



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,

“Even Christ pleased not Himself” (Rom. 15:3)

What a life! So confident was our Lord of the ultimate good end of the will of God, that at whatever cost to Himself, **He would seek and pursue that will only. All that opposed that will opposed Him; all that resisted it, resisted Him, and caused Him sadness.** Even His most advanced disciples caused Him sadness in that way often. A Peter could not bear the thought of His going into death: he would have the glory of the kingdom without the righteousness of the cross. A John would vindicate the master by destroying men’s lives, thus spoiling the day of grace by making it a day of judgment. **Dear Christian, Christ is our pattern. Do you see how Christ in every thing pleased God at such a great cost? To please Him and not ourselves is henceforth the purpose and the goal of our life. This will necessitate our suffering with Him. It will require our taking up the cross daily – the denial of our own likes and dislikes that we may truly take up His likes and dislikes. Is it not worth while? “If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.” We suffer but for a day, we reign for ever and ever.**

Who else rewards like that? But all depends on how close we are to Him, how deeply we desire to be like Him, and how we take hold of the unfathomable love and grace of His heart that will supply all that is needed to help us to do His will and thus to please Him.

It is our prayer that the Lord will use this issue to strengthen you and help you to grow spiritually in your Christian life and walk.

Thanks again for your great response to the magazine and your encouragement to us by e-mail and letters. Please keep us in prayer.

Yours in our soon coming Lord,

Emil S. Nashed

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

Quotations from Scripture are generally taken either from the King James translation or J. N. Darby translation.

MILK

"The truth shall make you free"

TWO WARNINGS AND AN EXAMPLE

MATTHEW 26

We have here an example in the case of Jesus and two warnings in Peter and in Judas. In Peter we may learn the weakness, and in Judas the dreadful wickedness of the flesh. We get in Jesus what we should aim for.

In Judas we see the mere professor, in Peter the saint sifted. All three are before us in a time of searching trial, and the result of trial is seen in each.

We ought to remember that we have received the Holy Ghost, which Peter had not when he denied the Lord; yet, having the Holy Ghost, we may still learn a lesson from Peter's flesh. And is not the entire worthlessness of the flesh among the last things we learn? In Peter we see what the flesh is.

There is no real living upon the hope of the glory, except in measure as the flesh is mortified and brought under subjection.

I would dwell, first, upon **Judas's apostasy. He had all the appearance to men of being as the other disciples;** he had companied with the Lord, he had been one of those sent forth to preach the gospel and work miracles; **but his conscience never was before God.** He might have truth in his understanding (and indeed, the understanding does not generally receive truth so readily where the conscience is affected). Again, Judas could not have walked three years with Jesus, and seen His grace and love, and not have had his affections moved. But then his conscience had never been brought into exercise before God. So

it is with many. If we watch the saint receiving truth, we shall often find him slow of apprehension. There is something to be judged before God; something which condemns him, and which involves sacrifice. For instance, we see most clearly that the precious blood cleanses from all sin; but only let us commit sin—and how slowly do we apprehend that blessed truth so as to get the comfort of it! In the latter case, conscience is at work. In like manner the affections of the unconverted may be moved: a great company of women followed Christ at the crucifixion, bewailing and lamenting Him! So we read of "anon with joy, receiving and by-and-by [or anon, for it is the same word], when tribulation arises, turning away."

The natural man wants something to satisfy self before God; and, until he has done with himself, he will be looking for a certain measure of righteousness before God. He may have been, in connection with this want, instructed in the gospel, and thus the understanding may be clear, and the affections moved; but unless the conscience be bare before God, there is no *life*.

Here was Judas betraying his Master! After all, what was this? Nothing more, at the bottom, than what is in every heart.

Judas loved money—no uncommon lust. And the love of money in a saint now-a-days is as bad, or worse, as being done more in the light.

