so, but is enjoined to reckon himself dead to sin, and alive unto God through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

### **THE WORSHIP OF THE LAMB**

Now let us turn to Revelation 5:11–12, where we shall find the third aspect of the Lamb, “And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.”

This is a different scene. It is not a Lamb on the altar, but a Lamb worshipped by the hosts of heaven, yet the same Lamb. Oh! how refreshing the sight. Once the object of scorn and hatred, He is now the center of universal adoration!

Once they bowed the knee before Him in mockery and proud contempt, now they fall before Him in adoring worship. Once when on Calvary’s cross “sitting down they watched him there,” now concentric circles of living creatures, elders, and myriad hosts of angels prostrate themselves before the enthroned Lamb of God.

“Four and twenty elders rise  
From their princely station,  
Shout His glorious victories,  
Sing His glad salvation.

Cast their crowns before the throne,  
Cry in reverential tone—  
Holy, holy, holy One,  
Glory be to God alone.

“Hark, these thrilling symphonies  
Seem within to seize us;  
Add we to their holy lays—  
Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.”

Sweetest note in seraph’s song,  
Sweetest name on mortal tongue,  
Sweetest anthem ever known—  
Jesus, Jesus, reigns alone.”

They say with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and glory, and blessing.” He was in weakness here, but He exercises power there. He was poor here, had not where to lay His head, but there He has riches. Here He was defamed, there He receives honor, and glory, and blessing. What a change for the Lamb! From the cross of shame to the throne of glory; and of a truth He deserves such exaltation.

Some may not know what worship is. Do you think it is merely going on your knees and saying your prayers, or coming to hear the Gospel preached? To worship is to render what is worthy, but in prayer you ask for the supply of need, and in hearing you come for instruction. In worship the soul gives to God that of which He is worthy. Many Christians are more like beggars than worshippers. We may have our needs; but have we not more mercies than necessities? Worship is the enjoyment of God’s company, delight in His love, giving back to Him what He has first given me. If we only lived more fully in this consciousness that our cup is flowing over, as in Psalm 23, we would beg less and worship more. The Father knows our need, but He seeks our worship. Dear fellow Christians may our hearts flow over with streams of gratitude.

## **THE WRATH OF THE LAMB**

The fourth aspect is in Revelation 6:12–17. It is not the walk, nor the work, nor the worship, but the wrath of the Lamb that we find here. “And the kings of the earth, and the great men and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.” What? the wrath of the Lamb? Yes, a paradox, but an awful fact: a seeming contradiction, but a terrible truth! Ye who despise Him, tremble! That hand which you nailed to the cross shall wield the sceptre. That brow which you tore by the crown of thorns shall wear the diadem of glory. He who was led as a Lamb to the slaughter shall sit as a Judge on the throne.

Meekness is not weakness, gentleness is not feebleness, lowliness is not impotence, and, He, who in the days of His flesh, displayed the grace of the Lamb, will exhibit then the omnipotence of the Judge of all, and woe to the wicked in that day! Futile will be their call to the mountains, vain their cry to the rocks—the mountains will not fall and the rocks will not hide—but the fearful vision of the Lamb’s righteous wrath must be beheld by all. “Every eye shall see Him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him.” There is not an unconverted man who shall not see Jesus Christ some day! If you look to Him now you will find Him a Savior, when you see Him then you will find Him a Judge. If you come to Him now you will find mercy: if you stand before Him then you will be driven away to “drink of the wine of the wrath of God...in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.”

J. Wilson-Smith

## **MEAT**

*“Sanctify them by the truth”*

### **“THINGS OF GOLD” IN THE “HOLIEST OF ALL”**

“The ark of the covenant overlaid roundabout with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; and over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy seat”.  
(Hebrews 9:3–4)

**The Ark speaks of Christ in the grace and holiness of His Manhood and in the glory of His Godhead. The Manna speaks of Christ once humbled here—the food of His saints. The Rod speaks of His life beyond the grave and of His priestly service to sustain His own so that they might be brought into the enjoyment and moral power of the Covenant.**

It is good for us in such a day as the present, when the material tends to transcend the spiritual—in the esteem of men—to buy of a glorified Christ gold tried in the fire that we might be rich. Silver was of no account in the days of Solomon, everything was of gold. Then, God had His proper place; His House was built; His Name was called upon His people. Divinely endowed prosperity was their portion.

