



# *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,

“I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food” (Job 23:12).

The question I would like to ask is whether you study the Bible now with the same eagerness as when you were newly saved and had a fresh appreciation of what the Lord did for you? It is a question for all believers at the present moment, for it concerns the spiritual welfare of every child of God. There is no spiritual growth without it, as Peter reminds us after dealing with the necessary condition of the soul: “As newborn babes, desire earnestly the pure mental milk of the word, that by it ye may grow up to salvation” (1 Peter 2:2); and as Paul teaches when he writes to Timothy, “From a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 2:15).

Now there are three ways in which it is possible to read the Word of God. It may be read from a sense of duty; it may be resorted to for help and guidance; and it may be read from delight in Him, whose Word it is, and whose precious treasures of grace and blessing it unfolds. These three methods mark for some different stages of spiritual life. They began by reading from a sense of obligation, they proceeded in due time to reading for help and teaching, and finally they read because they realized that God’s words were “more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb” (Psalm 19:10). This last method, as many have found, is the only true way of Bible study.

It is important to read the Scripture—devotionally and systematically. In the former, I listen to what the Lord communicates and look to Him to produce in me the suited effect of His truth by the working of His Spirit. Thus I become formed by the truth; worship and holiness of life result. In the latter, I search and examine to discover His mind, and what is taught on any given subject. I look to Him to give me understanding by the Spirit; to preserve me from error and to enable me to form His own judgment—to discover and to hold the truth in a divine way. Dependence is, therefore, of all importance. Nothing so keeps us in dependence as the sense of being in the presence of God in order to receive divine communications. It greatly helps if we read the Scriptures regularly and systematically. The more we read, the more we desire to read; and if nothing is allowed to interfere with the seasons set apart for this purpose, the reading will soon become as much a necessity as our daily food.

**I trust that you will enjoy the great articles in this issue during the summer months. It is our prayer that the Lord would use them for building you up in your most holy faith and help you to be established. 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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***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"*

### **"FAITH"—SOME "BETTER THING"!**

The first verse of Hebrews 2 introduces "faith;" its closing verse alludes to "some better thing," which God had "provided," or "foreseen" for us, who are Christians, compared with the saints of Old Testament times. This better portion which is ours does not consist of things visible to our natural eyes, and therefore faith is a prime necessity for us.

Have we all realized what a remarkable chapter Hebrews 11 is? The actual word faith only occurs twice in the whole of the Old Testament, and the first of these is a negation, for Moses had to complain of the mass of the people that they had, "no faith." And this is alluded to and endorsed in Hebrews 3 and 4, where it is pointed out that Israel's failure sprang from their unbelief; the word that reached them not being "mixed with faith." Yet in chapter 11, the Spirit of God reveals to us that all that was vital in these godly souls of pre-Christian times was the fruit of faith. What lay so largely beneath the surface in former times, now stands clearly revealed.

We have long thought that this chapter might be summarized under three headings; the first of which is:

#### **Faith saves.**

The offering that Abel brought was not the result of a fortunate guess but the fruit of faith, which perceived that on him as a sinner the death penalty rested, and so God could only be approached on the ground of death. Thus he was accounted righteous, and he knew it. So also, faith enabled Enoch to walk with God, though surrounded by fearful evils, and at last enabled him to escape death by translation. And further, what was it that enabled Noah to persist year after year building the enormous ship on dry land?—which must have seemed

ridiculous to the men of his day. It was faith, believing that God would do what He had said He would do. It resulted in salvation when the antediluvian world (*the world before the flood*) was destroyed. Yes, it is faith that saves.

But then we pass on to Abraham, and the middle of the chapter shows us that

#### **Faith sees,**

It gives a spiritual conception of things that lie outside our natural vision. Abraham departed from Ur of the Chaldees, though it was no mean city—as modern excavations have proved—to go forth into the unknown. His faith enabled him to envisage (form *a mental picture of*) a city that had foundations that were laid by God Himself. And so we move on through the patriarchs until we come to Moses, when we find a man, who "endured, as seeing Him, who is invisible." So clearly it is faith that sees.