There was sin in Judas's nature; which sin showed itself in the shape of the love of money. The next thing was Satan suggesting a way of gratifying this lust, **for he loved money more than he loved Jesus.** And now we find the result of outward nearness to the Lord while the conscience is unaffected: it was to make Judas reason upon circumstances. He thought, probably, the Lord would deliver Himself, as He had done before; for, when he found it not so, he threw down the money, and said "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood." He continues in this nearness to Christ, until,

thirdly, we read that, “after the sop Satan entered into him.” In the condition of hypocrisy he gets his heart hardened; and then Satan gets between his conscience and all hope of pardon. Many a natural man would not betray a friend with a kiss, as Judas soon after did. His nearness served to harden him; and he actually took the sop from the hand of the Lord! Even natural feelings were silenced. So it is when the unconverted man gets into a similar position. He becomes more vile than ever. His heart is hardened. Hypocrisy, and at length despair, ensues. Such is the flesh and its end. And the flesh cannot be bettered by ordinances, even where Christ Himself is. Such is the flesh—I can hardly say, when left to itself, for man is never left to himself, he is never really independent. He has the will to be so; therefore he is perfectly a sinner, but if disobedient, he is servant to his lust, “disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures,” and slave to Satan. **A natural man has a conscience and shame. He will not do in the light what he would do in the dark. But the outward form of Christianity, where it has not touched the heart, only makes this difference, that his conscience is seared, and he is only more subtly the slave of Satan.**

I turn now to the contrast afforded by what is seen in Peter with what we see in our blessed Lord. In Jesus we see the obedient, the dependent One, expressing His entire dependence by His praying. And there was seen an angel from heaven strengthening Him. He felt the weakness which He had given Himself up to bear; He was “crucified in weakness.” “All my bones,” He says, “are out of joint, my heart is melted like wax in the midst of my bowels.” “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; tarry ye here and watch with me.” **So in the earlier temptation, we hear Him answering the devil out of the word of God. Jesus might have sent Satan away by divine power, but this would have been no example to us. So, in this chapter, we see the Lord praying!**

If you compare what Peter is doing with what the Lord is doing, you learn the secret of Peter’s weakness and the Lord’s strength. What was the effect of trial upon weakness of Peter’s flesh? He had said, “I will go with thee to prison and to death;” but the Lord has to say to Him, “Could ye not watch with me one hour?” They were sleeping for sorrow. Here was neither prison nor death! “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation” (not merely that there be no transgression). Peter entered into temptation; Jesus never did at all. Yet the trial was far greater to Jesus. Jew and Gentile were against Him, and behind them the power of Satan. “This,” said He “Is your hour, and the power of darkness;” and again, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.” Where does He take all this? **The Lord does not sleep and seek to forget His sorrow. He goes and prays to the Father. His eye rested not on the circumstances to think of them. He looked to His Father.** Not that He did not feel; for He said “Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.” It was weakness here as man, and that is real strength.

Remember, if we are in entire dependence, the temptation does not meet us at all. Jesus does not say, “Shall I not go through all these trials?” But, “The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?” **He does not see Pilate or Judas in it; it was not Satan that had given Him the cup, but His Father. So with us; if in a frame of entire dependence, temptation does not touch us at all! Trial comes, but, like Jesus, we can say of it, “The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?** Every trial becomes a blessed occasion for perfecting obedience, if near God; if otherwise, a temptation! Jesus was walking with God. It was not that He did not feel weakness. “Tarry, and watch with me,” shows the weakness of human nature fully felt. As in Psalm 22:14, referring to the cross, He says, “I am poured out like water, all my bones are out of joint: my heart is melted like wax in the midst of my bowels.” And yet He shrank not from suffering alone when love

to His disciples called for it. “If ye seek me, let these go their way.” But being in an agony, He prays the more earnestly; it drives Him to His Father; and that before the trial comes. Then what is the next thing? **When the trial actually comes, it is already gone through with God! He presents Himself before them, saying, “Whom seek ye?” as calmly as if going to work a miracle. Whether before Caiaphas or Pontius Pilate, He makes a good confession; owns Himself Son of God before the Jews, and King before Pilate!**