In thirty years or so all was changed. Rehoboam, and all Israel with him, forsook the law of the Lord. God, in His righteous government, brought up the king of Egypt against Rehoboam. He spoiled the treasures of the House of the Lord and took away the shields of gold. Rehoboam replace them with shields of brass. The inferior was complacently accepted (See 2 Chronicles 12).

In yet a later day, with even deeper moral decline, Jeremiah lamented, “How is the gold become dim!”

Thankfully, we look forward to that day when the voice shall sing in Israel—in answer to the prophecy of Isaiah 60—“Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee;” and “for brass I will bring gold.” What a day of recovery when the Lord sets up his kingdom! Then Zion’s walls shall be “Salvation” and her “gates, Praise.”

Warned then by the failures of others, anticipating too the day of Christ, may we ourselves be content with nothing less than the gold of the truth of God, ministered by the Spirit of God, making everything of the Christ of God.

**The Golden Pot. Exodus 16:33.**

The Golden Pot and its contents of manna suggest that the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, in Manhood here upon earth, was in every way pleasing to God. The omer full, placed in the Ark, indicated God's distinct appreciation of Him here.

Gold is ever emblematic of the divine glory—only a Golden Pot would do for storing the treasured measure of manna. God's glory ever found an answer in that blessed Man who walked through this world despised and rejected of men but chosen of God and precious.

The Hidden Manna held out to the overcomer in a Pergamos-like, world-bordering, condition of profession (Revelation 2:17) will yield a sweet taste of that, in Christ, which was so delightful to God. Beside His public service and ministry, there was His constant communion with and dependence upon God. All was treasured up of God—not one little bit of it shall be lost. It will be the portion of the overcomer of worldly Christian profession to share in God's treasured store. Fitting recompense indeed for whole-hearted allegiance to Christ in the day of testimony and testing. That allegiance was sustained by their secret life of dependence, communion, and feeding upon Christ, a Christ once humbled here. We appreciate then that only a Golden Pot would do to contain the precious memorial of the wilderness food of the people of God.

**As we feed upon the true manna we are made to feel increasingly that we are moving against the current of the present evil course of things. Thus, we become aware of need of “help from the sanctuary” (Psalm 20:2).**

**The Golden Altar. Exodus 30.**

This speaks of Christ as competent to sustain the whole system of divine glory and testimony. The shittim wood speaks of His incorruptible humanity—the pure gold of His absolute deity. Hence, He is eminently able to maintain what is due to God and what is

needed by us. **He is “a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God.” Merciful on our side—faithful on God's side.**

The Golden Altar was foursquare, one cubit each side—north, south, east, and west—there is never a circumstance but what the fragrant grace of Christ's intercession can cope with it completely. One is the number of unity; two is the number of testimony. Christ would intercede for His own that they might be ONE (John 17:20–21), and that, in the living power of unity, they might witness to the God of the House of God.

As saints reap the gain of His intercession they are supported in the testimony of God, and are made to realize the blessedness of forming part of the House of God, and to reflect the intercessory grace of Christ. So they pray for “all men”—“all saints”—servants—“all things”—in all places—and at all times (see 1 Timothy 1:1; Ephesians 6:18; 2 Thessalonians 3:1; Philippians 4:6; Luke 18:1).

**Christ, in His service of Golden Altar character, sustains His saints in the sphere of fellowship as set forth in the Table of Shewbread. He also sustains them in the ministry of the Spirit, set forth in the shining of the Golden Lampstand, so that they are endowed and empowered to go out into the Court in witness and to go into the Holiest in worship.**

**The Golden Plate. Exodus 28:36-38.**

The High Priest, dressed in his garments of glory and beauty, had as the crowning piece of his adornment the Golden Plate. This was fastened by a lace of blue to his mitre upon his forehead. The stated reason being that the whole priestly service of offering should be, **“HOLINESS TO THE LORD.”**

As the saints take up the privilege of serving God as purged worshippers they come under the ordering hand of the Lord Jesus Christ—“High Priest of our confession.”

