



# ***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 PRESS TOWARD THE MARK FOR THE PRIZE OF THE HIGH CALLING OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS** (Philippians 3:14).

2022 has arrived with all its unknown! We look on to a path as yet unseen and untrodden.

Many set up their goals and plans, yet, judging by how the last two years have gone, the ever-changing circumstances of this world will bring disappointment and despair. Uncertainty and perplexity fill men's hearts with fear. Man is looking around for answers and stability but is faced every day with more bad news and a grim looking future.

The dear servant of the Lord, the apostle Paul, who lived in world that is very much like ours, shows us the secret of stability and tenacity. Paul pressed onward! The calling on high in Christ Jesus was before him. Forgiven, justified, saved, and reconciled to God through the death of His Son, he still moved forward to the heavenly goal.

The same grace that called him has called us. The same love of God that blessed him has blessed us. The same race that he ran is ours also. The same goal to which he hastened is before us too. The same power that strengthened him is given to us likewise. May the same purposefulness that marked him be also found with us.

Now, by faith, we can look beyond the present to the time when Christ shall fill the universe with His glory and to when God shall be all in all. By faith, too, we look into heaven and see Jesus and all the things that are His in the presence of God. Hope sustains us in the wilderness, and enables us to purify ourselves, "even as He is pure." With faith and hope we have love, which has been divinely implanted in our hearts through the sovereign working of God in grace and has been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. That love is to control our thoughts and actions for the pleasure of God.

The Lord Jesus is now at the right hand of God, and our life is hidden there with Christ. We are to be with Him where He is. Meanwhile, our pathway must be pursued to the end. The goal is still ahead. It is ours to press forward. Endurance is needed; but encouragement and cheer will not be lacking as we travel onward.

**Let us press on day by day with Him by our side, and with Him before our eyes. We will, through the reading of our Bibles and praying every day, be able to overcome the fear and the instability that is around us until we obtain the crown of righteousness.**

Dear readers, our hearts are full of thanksgiving to the Lord for His faithfulness toward us in the past years. To you, dear reader, who is praying for *Toward the Mark* and to those who are helping in producing this exercise, they are known by the Lord, and He is the rewarder.

It is our prayer that the Lord will use *Toward the Mark* to help you as you face the daily challenges of school or work, as we are dependent on Him to feed and strengthen His people. Thank you for your overwhelming response and encouragement to this exercise.

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"*

### *"ANDREW AND PHILIP"*

It is a blessed thing to know that the Lord Jesus Christ has settled the question of our sins so that we can say without a doubt, "We have peace with God." But it is quite another matter to make His acquaintance personally. We may receive the blessing of forgiveness through Him and be very little changed; but if we make the acquaintance of the Blessor, our whole life will be transformed—service will become both happy and natural, and it will be successful in the truest sense of the word.

I want to illustrate the great difference that heart-acquaintance with Christ makes by what is recorded of Andrew and Philip in the Gospel of John. They are, with one exception, always spoken of together in that gospel. The first mention of them is in the opening chapter. Andrew was with John the Baptist when he stood and looked upon Jesus as He walked. He heard John's words, "Behold the Lamb of God." He had been with John and learned blessed things from him, but now the One of whom John spoke was there, and he was attracted by Him and followed on, drawn by the magnetism of His person. The Lord turned and, seeing him and his companion following, said, "What seek ye?" They replied, "Master, where dwellest Thou?" Ah! We quite understand the meaning of their inquiry. It was as though they said, "No place will satisfy us but where Thou art; we cannot do without Thee." Would not this give pleasure to the heart of the Lord Jesus? Indeed, it would. So, He replied, "Come and see." Oh, the heartiness of the welcome!

Evidently, they believed that in the place where He dwelt there would be room for them, or they would never have dared to ask the question. It has often been pointed out that the Lord's

dwelling-place is in the bosom of the Father (1:18), the circle of the Father's love. That is not my point just now. And the Lord Himself will not be satisfied until we are in heart with Him in His own dwelling-place. So, we need not draw back, for we, too, shall find a wonderful welcome in the place where He dwells. Oh, how He loves us!

What I want to point out is that Andrew gained the company of the Lord and abode with Him that day. What wonderful things he must have learned! His heart had been looking out and yearning for the One whom God had promised through the prophets to send; and now He had come, and Andrew had found Him. He had been welcomed to His home; he had found Him to be full of grace and truth, and his heart was satisfied. Happy Andrew! May we get where he got!

Now with Philip things were different. He was not attracted to the Lord in the same way, for we find the Lord had to command him to follow Him; nor do we read that he reached the place that Andrew did. But beyond doubt he must have been blessed through coming into contact with the Lord in any way.