How comes this difference? In the first place, with Peter the flesh is sleeping; **he goes to sleep to get rid of the pressure of circumstances.** Peter has not gone through the trial with the Father. At the moment when Jesus is going to be led away, the energy of the flesh wakes up, and Peter draws the sword. **The flesh has just energy enough to carry us into the danger where it cannot stand—that energy deserts us then.** **How little real communion is here!** When Christ was praying, Peter was sleeping; when Christ was submitting as a lamb led to the slaughter, Peter was fighting; when Christ was confessing in suffering Peter was denying Him with cursing and swearing. **This is just the flesh: sleeping when it ought to be waking; in energy when it ought to be still; and then denying the Lord when the time of trial comes. With Christ it was agony with the Father, but perfect peace when the trial came. Oh, if we knew how to go on in all circumstances in communion with the Father, there would be no temptation that would not be an occasion of glorifying Him!**

The great thing was, Peter had not learned what the flesh is; he did not keep in memory of weakness of the flesh; and thus the condition of dependence was hindered. He seems to be sincere in wishing to own the Lord Jesus and not deny Him. There was more energy of natural and very true affection in Peter, then in those who forsook the Lord and fled. He really loved the Lord. Peter fails, not from self-will, not from willing to sin, but through the weakness of the flesh. In Christ there was no

possible moral weakness, because He always walked in the place of weakness in communion with His Father. Jesus goes—through agony itself—with the Father. Peter fails, though but the shadow of temptation comes to him. **All Peter’s fall began by want of dependence, and by neglecting prayer. We must be watching “unto prayer;” not merely ready to pray when temptation comes, but walking with God, and so meeting it in the power of previous communion and prayer.** Without continual prayer, and constant sense of entire weakness in self, the more love to Christ, and the more good-will to serve Him are in a saint, the more certainly will he, by that very good-will, be led into the place in which he will dishonor Christ! The other disciples that fled did not so much dishonor the name of their Master as Peter did. It was thus Peter had to learn the evil of the flesh. Jesus, on the contrary, ever walked in the confession of dependence—always praying. **And what use did the Lord make of His knowledge of Satan’s purpose to sift Peter? He prayed for him! The more knowledge, dear brethren, the more prayer!** “I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.” As the result of this intercession, Peter learnt the evil of the flesh more deeply than the others, and was able to “strengthen his brethren.”

We are incapable of ministering truth to our brethren unless we are conscious of weakness in our selves. Without the prayer of Jesus where would Peter have been? He was running nearly like Judas. Oh, what a blessed thing to be kept in entire consciousness of weakness, instead of running on like Peter, into a place where we cannot stand! **How good to be afraid to take a single step without the Lord’s guidance!** The flesh is ever playing us false—it is good for nothing. The effect of keeping it in the Lord’s presence is to have done with it—to be cast on the Father. There is no wisdom that will be cast on the Father. There is no wisdom that will stand us in any stead but the wisdom that is from above. The Lord knew what the flesh was, and what Paul needed, when he had been caught up

into the third heaven. To be taken up to a fourth? No; but a messenger of Satan to buffet: that is, he needed to be brought down. There is the thorn in the flesh given him; there is to be the consciousness that the flesh is worth nothing.

We may notice that there are three ways to learning the power and wretchedness of the flesh: prior to peace, often in desperate struggles (for knowledge and conscience are distinct things); when we have peace, before the Lord in prayer and communion, not daring to take a step till He leads us; and then He is glorified in us in grace and obedience, whatever the trial or in the bitter experience in which Peter learned it, when flesh is not judged in communion with God. This last will be the way, so long as we are judging of things instead of judging ourselves. When we are faithfully judging ourselves and waking with God, we shall enter into no temptation. Trial may come, but there will be full preparation to meet it; not that we may be able to say, "Now I am prepared for this or that temptation," we are in no certainty, from one moment to another, as to what trial may be coming; but we shall have the strength of God with us in it. **Therefore our only safe place is watching and prayer—yes, prayer before the assault—prayer that may amount to agony: for so Jesus prayed!**

We must expect to have our souls much exercised; often, it may be, when trial is there, casting about us to why this trial is sent. **It may be for a fault; it may be for some careless or hard state of soul. It may be, as Paul's to keep down the flesh; it may be preparatory to some coming conflict. But in these exercises of soul we must keep before the Lord: then, when the trial comes for which the Father has been training us, there will be perfect peace.** The Lord will make you bear in spirit with Him, when exercised, the burden which He will make you bear is strength in the battle. Do not shrink from inward exercise; settle it with Him. There is no limit to our strength for obedience when our strength is the Lord's.