How seemingly strange and contradictory is this statement: “that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts...that they may be accepted before the Lord” (Exodus 28:36–38). No imperfection of thought or expression will escape Him. Every offering will be presented in the

perfection of His grace. That fragrance which marks Him in His intercession in the Holy Place will mark Him too in His service in the Holiest of All.

**The High Priest, on the Day of Atonement, went into the presence of God enveloped in the cloud of incense from the Golden Censer. Christ has gone into that presence in His own perfection. We draw near in the fitness, perfection, grace and acceptability of the Christ of God. How thankful we are that, spite of our mixed condition, spite of imperfect presentation because of what we are, every gift sincerely offered to God is passed through the hands of our Faithful High Priest, and reaches God in the suitability with which Christ presents it.**

**The Golden Censer.** Hebrews 9:4; Leviticus 16:12.

Historically this was in the presence of God, in the Holiest, only once a year—on the great Day of Atonement. The Hebrew epistle tells us that the first feature of the Most Holy Place was that it “had the Golden Censer.” This reference back to the Tabernacle in the wilderness carries with it all the light of the New Testament. The Golden Censer is within the veil because our Priest is within the veil.

**If the Golden Altar suggests His constant intercession, then the Golden Censer suggests that the work of atonement is forever done and consequently Christ is in the inside place.** This clearly distinguishes Christianity from Judaism, for our Priest is within the veil—the Minister of the true sanctuary—constantly engaged in the service of God in the abiding fragrance of His all-varied grace and glory, as typified by the spices of the sweet incense, He is constantly leading the saints in the service of praise and worship Godward.

Thus;

**The GOLDEN POT,** speaks of God’s appreciation of a once humbled Christ; the manna—the food of the saints for days of wilderness history.

**The GOLDEN ALTAR,** of Christ as the Sustainer of the divine system; and the sweet incense of His continual intercession for His own.

**The GOLDEN PLATE,** of His holy vigilance to ensure that only what is pleasurable to God shall be presented to Him.

**The GOLDEN CENSER,** of the worship-service which He carries on today in the presence of God.

**Thank God for wilderness food which forms a constitution to enable us for overcoming now, and gives us the prospect of feasting with God on all that He has stored up of Christ—the Man of His pleasure.**

**Thank God for Christ’s priestly support this sustains us in the testimony now.**

**Thank God for access into His presence now, on the grounds of Christ’s perfect offering and in the acceptability this is His alone.**

“Blest God and Father, in Thy sight,  
We bow and own Thy grace;  
We worship in Thy glorious light,  
Which shines in Jesus’ face.”

N. Anderson.

### **Search the Scriptures!**

1. Who is the only Egyptian queen mentioned by name in the Bible?
2. Who is the prophet who wrote a brief book against Edom?
3. Which Gospel mentions that an angel rolled away the stone from the tomb of the Lord Jesus?

## EXERCISE

*"Exercise thyself unto piety"*

### **DEVOTED OR BACKSLIDING, WHICH?!**

Every true servant of Christ and lover of God's people must feel greatly the apparent lack of true and whole-hearted devotedness to Christ in this day amongst those who profess His name. It is most lamentable to see that the increase of light and Scripture knowledge has not produced the corresponding effect of devotedness to Christ and separation from this world. It has often been remarked that when people were less enlightened there was more true devotedness. How many there are who say "Lord! Lord!" and yet do not what He ask.

This is not only true of the vast profession which bears Christ's name, and which will eventually be spewed out of His mouth, because of having proved unfaithful to Him; but also of those who have been privileged with the greatest light. As was said in another day, "All seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's." Hence, the great want of self-surrender to Him. Where devotedness for the Lord is lacking, there cannot be true faithfulness and uncompromising testimony for Him in this world where He was, and still is, rejected.

**The great secret of whole-hearted devotedness to Christ is to know and enjoy His love, and thus to be absorbed with Himself alone.** No wonder Paul bent his knees, and prayed so earnestly for the Ephesian saints, that they might be not only strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man, and that Christ might dwell in their hearts by faith, but that they also might know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, and so be filled unto all the fullness of God.