Then in the latter part of the chapter we discover that

#### **Faith suffers.**

The one who possesses it is endowed with the power to endure. Indeed we may say that faith never shines more brightly than when it is confronted by adverse power. Moses chose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." And a long list follows of those who endured persecution and suffering in the energy of faith.

Thus God makes known to us that even in these earlier days, when what was revealed was often in connection with things that were visible, audible and tangible, what was of supreme importance for man was faith. Equally so, indeed even more so, is it thus for us today, seeing that the "better" thing, that we are to know and enjoy, lies outside our natural powers.

Some better thing then have we. Let us notice how this word, better, occurs, as we glance over the epistle. To begin with, we have it in Hebrews 1:4. The Son, who was the Creator, had become the Revealer and the Redeemer, and is declared to be

“much better than the angels.” Now the law was given by “the disposition of angels,” as Stephen said in his last address, recorded in Acts 7, and this is alluded to in our epistle, when we reach Hebrews 2:2. Hence this first great contrast in the epistle. The law conveyed some revelation of the mind of God, and it reached them through angels. The full revelation of God, which lies at the base of the better thing that has reached us, is found in the Son, who stands far above and better than all angels.

The word “better” does not actually occur again until Hebrews 7 is reached, but there it occurs thrice. In the first case it stands connected with a type. The priesthood of Christ is “after the order of Melchizedec,” and eternal. Now Melchizedec blessed Abraham, out of whom sprang the Aaronic priesthood, and he who blesses is better than the one who is blessed. The priesthood of Christ is eternal, and exists far above Aaron and his family, established under the law.

Then, as verses 18 and 19 remind us, the law made nothing perfect, and so the commandment going before is set aside, and a better hope is brought in. Now why is the better thing spoken of as a hope? Our reply would be that, as stated in Hebrews 3:1, ours is a “heavenly calling,” that will not be fully realized until heaven itself is reached. Hence a large element of hope enters into the Christian calling, and is of a character that surpasses any hope connected with the calling of Israel. But though this is the case its present effect is to bring us near to God. Before Christ came and accomplished His redeeming work, the way into the holiest was not made manifest. Now it is, and we have boldness of access to God, as is stated in Hebrews 1.

Verse 22 makes this manifest, for a new “testament,” or “covenant” has been established, and of this covenant the Lord Jesus is the “Surety.” If at this point the reader will turn to Genesis 43, and particularly note verse 9, the force of “surety” will be plain. The new covenant is a declaration of the grace of God; and it is as if our Lord said, “Should it not stand

imperishable and forever, let Me bear the blame of it forever.” Stand it will for it is “the everlasting covenant,” as Hebrews 13 states; and how much better it is than the old covenant of Sinai is abundantly clear. This is confirmed when we reach Hebrews 8:6, where the promises connected with it are mentioned. The hope connected with these promises we have just referred to.

If we pass on now to Hebrews 9:23, we get the statement that the heavenly things themselves are purified with better sacrifices than those offered under the law for the purification of the patterns of those heavenly things. The word here is in the plural—“better sacrifices,” because, we judge, the Hebrew reader is referred back to Leviticus 1–5, in which various offerings were commanded, all of which had typical reference to Christ. His whole pathway from the glory was marked by continual sacrifice, which culminated in the one great, atoning sacrifice of the cross, of which the rest of Hebrews 9 speaks. Here indeed was the one sacrifice of infinite value, which far outshines any sacrifice previously known.

The early part of Hebrews 10 continues this theme, and shows us that sin having been put away by the sacrifice of Christ, the believer today has boldness of access to “the holiest”—the very presence of God Himself. And in the later verses of that chapter we learn that consequently we are possessed of “substance,” of an “eternal” nature, which is “better” than anything that was promised to Israel under the law. Had they been obedient, they would have prospered and multiplied in their families and all earthly possessions. The Hebrew Christian had substance that lay outside earthly things, in keeping with the fact that they, and we also, are “partakers of the heavenly calling,” as Hebrews 3:1 states.

It was the realization of this that enabled these early Hebrew believers to take “joyfully the spoiling” of their “goods.” It would have been a great thing if, when some of their homes were smashed up by an opposing mob, they had faced the loss

with resignation and meekness, but they actually faced it with joyfulness. It served to emphasize in their minds the glorious fact that their real portion lay outside earth and in heaven, far beyond the power of all their opponents.