"If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." **None of our souls can estimate what that cup was for One who had dwelt essentially in the Father's love;** but the most spiritual will most acknowledge it. Then holiness itself was made sin; no one glean of light on the soul of Jesus. At the thought of it, when pressed by Satan on His soul we see Him sweating as it were great drops of blood. **He did not think lightly of sin!** The Prince of Life was brought into the dust of death—"all thy billows passed over me." **At the cross Jesus bore what you will never be called to bear. Beware of denying Him. Many do so in detail who in the main acknowledge Him. Our happy privilege is, not to be occupied with the trial as a trial, but to see in every trial an opportunity of obeying God, and to say of each, as Jesus did, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"**

"Now unto him that is able to keep you from failing, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy...to him be glory."

J.N.Darby

Meat

"Sanctify them by the truth"

BREAKING OF BREAD – PART 4

THE LORD'S SUPPER IN RELATION TO THE ASSEMBLY

(Read 1 Cor. 11: 23 – 26)

In the last section the “external” effects of the Lord’s Supper were before us – the behavior which ought to be seen in the people who are in the fellowship of the Lord’s death. We now consider something related to the inside place, and what is enjoyed there. The same persons, but now in the circle of those where His love is known, where there are those who seek faithfully to respond to Him, and where He would come into the midst of His own and fill hearts with “the joy His presence brings, its warmth and cheer,” as the hymn writer puts it. It is vital to the clear understanding of these passages to recognize that 1 Cor. 10 is individual, whereas here we have what is collective, in the Assembly.

Sadly, it was the failure of the Corinthian saints which led the apostle to set out the wonderful truths in relation to the Lord’s Supper. He begins here, and continues in chapters 12-14, the great principles of the Assembly. **But first and foremost we learn of the order and place of the Breaking of Bread. This distinction surely calls for us to take careful note and give this matter its right place. We note in Acts 20 that the principal purpose of the Christians being together on the Lord’s Day was to break bread, and other things followed.**

We have previously looked at the historical details set out in Luke 22, and now present some practical thoughts. **Pre-eminently we gather to remember Him – man has no place here – the Lord Jesus and His love is supreme.** We are gathered as “His brethren,” those associated with Him in risen life, those whom He has breathed into; and on such distinctive

ground that our state, circumstances, and history have no place. **We are in His presence – gathered to Him, the One who was dead, but is alive for evermore – and in the realization of His love which caused Him to give Himself. Would not our hearts overflow with praise and adoration as a result of again seeing His hands and side? See Jn. 20:20, “The disciples rejoiced therefore, having seen the Lord.”**

Now then, we are led on by Him in the midst of the Assembly to worship the Father (Ps. 22:22). Perhaps Heb. 2 fills out the quotation, “For both He that sanctifies and those sanctified are all of one; for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare Thy Name to my brethren; in the midst of the assembly will I sing thy praises.” **It is that our risen Lord would lead us into that sphere of divine love where the display of the Father’s heart is manifested,** “All that the Father hath is mine” (Jn. 16:15), and “I have declared onto them Thy name” (Jn. 17:26). **Surely the consideration of the love of the Father would draw from those hearts, touched by divine love, worship. “The Father seeks...worshippers” (Jn. 4:23).**

The breaking of bread, “showing forth His death till He come,” takes our minds and hearts backward and forward. We look back and recall we are identified with His death, His rejection here in this world, and our fellowship with Him in that death. How blessed to ponder, as we look forward, “till he come.” He will come in power and great majesty and every eye will see Him. He will reign from the river to the end of the earth, and all nations shall call Him blessed. How wonderful that He will have us in fellowship with Himself in that day. We will be with Him; we will be associated with Him as His wife – what a partnership or fellowship! Does that not lead us on to enter into the whole counsel of God?