We find these two men go forth to bring others to the One whom they had found. It must ever be so when real blessing is received. Its course is outward and onward to others, and if, in your heart, there is no desire to see others blest, we greatly doubt as to whether you have got the blessing yourself. One thing is absolutely certain—you are not enjoying it.

Andrew first sought out his brother Simon, saying to him, "We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus." What a lovely sentence that is, "He brought him to Jesus"! He brought him to the One who had satisfied his own heart, the One in whom is all love, all grace, all tenderness, and all power. In short, he brought him to One whom all sinners need and the One who is sufficient for all.

See what follows. “Jesus beheld him.” With what love He must have looked upon him! Those words—” Jesus beheld him”—speak volumes to us. Then He said, “Thou art Simon, the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas,” which means “a stone.” Thus, we learn that Simon had heard and believed the testimony of Andrew. And now the Lord tells him that, having believed, he was to become one of the bright stones in God’s spiritual house, which Christ, in His omnipotence, was to build.

Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found Him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” If you compare this testimony with Andrew’s, you will at once see the difference. Nor was it so eminently successful, for we find that Nathanael straightway began to cavil, saying, “Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?” And it was not until Philip said, “Come and see. Prove it for yourself before you judge,” that Nathanael was drawn to Jesus.

We pause here for a moment, for it is possible that some unconverted soul will read this paper. You have long doubted the power and grace of Jesus. You have imagined that He cannot benefit you at all, because you do not see much brightness or joy in Christians around you. To you we would say, as Philip said to Nathanael, “Come and see. Prove Him for yourself; you shall find Him to be brighter and better than the best thing on earth.” But even Nathanael takes higher ground than Philip in his testimony, for when he came and had to do with the Lord Himself, he exclaims, “Thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.” Here, then, we see a distinct difference, at the very outset, between Andrew and Philip.

Now the next time we read of them is in John 6. Gathered round the Lord and His disciples were five thousand famishing people, and His heart was moved with compassion towards them, and He intended to feed them. But first of all, He speaks to Philip to

prove him, saying, “Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?” Philip’s reply proves that he thought such a thing impossible. “Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that everyone may take a little,” he said. He had no thought of the power of his Master.

Andrew standing by hears the question and the answer, and he says, “There is a lad here which hath five barley loaves and two small fishes.” Apart from faith, to mention so small a supply in the presence of such vast need was absurd in the extreme. But Andrew had some knowledge of the Lord’s power, or he never would have mentioned the small supply that the lad had, even though he spoiled it somewhat by saying, “But what are they among so many?” We know the result. The Lord took that small supply of which Andrew spoke and made it sufficient to meet the need of every person in that vast multitude.

They are brought together again in chapter 12. Certain Greeks had come up to the feast to worship. These came to Philip, saying, “Sir, we would see Jesus.” Philip seems to be somewhat in a dilemma. But he goes and tells Andrew his difficulty. Andrew had no difficulty at all, for we read that at once he and Philip go and tell Jesus. We gather that Andrew had some idea of the overflowing grace that was in Christ Jesus, which could and would reach outside and beyond the bounds of the Jewish nation and take in the Greeks.

The whole secret comes out with regard to Philip in chapter 14. There Jesus said to him, “Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip?” This was the secret. Philip had received blessing from the Lord, and he was one of those of whom it is said, “Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.” But he had never really known the Lord Jesus as the One who came from the Father, bringing of the fulness and wealth of heaven down to those who were brought to Him. His attractiveness as in chapter 1, His power as in chapter

6, His grace as in chapter 12, had not really been comprehended by him.

Oh, that we may be like Andrew, attracted to the Lord by the beauty that we see in Him! May He become so indispensable to us that we cannot do without Him.

But if He is indispensable to us, He is also all-sufficient. We have no need to turn to any other source of supply. If this is the case with us, like Andrew, we shall always be found bringing something or someone to Jesus. With him it was first the sinner, then the smallness of his own supply in the presence of a vast need, then as the servant of the Lord who knew how to act in an emergency. All alike were brought to Jesus by Andrew because he first had proved how wonderfully Jesus could meet and answer every question in his soul. "Go and do thou likewise."

J.T. Mawson

### **SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES!**

1. What was the name of Ruth's first husband?
2. How many loaves did the Lord Jesus use to feed the four thousand?
3. Who was the apostle whose shadow produced healings?

## MEAT

*"Sanctify them by the truth"*

### *THE WORD TO PHILADELPHIA*

Revelation 3:7-13

It is blessed to see in the verses we have read that, in spite of all the failure and breakdown recorded in these chapters, there is in the church in Philadelphia that in which the Lord can find peculiar pleasure, and that He has no word of judgment to speak to this assembly.