And what was it that made the heavenly portion that was theirs so real to them? The answer to this is of course found in the first verse of Hebrews 11, which in Darby's New Translation reads, "Now faith is the substantiating of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." The better and enduring substance was substantiated to the early Hebrew Christian by faith.

Exactly thus it is for us today. We, who are English-speaking Christians, are like men walking amidst a forest of pleasant and attractive things. The few of us who can look back through sixty or even seventy years, can realize how great has been the advance in pleasant and profitable human inventions. At the moment money abounds and every kind of invention and contrivance abounds; often useful and always very attractive, and therefore bidding for our attention, Our modern "goods" are very absorbing in their nature, and at the moment there is no "spoiling" of them by active opponents. But what about that unseen, yet better and enduring substance which is ours in heaven? Is faith active with us, so that the unseen, heavenly substance is really filling our thoughts and dominating our lives?

"Some better thing," then as compared with what was revealed to the worthy saints of pre-Christian times, has been provided for us, and the knowledge of it, received by faith, is to dominate our lives. But we shall all be ushered into the full enjoyment of our respective portions together. They will not "be made perfect" without us, and we may add, nor we without them; for we shall all reach final perfection together, at the day of resurrection and glory, when the Lord Jesus comes again.

F.B. Hole

## MEAT

*"Sanctify them by the truth"*

### **"NOT MADE WITH HANDS"**

**This expression, which occurs at least eight times in the New Testament, refers to things of this creation (see Hebrews 9:11). We live and react to a material world by our five senses, but in Christianity we are brought into a spiritual world, which cannot be received or understood by those five senses. In 1 Corinthians 2:14, the apostle Paul writes, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."**

Sadly, because we are born a natural man, we have a great difficulty in understanding spiritual things and when considering them, we try to reason them out by our natural intelligence and ability. But a true believer has the Holy Spirit indwelling him, so in the previous verse to the one quoted above we read, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given us of God."

- In **Acts 17**, we read of Paul left alone at Athens, where he saw all the buildings and sculptures representing man's imagination of God, his spirit was stirred in him and publicly condemned it all as superstitious. And said, "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, **dwelleth not in temples made with hands**; neither is worshipped with men's hands."

The Lord Jesus in John 4:24, says, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth" which means that true worship is not only by the Holy Spirit which has been given to us, but it is a spiritual thing. Christendom has very largely copied the Old Testament form of ceremonial

approach to God by using things that are material, and which appeal to our five senses, in the so-called worship of God, not understanding that these were all terminated in the death of God's beloved son.

-In **Colossians 2:11** Paul says, "In whom also ye have been circumcised with **circumcision not done by hand**, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of the Christ." The Jews were well acquainted with the meaning of circumcision and it was given them by God as a token that they were His people. This act certainly affected them in their bodies but did not alter what they were inwardly, or spiritually. The circumcision, not done by hand, but by God in the death of Christ, cuts off once and for all that old nature, which can neither please Him nor respond to Him.

So Paul continues in verse 12, "Buried with Him in baptism, in which ye have been also raised with Him through faith of the working of God who raised Him from among the dead."

-The tabernacle of old was set up by Moses according to the pattern that was shewn him in the mount and was a privileged way of ceremonially approaching God that no other nation had. But in **Hebrews 9:24**, we read, "For Christ is not entered into holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us."

-Again, in that **same chapter**, already referred to in **verse 11**, "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, **not made with hands**, that is to say, not of this building [creation]."

If we consider for a moment that wonderful tabernacle, divided into three sections: the court, wherein was the brazen altar; then the holy place with the table of shewbread, the pure gold candle stick, and the golden altar of incense; and finally the most holy place where was the ark of the covenant, we have a pattern of

what was in the mind of God into which the believer today has entered, through the work of Christ.

The brazen altar represented the holy and righteous claims of God and the burnt sacrifice that was offered upon it, how those holy claims have been settled once and for all for us in the death of Christ. That being true, every believer today is a priest to God and the holy place represents the way that we can serve God as priests. The table of shewbread displayed an order that is sustained by a divine person of saints bound together in the presence of God, in the light of God being revealed, again by a divine person, that is, the candle stick and able "by Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name," as represented by the golden altar.