**Nothing but true affection for Christ can draw us from the influences of this world, or keep us from them. Our hearts must be centered in, satisfied with, and controlled by an Object outside of self and seen things, if we are to be preserved from the present awful current of worldliness around us. No**

**amount of intelligence can produce devotedness. We might be a walking encyclopedia of Biblical knowledge; we might have ransacked the whole domain of theological literature; we might have committed to memory, and might be able to explain, every verse in the Bible; we might be able to define and settle in a most authoritative way the hardest points in theological controversy; our lips might utter very high and heavenly truths, and all the while our hearts be cold and indifferent to what suits the Lord at this present moment.**

Moreover, our Church position might be unassailable. We might be maintaining the right ground, as people speak, and the Lord might say of us as He said of Ephesus, "I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for My name's sake hast labored, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless, I have it against thee, that thou hast left thy first love." (Revelation 2:2-4, R.V.)

It is a great mistake to think that devotedness is only shown by great acts of service. Not that service should be made little of, but a person might be most active in service and to all appearance might be very energetic in it, and all the while might not be truly devoted to Christ. If Saul thought he was doing a great service when he spared the best of the sheep and oxen to sacrifice to the Lord his God in Gilgal, Samuel said, "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." Martha is an example of this, as well as the Ephesian assembly which has come before us. "She was careful, and troubled about many things," and she said to the Lord, "Dost thou not care that my sister has left me to serve alone?" She evidently wanted Mary to leave her sweet retreat for the moment, and help her. But the Lord said, "Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." Mary sat at the Lord's feet, and learned His mind, and thus knew what suited Him. This the Lord most appreciated and commended, and from this place all true and effective service must ever flow.



No doubt, where devotedness to the Lord is true and real, it will be seen in some form of service. But it might not be of such a character that men would esteem or value it. For instance, when Mary of Bethany showed her devotedness to the Lord by bringing a pound of very costly ointment, and anointing His feet, and wiping them with her hair, Judas said, “Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?” He thought Mary’s devotedness was all waste. Men would doubtless have thought far more highly of what the rich men cast into the treasury than what the poor widow cast in. Not so the Lord - “That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God”; “The first shall be last, and the last first.”

**There is nothing the blessed Lord is so jealous of as our heart’s love.** He does not ask us to love Him without giving us the motive to do so—His own deep, unfathomable, unchanging love, of which we have been the eternal objects, so fully expressed in giving Himself for us. As Paul says, “He loved me, and gave Himself for me.” And also, “The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if One died for all, then were all dead; and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again.” Also, when Paul sought to move the Corinthians to a truer devotedness and greater liberality in giving to others, he used the mightiest possible lever to move their hearts when he said, “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich.”

**Nothing is so jealous as true love: it cannot bear rivalry. But, alas! how much the blessed Lord has to bear with us; for is He not often rivaled in our hearts? “Little children, keep yourselves from idols,” is a word that is often forgotten and greatly overlooked. Anything that supplants Christ in the heart of a Christian is an idol, and ought to be judged and put far from us.**

It is extremely sad to see departure from first love, and to witness the declension of those who were once burning and brilliant in

testimony for Christ. Of old, God said of Israel, “My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.” And the prophet Haggai said to the returned captives of Ezra’s and Nehemiah’s days, in whom declension was so soon manifested, “Now therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways. Ye have sown much, and bring in little...ye drink, but ye cannot be filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it in a bag with holes... Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home I did blow upon it. Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of Mine house that is waste, and ye did run every man to his own house.” What sad declension!

It has been remarked that “backsliding begins at the closet door,” which is quite true. It behooves each one of us, therefore, to watch the beginning of things. No matter how far advanced we may appear to be, or how much truth we know, it cannot be held in divine power if we do not seek to be alone with God in our closets. I shall never forget a servant of Christ saying that “if we judged ourselves for a dull half-hour we would never get a fall.” If our dullness arises from something we may have allowed in our walk and ways to grieve the Holy Spirit, how true this is. But if we judge ourselves, and turn to the Lord in confession, “we shall not be judged.”