In the first chapter the glories of the Son of Man are presented to us. In the 2nd and 3rd chapters He walks in the midst of the churches in the character of judge; and in Ephesus He touches the mainspring of the church's failure when He says, "Thou hast left thy first love."

The apostle Paul, in writing to the saints at Thessalonica, remembered their "work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope" (1 Thessalonians 1:3), but while these same things are noted by the Lord in regard to Ephesus, there is no mention of the springs of action found in the Thessalonians: faith, love and hope; instead, He calls attention to the decline of love. All the failure recorded in these chapters results from the giving up of first love, as does also the removal of the candlestick of testimony for Christ.

In the first three churches, which give prophetically the successive stages of the public history of the church, the address to the overcomer follows the exhortation, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." This order is reversed in the last four churches, and in each of these four is found a mention of the coming of the Lord, surely signifying that the conditions depicted in them will continue until the end. The

corruptions of Romanism, the deadness of Protestantism, the faithfulness of Philadelphia, and the lukewarmness of Laodicea will all be found in the professing church when the Lord comes.

When the Lord comes, the professing church, which He will spue out of His mouth, will come under divine judgment, as shown later in this book. Do we not see the church in its Laodicean condition today, marked by lukewarmness and indifference to Christ? Christ is found knocking outside the door of the professing church, but His word to the individual is, "If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." In spite of the corruption of the church, the faithful individual can have communion with the Lord and all the blessedness that this speaks of to our hearts.

The meaning of Philadelphia is love of the brethren, and their regard for the word and the Name of the Lord as the Holy and the True manifested not only brotherly love, but affection for the Lord Jesus Himself. How great is the contrast with Ephesus, where first love had been given up. That address is to the angel of the church, the representative of authority in the assembly, the responsible element.

As in each address, the Lord presents Himself in some distinctive way; here we read, "These things saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth, and no man shutteth: and shutteth, and no man openeth." The value of the word, and its authority, take character from the One who speaks. In presenting Himself as "The Holy," the Lord reveals that He expects His own to bear the same character in testimony before the world, even as Peter shows that God ever sought this from His people when He said, "Be ye holy; for I am holy." What God required from His people of old can be secured in the saints today because God has given to us His Holy Spirit as the power for holiness.

Jesus is also “The True.” When here upon earth He said, “I am the way, the truth and the life.” On earth He was the perfect expression of all God’s thoughts and nature, the One in whom the Father was fully revealed. But as “The True” the Lord is the One who is thoroughly reliable, who has answered perfectly to every divine test as Man, and who is the divine standard of perfection for men. In such a day as this where all around is in confusion, where we have learned to have no confidence in the flesh, we can rest with implicit confidence in Him who is “The True,” knowing Him to be constant in His faithfulness and that we can trust Him for everything at all times.

Having “The key of David,” the Blessed Lord speaks with divine authority and has the authority to open the way into the treasures of divine revelation and to open the door for testimony regarding Himself as The Holy and The True. If we are living in a world of which Satan is the god and prince, it is good for us to realize that not all the power of the enemy can shut the door that Christ has opened for His saints in these last days. Everything concerning the things of God is secure in the hands of the Lord Jesus; if He opens doors, none can shut; when He shuts, none can open. The testimony is not ours, it is His, so that we look to Him to order all for His own pleasure and the glory of God.

His words regarding their works are the same as those to Ephesus, “I know thy works”; but what follows enables us to see His thoughts of them. He does not find fault with their affections, but sets before them an open door, which no man can shut. Their works were not the great works of Pentecost, which all could take notice of; they had but “a little strength,” but He took notice of that which had been wrought in conscious weakness for His eye, not for the approbation of the great religious profession around.

Christ tells us what He approves in such a day as this, “Thou...hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.” Theirs was a path of simple obedience to the desires of Christ;

what He had spoken was enough for them. His commandments are specific requirements, but His word is the whole scope of His thoughts and desires for His own. In a day when the religious world that professes His Name has turned its back upon Him and ignores His word, how delightful it must be to the heart of Christ to see those who care for His word and seek to do it.

The Philadelphians had not denied the Name of Christ. Although this is a negative trait, how powerfully it speaks of the grave departure of the mass in the professing Church, who had denied His Name. How very few there are who are really concerned with the reputation of Christ's Name. Everyone who professes to be a Christian bear upon him the Name of Christ, and their every action reflects upon His Name. Those who are careless and indifferent to the honor of that glorious and precious Name, who deny it in their walk and ways, are guilty of grave dishonor to Him. They may be indifferent: He is not. Nor is He unmindful of those who think of His name, and endeavor to honor it in the details of everyday life as they pass through this world.