Between the holy place and the most holy place was the veil. Hebrews 9:7-8 tells us that the high priest alone went into the holy place just once a year, and that not without blood: "The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as yet the first tabernacle was yet standing," but in chapter 10:19-22, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith."

-In **2 Corinthians 5:1**, the apostle Paul refers to our bodies as our earthly house of this tabernacle: "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, **an house not made with hands**, eternal in the heavens." This verse makes it clear that this expression, not made with hands, relates to things of this present creation as our mortal bodies are, and they are subject to death and corruption.

Verse 8 tells us what is the lot of those, whose bodies have died but whose spirits are now in the presence of Christ, awaiting

that moment when they will receive that “house not made with hands” and which is eternal, “We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.”

**The apostle in verse 17 of this same chapter, makes a clear distinction between the material and the spiritual: “So if anyone be in Christ, there is a new creation; the old things have passed away; behold all things have become new: and all things are of the God who has reconciled us to Himself by Jesus.”**

Jeffrey Brett

**Search the Scriptures!**

1. Where did Moses flee when Pharaoh sought to kill him?
2. Who ordered Jezebel’s servants to toss her out of a window?
3. What Roman centurion did Peter command to be baptized?

**EXERCISE**

*“Exercise thyself unto piety”*

**WHAT WANT I WITH THE WORLD?**

**What want I with the world?**

And all its treasures?  
In Thee alone, Lord Jesus,  
Are my true pleasures.  
Thou art my soul’s delight;  
My joy I find in Thee!  
My rest and peace art Thou!  
My heart’s tranquility!

**What want I with the world?**

The world is as a smoke  
Which vanishes in air;  
And, like a shadow fleet,  
That stays not anywhere  
My Jesus, though, remains,  
When all things else decline;  
My heart’s true confidence,  
Jesus alone is mine!

**What want I with the world?**

The world seeks its renown  
Among the grand and great;  
Thinks not how quickly glides  
Its phantasy and state  
But sweeter far to me  
Is Jesus’ love alone;  
And this my heart’s desire,  
To see Him on His throne.

**What want I with the world?**  
The world seeks worldly wealth;  
Its hope on mammon rests;  
Its comforts rise and fall,  
With money in its chests  
There is a nobler prize,  
On which my heart reclines;  
The joys of Jesus' love,  
Which in my spirit shines.

**What want I with the world?**  
The world is sorely tried,  
If scorn its portion be;  
And most, when over-reached  
By deeper subtlety  
I bear the cross of Christ,  
His pleasure to fulfil;  
His favour my delight;  
My peace to do His will!

**What want I with the world?**  
The world so high esteems  
Its fleeting fancies joy;  
Its follies to retain  
Would barter heaven away;  
She hangs her hope on that  
Which care can only yield:  
I love my Lord and God,  
My fortress and my shield.

**What want I with the world?**  
As grass it fades away;  
The stamp of death is there;  
It hasteth to decay;  
Health doth itself depart;  
All earthly creatures fade,  
Jesus sustains; my heart  
Is by His love repaid.

**What want I with the world?**  
What want I with the world?  
My Jesus is my life,  
My substance, and my joy,  
In this poor scene of strife  
To Him I gladly bow;  
I worship at His feet;  
He is my heaven, my all;  
Therefore do I repeat,

**What want I with the world?**

Answers to Scripture Search!

1. Midian (Exodus 2:15)
2. Jehu (2 Kings 9:31–33)
3. Cornelius (Acts 10:48)



## REST

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

### “WHAT HAPPENS TO THE BELIEVER

### AFTER DEATH?”

#### Some Thoughts on 2 Corinthians 5

#### OUR EARTHLY TENT

“For we know that if our earthly tabernacle house be destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (2 Corinthians 5:1).

What happens to a believer at death?<sup>1</sup> In 2 Corinthians 5, the Apostle Paul gives us one of the greatest and most comprehensive teachings on this subject that can be found in the Word of God. Let us briefly explore this wonderful chapter.