**Now soul declension is far more common than many suppose. How many there are who, though not openly backsliding, are nevertheless in heart. They may never miss a meeting; they may be very correct and upright in their ways; they may maintain a perfect outward behavior; but all the while they may show very little heart for Christ, or His interests. Of such the Scripture says, “They shall be filled with their own ways,” not the ways of Christ, or what pleases Him. We might call such people lean-souled Christians—like those of old, of whom it is written, “He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul.” The Lord save His people from such a wretched state!**

**No state of soul, perhaps, is so serious in any saint as to be in a declining state, and not to know it, or to be indifferent to it.** God said of backsliding Ephraim, “Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not; yea, grey hairs are here and there upon him, and he knoweth it not.” Yet think of the compassionate heart of God saying, “How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within Me, My repentings are kindled together.” (Hosea 11:8.)

How very comforting to be assured of the fact that, though the Lord may allow us to reap the fruit of our own ways, and make us feel the bitterness of having departed from Him, yet His love never changes toward us: “Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.” Nothing could ever induce Him to give us up, though we, in our foolishness, may be tempted to give Him up.

Though Peter denied Him, yet the Lord’s heart remained unchanged toward Peter. With a look that must have expressed the deepest love for Peter, the Lord broke Peter’s heart, and afterwards fully restored him. What marvelous grace! How like the Lord this is!

**May the Lord attach our hearts more to Himself, in the place where He is, outside this world. May we have the same spirit as Ruth, when she said, “Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me.”**

P. W.

## REST

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

### **“BESIDE THE STILL WATERS”!**

“He leadeth me beside the still waters” (Psalm 23).

**The souls of men are restless, sin has made them so, for “the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest.” But the Good Shepherd calls His sheep from their restless wandering and unsatisfied and self-willed straying and brings them to repose at His feet He leads them beside the waters of quietness.**

The simile brings a picture of peace to the vision; it speaks of restfulness of heart in a secure retreat. But it does not follow that this quietness of soul springs from external circumstances—these may be most adverse to our natural inclination, yet in the midst of them the heart may be unruffled, as another Scripture says: “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee.”

One soul-enthraling incident in the life of our Lord on earth illustrates this quietness and peace to perfection. At the bidding of their Master the fishermen-disciples had launched their craft upon as still a sea as ever the sun shone upon. But they had scarce set their oars to the row-locks when the wind uprose and gradually increased until it blew a terrific gale, the very fury of hell seemed to be let loose in that tempest, and the waves roared and rolled about that one small boat with such force that those well-seasoned mariners were seized with a panic of fear.

**The raging of the waters without the boat created so great a storm of terror within their breasts that they cried aloud to their Master that they would perish. But what of Him? Was He afraid? Did any anxiety of heart show itself in His demeanor? Nay, “His head was on a pillow laid, And He was fast asleep.”**

**Perfect peace, in the midst of the tempest! Blessed repose in the presence of the threatening waves! Why did they not share His pillow?**

Had that storm increased in its fury sevenfold they would still have been safe, yea, safe as when at His command a great calm laid its arresting hand upon the turbulent waves.

**But what was the secret of that wonderful repose? Upon what pillow did the Lord put down His head? The secret was unbroken confidence in God; the pillow was His Father's changeless and almighty love.**

He was the Man of absolute dependence, more than man, as we shall see, but truly man, committing all His way to God and satisfied to do His will alone. And the God whom He served was behind every circumstance; He sat above the water-flood and put a strong bridle on the mouth of the storm. It could not rage beyond His permission, His love would keep His loved One in all His ways, and the ever-blessed and absolutely dependent Jesus rested there. And, Christian, He gives that pillow to you, so that you may find repose in the midst of trouble, He says, "The Father Himself loveth you because ye have loved Me." "My peace I give unto you...not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27). This is a great reality—"He leadeth me beside the still waters" The raging flood without, but the quiet waters within.

**The fear of those disciples brought forth an evidence of the divine power of the Lord, a gleam of His Godhead glory. With tender compassion in His heart for their weakness, with the quiet of an eternal calm in His eyes, and with omnipotence in the words of His mouth, He spoke to the storm; and the great billows fell at His feet in mute submission as cowers a spaniel at the feet of his master.**

The disciples marveled at that mighty act, and, indeed, it was wonderful; but whether of the twain commands our deepest admiration, the peace in the tempest, or the power over it?