We are not only to care for the word and Name of Christ in our individual lives but also in our gatherings. He has said, "This do for a remembrance of me," and those who value His word delight to come together to partake of the Lord's Supper in the way He has Himself instituted, so as to answer to His word. In relation to our gatherings, we also remember His word, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." At such gatherings, all is to be carried out according to His word, and in the consciousness that it is to His Name that we are gathered: the honor of His Name is bound up with the conduct of the saints in their gatherings.

## EXERCISE

*"Exercise thyself unto piety"*

### LOOKING FORWARD

Haggai 2:1–9

In reading these verses I have in mind to draw a comparison between the state of the saints in the day of Haggai and our state today. One has been encouraged by the phrase “be strong,” and it is this that has prompted me to refer to this prophecy.

In these verses we are carried back in thought to the book of Ezra, where we have the record of the rebuilding of the temple by the people who had been restored from Babylon and were back again in the land. Owing to the opposition from the hostile forces that surrounded them, the work on the temple had ceased, and the people were saying it was not the right time to build the house of the Lord. This state of things had existed for about two years, when God raised up the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, who sought by the prophetic word to persuade the people to recommence the building again. Stirred to action by the word of the Lord through His servants, the people had resumed the building of the house of the Lord, and the prophecy we have read—the third one Haggai uttered—was given to encourage them now that they were actively working. This then is a word to those who are active in their service for God.

The leaders of the people, Zerubbabel the governor, and Joshua the high priest, are addressed first, but this work was not carried on by leaders only, for “the residue of the people” are also addressed. We must not think that the work of the Lord is carried on by leaders only. All of us are in this work today, even as they were in their day; we all have work to do according to the ability given to us. We may thank God for those whom He has given grace and ability to enlighten and lead the saints in a right path, but let us beware lest we think they only have work to do and thus be inclined to leave it to them.

We each have work to do; may we have grace and strength to do the service that has been allotted to us and for which we are equipped.

One major cause of their discouragement is referred to in verse 3. Some of the elders had been looking back in mind to the magnificent temple that Solomon had built and, comparing it with the work then going on, decided that the latter was so insignificant in comparison that their work was hardly worthwhile. “Is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?” Are we not in as great a danger from this same feature as they were? Do we look back to the early days when the truths connected with the assembly were ministered and acted upon by pious men whose names we have come to revere and “in comparison” mourn over the state of things today? Sighing and lamenting because of what characterized the past will not bring about anything substantial today. The days now past were days of responsibility for the saints who lived through them, and who are now in heaven; but today is our day in which we have our responsibility to do the work of the Lord until He takes us also out of the sphere of service. The rest of God is still before us; today is the time of labor. Having again put their hands to the work they are encouraged to “be strong,” and in order to strengthen them the promise is given, “I am with you saith the LORD of hosts” (v. 4.) What a strengthening fact this is! We remember what Paul said to Timothy, “Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me” (2 Timothy 4:17). We can well afford to go on when the Lord is with us, and we are assured He is with us today.

Moreover, they were assured that the “word” was still with them, the same word which God covenanted with them when He brought them out of Egypt. We too have the word of God in our hands, the same word which the early brethren had to enlighten and to strengthen them in their service for our Lord. We do not need modern innovations, nor will we seek for such, for we are assured that all that is needed to enlighten, to guide, and to strengthen us is in this word that has been preserved to us by our Lord. We have already seen in the second chapter of Paul’s second epistle to

Timothy how the man of God can be fully fitted by it. We may well thank the Lord that this word is still being ministered to us today.

Added to this we read, “My Spirit remaineth among you; fear ye not” (v. 5). Here is the One who has given power to all the saints at all times, in order that they might be strong in the service of God. All that we need today the Spirit will supply: light, strength, ability, and guidance. Do not let us underestimate the importance of what is being accomplished for the Lord today and the importance of our own part in this work. We, as they, have all we need to keep us strong and active in the work of our Lord. He is with us; His word is in our hands and His Spirit is in our souls, “the spirit...of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7). May we all be strong and “work,” and not give up in discouragement.

The next few verses project our minds on to the world-to-come, when our Lord will be in control of the universe—heaven, earth, sea, and all nations. The glory of that day, and the house of God in that day, will far eclipse any former glory seen in this world. Instead of looking back and lamenting because of what has been, rather let us look on with rejoicing to what will yet be. The greatest glory is not behind, it is still on before. May we be strong and go on with the work as having the coming glory before our souls. When we actually arrive there, as we most certainly shall, how glad we shall be that on the way to it we were given strength and grace to do our part in our day in the testimony of our Lord. We cannot go back a hundred years; we are here now, today; let us have grace to receive these words of encouragement and, as exhorted, “be strong...and work.”