When writing to the two epistles to the Corinthian believers about their moral issues, fleshly strife, assembly disorders, and even bad doctrine, it is lovely to see how the Apostle Paul often uses these occasions to open up a whole panorama of heavenly light and truth. This is the case in chapter five of the Second Epistle. In the first four chapters of Second Corinthians, Paul had been describing the character and source of his ministry (sadly, the Corinthian believers had questioned his ministry!). He sums up the purpose and result of his ministry with, “so that death works in us, but life in you” (4:12). From there he launches into heaven and eternity: beginning with the believer’s resurrection (4:14), the contrast of the present, temporal afflictions with the eternal glory that is coming (4:17–18), and then a doctrinal truth describing the state of the believer at death and the hope of a resurrection body (5:1–8)!

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<sup>1</sup>The state between death and resurrection of the body is called by theologians and other Bible students, the *intermediate state* or the *separated state*. These terms are not actually found in the Bible but they accurately describe a biblical truth.

In verse one the apostle writes to them about the dissolution of our “earthly house, this tent.” These dear saints, who were over-indulging the flesh on one hand and had faulty views of the resurrection on the other, needed to hear this. He describes the present condition of our body as a “tent,” which means a non-permanent, temporary structure. We are waiting for a new body, “a building from God” which will be “eternal” and not temporary like our present “tent”! We “groan” in this body waiting for the “house which is from heaven” (5:2, cf. Romans 8:23). Here the word “house” means “an edifice which is the result of construction,” a solid permanent dwelling place in contrast with the “tent” in which we now live. What a hope!

#### CLOTHED WITH OUR HOUSE

For indeed in this we groan, ardently desiring to have put on our house which is from heaven; if indeed being also clothed we shall not be found naked...yet we do not wish to be unclothed, but clothed, that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life” (2 Corinthians 5:2–4).

In the above verses, the apostle turns now from the dissolution of our bodies to their future condition in glory. In doing so he changes the metaphor from a tent to clothing; we will be “clothed” with our “house which is from heaven.” He uses three terms to describe the state of man at death or at the Lord’s coming: “unclothed,” “naked,” and “clothed.”

When a believer dies he is in an “unclothed” condition waiting for the resurrection—it is a blessed state—indeed it is “far better” than our current one (Philippians 1:23); this is the *intermediate state*<sup>2</sup> as

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<sup>2</sup>The teaching of so-called “soul sleep” is completely unscriptural. This teaching purports that when one dies we are totally unconscious or that we even cease to exist. This teaching is based on a misunderstanding of verses which speak of the death of a believer as “sleep” (see for example: Luke 8:52; John 11:11–14; 1 Thessalonians 4:14). But the expression does not mean cessation of consciousness or existence but rather is in reference to the body as it awaits resurrection—the soul and spirit of the believer are “present

noted above. But Paul also warns in this passage of the danger of being “naked.” This is the state of unbelievers when they stand before God at the final judgment. They will be raised bodily but in their sinful condition. They are naked because they will not be clothed in a robe of righteousness before God and will face the “second death.” The believer will be *unclothed* at death, but the unbeliever will be *naked*. Solemn difference!

However, the Christian’s *ardent desire* is not death but is that at some time in the future we will “put on” our resurrected and glorified bodies. This is an important point that Paul stresses in several of his epistles: The believer’s hope and desire is not death, or even going to heaven, but the transformation that will take place at the Lord’s coming and the resurrection of our bodies. The believer will be “clothed” as being part of the “first resurrection” (see 1 Corinthians 15, 1 Thessalonians 4 and Revelation 20). At that time “what is mortal” will be “swallowed up by life.” The Lord Jesus has so completely conquered death that in fact we may never be “unclothed” at all but at His coming will be transformed into glory without ever dying! This is the blessed hope of the believer and what we ardently “groan” for.

### THE GUARANTEE

“Now He that has wrought us for this very thing is God, who also has given to the earnest of the Spirit (2 Corinthians 5:5).

It is as striking as it is important to consider how the Apostle Paul presents the Holy Spirit in connection with the future state of the believer. The term “earnest” means that the Holy Spirit is the “guarantee” of the blessings that are to come to the believer—especially in regards to the resurrection or “redemption” of the body. The fact that this word is used today in the modern form of the Greek to describe an “engagement ring” helps us to understand its meaning. It is a token of something wonderful to come!