The former may even be ours, for the latter is always on our side, to be used for us when immortal love sees that the storm has taught us the needed lesson. But it is a greater thing to go through the storm reposing in perfect confidence in Him than to have it removed for us. It is more to His honor when we allow ourselves to be led by the still

waters while the floods roll about us, than to have circumstances changed to suit our lack of faith.

"Carest Thou not that we perish?" cried His disciples. Strange words from their mouths, revealing their distrust of Him. How little they knew Him! I wonder, if Simon Peter remembered this faithless cry when years after he wrote to his brethren who were being greatly tried and persecuted, "Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you." Yes He cares, and Simon Peter had proved it, and so have we, and so we shall still prove it, not because we have faith but because He is faithful.

**Christians, let us trust in the Lord at all times; let us recline upon His bosom, and believe that He will not permit a single circumstance, or place us in any situation which will not further in our souls the purposes of His changeless love. So shall we be led by the waters of quietness. And though in the world we shall have tribulation, yet in Him we shall have peace.**

J.T.Mawson

### Answers to Scripture Search!

1. Tahpenes (1 Kings 11:19)
2. Obadiah
3. Matthew (28:2)

## IMPROVING THE MONA LISA!

The Mona Lisa may not be your favorite work of art, but it would be hard to find a more famous or imitated piece. Painted in approximately 1504 by Leonardo da Vinci, the Mona Lisa has had a pretty unique journey. She was stolen from her place in the Louvre and hidden in a small apartment for two years. Pablo Picasso was picked up for questioning about her theft. She has appeared in over 2,000 different advertisements. Joconde, as she is also called, hung in the bedroom of Napoleon Bonaparte. She is guarded in a concrete and bulletproof glass viewing case. The Mona Lisa has over 500,000 distinctive cracks in her protective varnish. The information desk at the Louvre answers the question “Where is Joconde?” far more than any other. She is estimated to be worth in excess of \$700,000,000.

What Could You Do to Make It More Valuable? Suppose you or I were to touch up the painting just a bit. Salvador Dali, the famous painter, created a version with some special flourishes that isn’t worth anywhere near as much as the original. Suppose we just make the background a touch more interesting and then sign our names to the bottom. All we would succeed in doing is to reduce its value. Suppose the lady who sprayed red paint at it in April 1974 had succeeded in coating more than its protective casing, would she have improved it or increased its value?

There’s an even more important work that cannot be made more valuable by the extra touches you or I could add. Each one of us has made what we call “little mistakes” in our lives. Most of us are willing to admit that we aren’t perfect, have “messed up” or have occasionally acted in a way that we now regret. God, the holy God we must answer to, says a very uncompromising, “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). He had a masterpiece planned for our lives that would have been for His credit and our joy. We have defaced it with our self-will, lust, anger, jealousy, and selfishness. No amount of touch-up is going to make it any better. But, amazingly, God loves us deeply in spite of our rebellion against Him and spoiling of His treasures. So that God could express His love in a perfect way that would let Him have a right to receive us into His presence, Jesus Christ came to pay the ultimate penalty for sin—death. He came to fully and completely wipe out the guilt of any who would trust Him as their Savior. “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). After He completed His work on the cross of suffering for the sin He hadn’t committed, Jesus announced, “It is finished” (John 19:30). God’s ultimate masterpiece—His fair and righteous work to take away sin so that undeserving could be saved—was completely finished. Nobody would ever need to come along and improve it.

Trying to Improve the Masterpiece: Sadly, there are many people who think God’s beautiful and perfect plan of salvation needs a few of their finishing touches to make it complete. Many religions offer people activities like prayers, penance, pilgrimages, and acts of charity that are supposed to make God a touch more favorable toward the pious person. But Jesus’ work was perfect, complete, and finished. Most of us would be appalled if someone grabbed a can of spray paint and started to “improve” the Mona Lisa’s smile. How could we possibly think that we can improve on God’s smile of love toward us? It is really an all-or-nothing gift. Either we gratefully receive God’s gift or we not so subtly deny its value by saying we can add to it, improve its worth, or pay for it with our own good works. “The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

**What will you do with that masterpiece?**