G. Davison.

## REST

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

### A PERSONAL LETTER TO A SAINT AT MARAH

Friend in the Lord: So, you have come to Marah and found the waters there bitter. You had learned already that the world was nothing but a wilderness—a dry and thirsty land, with a “mighty famine,” and “no water.” But it seemed as if the Lord was leading you beside some desert stream, and you longed more than ever to drink. As you followed the pillar of cloud, it shined before you and, I trust, awakened gratitude to Him who “turneth the wilderness into a standing water.” But now you taste its waters and find them bitter; you cannot drink of them, and you cry unto the Lord. Moses did so in Exodus 15:25, and allow me to remind you how the Lord answered his cry: “The Lord showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet.” He did not create some new thing for the occasion, meeting the new difficulty by some new show of miraculous power; but He directed the eye of Moses to something there already, on the banks of the very waters of Marah, that was able to make the bitter water sweet.

Now my fellow pilgrim, what do you ask the Lord to do for you in this new trial? To create some new thing on earth to meet your case? To bring back the loved object He has bereaved you of, or to remove at once in some other way the heavy trial that burdens your spirit and weighs you down? Is this His way? For, “the Lord hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm” (Nahum 1:3). No, I will ask the Lord for you, that if they be bitter waters to which He leads you, He will show you the Blessed One, our Lord Jesus, whose presence in love and sympathy can sweeten every bitter cup and bring light to the dark bed of death. No new Savior, but “Him that is from the beginning,” the same today as He was yesterday and will be forever. No new thing came down from

heaven or grew up from the earth to sweeten Marah's waters for the thirsty wanderers in the wilderness. Instead, the Lord showed Moses a tree there before the waters were tasted. Similarly, the Holy Spirit, who is with you and in you, may take the things of the Lord Jesus and show them to you (John 16:14,15), leading you to see and enjoy what He is to you.

Remember, the Lord has been guiding you through the wilderness for many years. If He guides you now to Marah, He has gone before you there and planted a sweetening tree within easy reach. Please, reader, do not then be looking for some new token or revelation from the Lord but that He may, by His Spirit, show you more of Him who is with you always, even unto the end.

W.T., Extracted and Adapted from Christian Truth for the Household of Faith (Vol. 7, No. 2).

Contributed by KG

### ANSWERS TO SCRIPTURE SEARCH!

1. Mahlon (Ruth 4:10)
2. Seven (Matthew 15:32–39)
3. Peter (Acts 5:15–16).

## BE PREPARED!

A news article recently published the name of famous people that died in 2021. Some were old, many were healthy middle-aged, and some were healthy young people. Some died because they were sick, some died in unexpected accidents, and some died from the coronavirus.

**I often wonder if they were prepared to meet their Creator.**

Many years ago, Bobby Leach was the second person to brave Niagara Falls and live. He performed his death-defying stunt when he was forty-nine years old, sealed in a barrel. Fifteen years later he met his end in a way least expected, as the following news release records: “Bobby Leach, who achieved fame when he went over Niagara Falls in a barrel, died today of injuries received in slipping on an orange peel. Leach, who made the perilous Falls journey without dying, broke his leg when he slipped on the orange peel. Complications set in following an amputation, causing death.”

The case of Bobby Leach is only one of thousands reported, with many more untold. Heroes of many battles, escape the horror and death in war, only to die later from what starts as a virus infection.

The reality that your life can end in any moment must make you sober; although you survived 2021, there is no guarantee that you will make it to the end of 2022. Even if you are healthy, have the best medical care, and have the best of what money can buy, as many of the famous people who died last year did, death does not discriminate. The big question is what will happen to you after you die, and what will you say when you stand before God, the Judge? The Word of God informs us, “And as it is appointed unto man once to die, but after this is the judgement” (Hebrews 10:27).

The safety or loss of our life often seems (and is treated by some) as a gamble. But if we could see as God sees, we would be compelled to say, “There is but a step between me and death” (1 Samuel 20:3).

**The fact is plain: Be prepared! Your time may be short—much shorter than you dream or think! God says, “Acquaint now yourself with Him [God], and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto you” (Job 22:21). “Remember now thy Creator in the days of your youth” (Ecclesiastes. 12:1). “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2).**

**Why not start the New Year by accepting the love of God, receiving the forgiveness of your sins and the gift of eternal life?**

John 3:16 says, “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.” “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31).