Before closing these remarks, it is well to mention vv. 27–30. Surely we fully realize the worthiness due to our blessed Lord. He would have us in the fellowship of His death, where all of self has been judged. This is where the Corinthians failed; they were allowing the flesh to act. Outwardly, professing to call Him to mind, but in reality giving the desires of the flesh scope to act. Thus the sad result is seen, in weakness, sickness, and even death. Perhaps the specific Corinthian failure is not what may characterize us, but surely the principle set out here should send a clear warning to avoid everything which would lead to such a state.

May the Lord Jesus, through the power of the Holy Spirit, give us a greater appreciation for this wonderful privilege to remember Him in the breaking of bread. May it draw us out of this world and give us a greater desire to be found here in the fellowship of His death, until He come.

J.A.P

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES!

1. Who is the youngest king mentioned in the Bible?
2. Which books in the Bible contain the word “Christian?”
3. How many books in the Bible end with the word “Amen?”

Math Exercise

“Exercise thyself unto piety”

“I PRESS TOWARD THE MARK”

The life of the Christian in the world is presented in the Word and especially by the apostle Paul, like a race toward a mark which we are trying to reach: “We press toward the mark,” “Let us run with patience the race that is set before us” (Heb. 12:1). “I press toward the mark for the prize of high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” “But this one thing I do: forgetting those things behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press...” One of the characters of the Christian it is that he has before him a Mark, a hope, a certitude: the rest, the glory, the peace, and the love. He knows that CHRIST awaits him to receive him in the Father’s House where his place is ready. He presses toward the mark, with this precious thought that JESUS himself will come (1 Cor.14:52). In a moment in a twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet...He can come and take him to obtain without strain with his beloved, the wonderful trumpet...He can come and take him to obtain without strain with his beloved, the wonderful mark that His grace glitters before us.

What a contrast between such a race and that of an unbeliever who is walking blindly in front of the Abyss, the death, the judgment, instead of running; trying to fasten himself at everything he finds to prolong his race, to delay the end. What a sad condition to the one who is without God, without hope in the world to long for the worldly things where is emptiness, where everything passes. Or where nothing can satisfy the heart, or even the short joys that we may find, have an end, the sorrow... “Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful and the end of mirth is heaviness” (Pro. 12:13).

The race of the believer seems to be long sometimes and often difficult, that is why it is said to run with patience the race which is before us, patience and hope which helps us run faster with more courage when we are nearing the mark. It is necessary to be able to run this way, to have before us without ceasing the mark we try to obtain with the desire to get it. **We have to run straight to the mark without going astray on the way of faith.** “Let thine eyes look right on and let the eyelids look straight before thee” (Pro. 14:25). “Ponder the path of thy feet and let all thy way be established, turn not to the right hand nor to the left, remove thy foot from evil” (Deut. 5:32). **Run the race like the apostle Paul with the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left. We will have to fight the enemy: he is always actively seeking to stop us,** “Whom resist steadfast in the faith” (1 Pe. 5:9). Look forward to the race which before us, “forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before,” says the apostle. “I press toward the mark for the price of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” He always had his eyes fixed on Jesus and exhorts us not to remove our glance from Him. **We have to turn them neither to the right to try to find in ourselves some encouragement, or some strength to pursue the race; neither to the left to rest, being wearied, “lest we be wearied and faint in your mind” (Heb. 12:3).**

No obstacle will be able to stop us in our race, nothing is going to make us flinch, and nothing is going to trouble us, if we do not lose sight of the goal. CHRIST himself, our SAVIOR, our life, our hope, the one who loves us, and the one who will have us forever with HIM. The LORD whom we can contemplate through faith, “but we all with open eyes...” (2 Cor.3:18). We are running to Him: do not be stopped or be turned away. **Never forget what the Lord said to His disciples, “You are in the world, but not of the world.” This shows us that we have to pass through this world like strangers running; that our hearts do not stop there.**

To the Galatians who had been carried away from the path of faith the apostle says, “Ye did run well, who did hinder you?” (Gal. 5:7). They had forsaken the gospel of grace from Christ; they had stopped to go to another gospel (Gal. 1:6) instead of continuing the race, “looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.