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with the Lord” at death, not unconscious. More will be said about this a little further on.

This is not the only time that Paul says the Holy Spirit was given as an earnest of what is to come. In Ephesians he shows that after we believed in Christ we were sealed with the Holy Spirit, “who is the guarantee [earnest] of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession” (Ephesians 1:14 NKJV). The Holy Spirit is living in our hearts and gives us assurance that before long our bodies, along with our sinful tendencies, will be changed and we will receive our heavenly inheritance!<sup>3</sup>

Similarly, in Paul’s magnificent Epistle to the Romans, he writes that we, “who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, we also ourselves groan in ourselves, awaiting adoption, that is the redemption of our body” (8:23). The Holy Spirit is described as the “firstfruits” because He is given as a foretaste of what is to come—even the redemption of our bodies at the resurrection. How wonderful that we have a divine Guest who dwells within and encourages us. We “groan” because of these old “tents” in which we live (Romans 8:23; 2 Corinthians 5:2, 4), but a day is coming when these bodies will no longer give us trouble but be conformed “like unto His glorious body.”

### AT HOME WITH THE LORD

“Therefore we are always confident, and know that while present in the body we are absent from the Lord...we are confident, I say, and pleased rather to be absent and present with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:6, 8).

We saw in the above thoughts that the ardent desire of the believer is to be “clothed” with a resurrection body. Being “unclothed”—*the intermediate state between death and the resurrection*—is never presented as the hope of the believer. However, Paul does show in this chapter (and elsewhere) that death before resurrection is nevertheless a blessed state. Consequently, in verses 6–8 he

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<sup>3</sup> The Holy Spirit is the *Earnest* of what is to come, that we have a heavenly inheritance coming. But the Holy Spirit is also called the *Seal*, which means that we belong to Him—we are His property. With the sealing of the Spirit I know that I am God’s property; with the earnest of the Spirit I know that I’ve got property coming.

describes one of the ways in which the “unclothed” condition of the Christian is preferable to living in this world. He says that as long as we are in this body, we are absent from the Lord and conversely, when we are absent from the body we will be “present” with the Lord. There could be no clearer evidence of the precious fact that when we are in our “unclothed” state we will be consciously in the presence of the Lord. The word “present” here means “at home”<sup>4</sup> and it is for this reason that when a believer dies we sometimes say he or she is “at home” with the Lord. Several years after Paul wrote these words he revealed this same truth to the saints in Philippi, yet in a much more personal way. He was in prison and facing execution but was torn between two options. On the one hand he desired to remain in this world in order to be a help to the saints; on the other hand he had “a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better” (Philippians 1:23).<sup>5</sup>

#### FINAL THOUGHT

**The bright prospect of the Christian is wonderful. Should we die before the coming of Christ we will be immediately be at home with the Lord. But this is not the end. Whether we are at home with the Lord, or still alive in this present world we are waiting for the “obtaining the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thessalonians 2:14). Now that is a prospect! In fact, as Christians, we are to “boast” in this hope of coming glory (Romans 5:2, see in JND).<sup>6</sup> A Christian once stated that he was very worried about what would happen in the future. Someone responded to him that, “A Christian has no future but glory.” Amen.**

Brian Reynolds

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<sup>4</sup> See the ESV.

<sup>5</sup> See also Luke 23:43; Acts 7:59.

<sup>6</sup> See also Romans 8:29; 1 Corinthians 15:49; Philippians 3:21; 1 John 3:22–23.

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

I have a few questions that I would appreciate if you could answer. Timothy I.

**Q.1.** I know that the Lord Jesus suffered for our sins during the three hours of darkness. If this suffering was mental, was the physical suffering necessary? Wasn't it possible for Him to suffer only the mental agony?