The apostle Paul presents the race like an athlete who is running in the arena. He is trying to do everything to gain the prize. We have to run alone to get it, to obtain the incorruptible crown, the prize of the heavenly call. We have to put aside everything which could stop our walk, having our hearts empty, knowing what is our goal; not like “as one beating the air” (2 Cor. 9:26). “Know ye not that they which run in a race, run all; but one receiveth the prize, so run that ye obtain” (1 Cor. 9:24). At the end of his life the apostle can say in very good conscience, “for I am ready to be offered, and my time of departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only but unto all to them also who love his appearing” (2 Tim. 6:8).

Dear saints, don't we have to ask ourselves if we are really running? Are we not stopping if we turn our glance to the right or to the left or in any way fail to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus?

Translated from French by

Jean Moinat

Switzerland

"Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven."

BIBLE NUMBERS

PART 2

SIX

6 is the second number which is not a prime number. Divided, its factors are 2 and 3, which easily yield the thought of the manifestation of evil, or of the enemy's work.

6 is the number of the days of man's work-day week, the appointed time of his labor, type of this life labor, his "few and evil" days—limited because of sin.

In its full meaning, it seems to speak of sin in its full development, limited and controlled by God, who thus glorifies Himself in the issue of it. The discipline of God for His own would come under this.

In the number of the beast, we find in it three successively higher powers of the decimal scale—evil in its fullest activity; yet its feebleness over apparent, and God's hand controlling it: it increases only responsibility and judgment. Its number is "the number of its name"—stamps it as what it is, and is only the "number of man" vainly and impiously aspiring to be as God.

In the tenth Psalm is the description of this "wicked one" (vv. 2-11). It is, conjointly with the preceding one, an alphabetic Psalm, from which in this place exactly six cubits; a giant of his race has six fingers and six toes.

Nebuchadnezzar's idolatrous image was sixty cubits high, six broad.

One sixth of Gog's host is spared (Ezek. 39:2). That is, six parts are the measure of the host, of which God spares one in divine sovereignty.

Lastly, the darkness at this cross began at the sixth hour and ended at the ninth (3x3)—

SEVEN

Is the symbol of perfection—the sense, however, being sometimes evil, though prevailingly good. It is in Scripture, where divided, in general 4 + 3—numbers which speak evidently of the creature as manifesting the Creator, which, being attained, is for the creature its perfection, and for God His rest.

It often seems merely to indicate a complete view or accomplishment, as the parables of Matthew 13 give a complete view of the kingdom of heaven: the first four, the external world-aspect; the last three, the divine mind. The seven addresses to the churches give in like manner the complete inspired church-history. The seven seals secure the book completely. In the seven vials is "filled up the wrath of God." The seven more wicked spirits which the unclean spirit associates with himself (Matt. 12:45) is an example of the bad sense; as are the seven heads of the beast in Revelation.

Perfect divine accomplishment we may take as the meaning of this number in a good sense.

EIGHT

Simply showing that it is complete by indicating a new beginning, as the eighth day is the first of a new week. It thus speaks of what is new in contrast with the old, and thus of the new covenant, new creation.

Thus circumcision was to be performed the eighth day: “the putting off the body of the flesh” (Col. 2: 11), and is connected with the new creation in Christ Jesus unto good works (Eph. 2: 10).

So seven days are occupied with the consecration of the priesthood, and on the eighth day they enter on their work.

So the transfiguration on the eighth day (Luke 9:28) begins, as it were, the new age with “the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Pet.1: 16-18). And the eighth Psalm announces His kingdom (cf. Heb. 2: 5-9).

But this, like other numbers, can be applied to what is evil; and so we have—

The “seven other spirits” associated with the first “unclean spirit” making eight, and introducing the “last state” of the man into whom they enter.