Dear Timothy,

**A.1.** This is a very good and a very difficult question for one needs to be very careful in exploring the suffering of the Lord Jesus during the three hours of darkness, because Scripture does not speak much about it; it is beyond human comprehension. The Lord Jesus was a perfect and complete man (body, soul, and spirit) and He suffered in all three parts for our sins, because sin affected these three components of man. God in His wisdom shields us from what the Lord Jesus went through as a man from a holy, triune, just God, for He was paying the penalty of our sins. Though we cannot see or understand or enter in to what He went through, we are grateful to hear His voice of triumph, “It is finished,” and every true believer of the Lord Jesus rests in the fact that the atoning work is done. That God is satisfied with Jesus and that therefore there is no condemnation upon them who are in Christ Jesus.

**Q.2.** About how much would you recommend that I read from the Bible per day? I am currently reading one chapter from the Old Testament in the morning and one chapter in the New Testament at night. Is this enough or should I read more?

**A.2.** I always recommends at least three chapters a day. Most of us eat three meals a day. You can start by reading a chapter from Genesis, one of the Psalms, and one from Matthew and just keep going. You should read more when school is over in the summer months. It is also important to take time to meditate on what you have read. I also recommend taking a specific book in the Bible and reading some commentaries on it. Commentaries by Hamilton Smith, F.B. Hole, and C.H. Mackintosh commentaries are usually a good help and provide excellent interpretations and applications.

## THE MISER'S GIFT!

Many years ago, a man named Guizon lived in Marseilles, in southern France, an area now well known for its beautiful gardens. But it was not always so. When our story begins, Marseilles suffered from the lack of a good water supply and the surrounding area was often arid and bleak. Guizon seemed to be always busy—always occupied in making money, both by hard work and by careful investment. His clothing was obviously old and worn. His food was the simplest and cheapest. He lived alone, denying himself the luxuries and even the comforts of ordinary life. Guizon had a reputation in Marseilles as a miser. Though he was honest in all his dealings and faithful in performing his duties, he was generally despised. At the sight of his poorly clad figure on the street the boys would shout after him, “Here goes old Skinflint!” He always continued on his way, paying no attention to the abuse directed toward him, and whenever he was spoken to, he replied in a gentle and patient manner. Eventually, his back bent from incessant work, his hair white with age, and more than eighty years old, Guizon died.

### **A Surprising Will**

The executors of his estate discovered that he had amassed a fortune in gold and silver. Among his papers was his will, containing this paragraph: “I was once poor, and I observed that the people of Marseilles suffered heavily from the lack of pure water. Having no family, I have devoted my life to the saving of a sum of money sufficient to build an aqueduct to supply the poor of the city of Marseilles with pure water, so that the poorest may have a full supply.” Consequently, between 1837 and 1848, a canal nearly 100 miles long was constructed to bring water from the Durance River to Marseilles, and the area around it has responded in prosperity and beauty. Despised and friendless, Guizon, lived and died alone in order to bring pure water to those who misunderstood and mistreated him.

### **A Greater Giver**

**There was once another Man in an eastern land who was very much more misunderstood and mistreated—the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Savior. About 700 years before He was born into this world, these words were written of Him: “He is despised and rejected of man...He was despised, and we esteemed Him not” (Isaiah 53:3). In His life, and death, He fully proved this prophecy. His life was one of voluntary poverty. He had no home—“no place to lay His head.” But the feeling against this gentle and humble Man was so strong that His people actually clamored for His death, crying, “Crucify Him, crucify Him” (Luke 23:21). Restraining His power, He let Himself be treated as a criminal, He was given an unjust trial, and He was crucified. As He hung suffering on the cross, those who saw Him laughed at Him. But the Bible tells us that He was suffering there, not for His own sins, but for the sins of any who will believe on Him: “He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5). “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” (2 Corinthians 8:9).**

Guizon’s will, provided fresh water for all the poor of Marseilles. The Lord Jesus Christ, by His death and resurrection, has made it possible for each and every one of us to drink the water of eternal life, by simply believing on Him. The self-denial of someone like Guizon does not compare with the infinite cost of the gift provided by the Lord Jesus. The water of life is flowing today and we may drink all we want and need, free of charge, “Ho, every one that thirst, come ye to the waters...yea, come...without money and without price” (Isaiah 55:1). The Lord Jesus said, “He that believeth on Me shall never thirst. If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink” (John 7:35, 37). “Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Revelation 22:17). “The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23). “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved” (Acts 16:31).