So the ten horns of Daniel’s fourth beast have three uprooted before the little horn, becoming, thus, eight with this; the last state of the beast being thus brought about, in which judgment falls upon the whole. And in Rev. 17, where from another side the same things are recounted, the eighth head gives to the beast its blasphemous form, and “goes into perdition.”

TWELVE

It is, in Scripture, at least as commonly divided into 4 x 3 as 7 is into 4 + 3. The factors are the same; but whereas in the one case they are added, in the other they are multiplied. It is only in the relation of the two numbers to one another that it differs from 7: the number of the world, and that of divine manifestation, characterize it; but these are not side by side merely. It is God manifesting Himself in the world of His creation, as 7 is, but now in active energy laying hold of and transforming it. Thus 12 is the number of manifest sovereignty, as it was exercised in Israel by the Lord in the midst of them, or as it will be exercised in the world to come.”

1 and 5 are also governmental numbers; but 1 speaks simply of supremacy—of sovereign will and power, while 5 speaks of God’s governmental ways. Both apply to providential as well as manifest government.

In the new Jerusalem, it is plain why the number of manifest sovereignty is everywhere apparent—twelve gates, twelve foundation; twelve thousand furlongs its compass every way. This is its blessedness, that God here rules entirely. Upon earth, according to the Lord’s promise, the twelve apostles “sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” (Matt. 19:28.)

And now looking back at this series of numbers, we can easily trace in it a connection of thought, which unites it together, and manifests also its completeness as a series. It will serve as confirmation of the meaning of the whole, and of each separate part also. The order of thought gives it a new beauty, and its fullness becomes a demonstration. It is plain that the sum of all truth is contained in it, and that we cannot go beyond it for any thing.

In the first three numbers, thus, we have God in His fullness—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. God must, if our thoughts are right, take precedence in them of all else, and the display of Himself is what is accomplished and designed in all that follows.

We have next in the number 4, the creature; and here the display of God in it is noted and emphasized in the Scripture division into 3 and 1 which has already come before us. The connection of the first three numbers with the fourth is here made plain to us.

F.W.Grant

ANSWERS TO SCRIPTURES SEARCH!

1. Joash ,who began his reign at the age of seven (2 Chr. 24:1)
2. Acts and 1 Peter
3. Seven-Romans, 1 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 2 Peter, Jude, Revelation

REST

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

THE LORD'S PROTECTING CARE

A medical missionary and his friend were returning from the bank in a distant town; they had been there to collect a large amount of money. Realizing that they could not reach the mission hospital by nightfall, they spent the night on a lonely hillside and continued the journey the next day.

"I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for Thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety"(Ps. 4:8).

A few weeks later a man came to the hospital. After a while he said to the doctor who was treating him, "I've seen you before. My friends and I saw you come from the bank and followed you. **When it was dark, we intended to rob you, but you were surrounded by soldiers!**"

"But there were no soldiers with us," replied the missionary. **"Oh yes, there were,"** said the man. **"They were protecting your camp."**

Some months later, when the missionary was home for awhile, he was at a meeting and told how they were nearly robbed, and of the conversation with the hospital patient. After the meeting, a friend said to him, "What date was it when you camped out?" The missionary found the date in his diary. When the friend compared the date with his own diary, he said, **"It was our prayer meeting, and I remember that night we specially prayed for you."**

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q: A friend of mine who claims to be a Christian believes that it is better to be cremated than to be buried after death .what does the Bible teaches? H.O

A: Dear saint, I am very thankful for your desire to seek what the Bible teaches. I believe the Bible teaches the following:

1. God's Order:

God has set the pattern of burial from the book of Genesis (book of beginnings) by telling Abraham, "thou shalt be buried in a good old age (Gn 15:15). Abraham understood God's mind and was much occupied with buying a burial ground to bury his dead in chapter 23. It is interesting that the word bury, buried, etc... is mentioned about 11 times in the same chapter. Please note that all the heroes of faith were buried and in Moses' case, Jehovah Himself buried him.

2. God's Son:

The Lord Jesus was buried and spoke about His burial (Matt. 26:12, Jn 12:7). His burial is essential to proclaiming the gospel (1Cor. 15:4). That which is offensive to God has to be removed. So then if we claim that cremation is better than burial, then we are taking away from the truth of the Gospel.

3. God's Spirit:

We are the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16, 6:19) and we are not our own: "For ye are bought with a price...(vv. 19-20). Therefore since our bodies are not ours, then it will be an act of disobedience to decide for ourselves to be cremated when we clearly know it is not God's decision and pattern.

4. God's Purpose:

I mention the purpose, simply because God wants His children to be conformed and to bear the image of his Son in everything, even in His death (Phil 3:10). Therefore, if Christ was buried then we need to do the same.

5. God's Doctrine – Baptism

Cremation does not only disregard the truth of the Gospel (see above) but also denies the truth of Baptism (Rom. 6:4, Col. 2:20).

Much love in Christ,
J.A.

THE MAN OF SORROWS

PART 4

On him who had disowned Thee
Thine eye could look in love-
'Midst threats and taunts around Thee-
To tears of grace to move.

What words of love and mercy
Flow from those lips of grace,
For followers that desert Thee;
For sinners in disgrace!

The robber learned beside Thee,
Upon the cross of shame-
While taunts and jeers deride Thee-
The savour of Thy Name.

Then, finished all, in meekness
Thou to Thy Father's hand
(Perfect Thy strength in weakness,)
Thy spirit dost commend.

O Lord! Thy wondrous story
My inmost soul doth move;
I ponder o'er Thy glory-
Thy lonely path of love!

But, O Divine Sojourner
'Midst man's unfathomed ill,
Love, that made Thee a mourner,
It is not man's to tell!

We worship, when we see Thee
In all Thy sorrowing path;
We long soon to be with Thee
Who bore for us the wrath!

Come then, expected Saviour;
Thou Man of Sorrows come!
Almighty, blest Deliverer!
And take us to Thee – home.

J. N. Darby

MISDIRECTED

A terrible blizzard was raging over the Northern part of the United States, making more and more difficult the progress of a train that was slowly forcing its way along. Among the passengers was a woman with a child, who was much concerned lest she should not get off at the right station. A gentleman, seeing her anxiety, said, "Do not worry; I know the road well and I will tell you when you come to your station."

In due course the train stopped at the station before the one at which the woman wanted to get off. "The next station will be yours ma'am," said the gentleman. Then they went on and in a short time the train stopped again. "Now is your time; get out here," he said. The woman took up her child and, thanking the gentleman for his kindly interest, left the train during the storm at what was supposed to be the wayside station in the country.

At the next stop, to his surprise and alarm, the brakeman called out the name of the station where the woman wished to get off. "You have already stopped at this station!" called the gentleman to the official. "No sir," he replied, "something was wrong with the engine and we stopped for a few moments." "Alas," cried the passenger, "I have put that woman off in the storm when the train stopped between stations!" Afterwards, they found her with the child in her arms. Both were frozen to death. It was a terrible and tragic consequence of wrong direction being given.

Reader – you should be on your guard against being misdirected for eternity. It is all too solemn to rest on uncertainties with such an important matter as the soul's salvation at stake, and as to where you will spend eternity – in heaven, or in everlasting fire. It must be one or the other. Thank God, there is no need to depend upon doubtful counsel. In His own sure Word He has himself given the plainest directions as to the way to heaven. The way he indicates is not the way of "doing our best," or "of observing the golden rule," or of "trying to do good."

We are assured at the outset that none of these ways will lead us to God. All have wandered too far away from God for any such directions to help, for "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way," and only the true Shepherd, our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, who gave His life's blood for sinners and died and rose again, can save poor, lost, undone and hell-deserving sinners.

The Word of God points to Christ as the ONLY way. He suffered, not as a martyr, but as a sin-bearer making atonement by His blood. Now that He is risen from the dead He is proclaimed to all as the Savior of sinners. The Scripture says, "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His Name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:43). Could words be plainer?

The course of true wisdom is to give heed to the sure directions of the Word of God and thus escape the awful peril of being misdirected. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36).