



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,

“Thou art the same” (Heb. 1:12). “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever” (Heb. 13:8).

With the New Year upon us, we do well to pause and look backward as well as forward. **We need to look back over a road we have trodden and known, and look on to a path as yet unseen and untrodden.** Can we not look back to the past year and recall so many experiences of the Lord’s gracious dealing with us, so many mercies, so much grace, such compassion and guidance? **How good it is to remember the Lord’s faithfulness, and to be conscious of the fact that He will always be true to Himself, and to His own promises. But the Lord of yesterday is the same faithful Lord of today and of tomorrow. With a Lord like this, we can look back on our past year, on our past pilgrimage, with gratitude, and we can look on to what is left to us of our journey through life, with whatever the future may have for us to meet, with confidence in the Lord who can not fail us. He was yesterday what He is now, He is the same today as He was yesterday, He will be the same tomorrow as He was always. “Thou art the same” (Heb. 1:12) is His name.**

May this lovely name, with all its wonders, be to us a power and encouragement in our pilgrimage in the New Year.

I would like to acknowledge those faithful ones who have been a source of help and encouragement to me: the Lord knows them and He will reward them. Also, I want to thank all of you dear readers for your overwhelming response to the magazine. I trust that you will enjoy this issue, and please keep praying for the Lord’s blessing on *Toward the Mark*.

Yours in our soon-coming Lord,
Emil S. Nashed

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*I have the pleasure to inform you that a mailing list has been set up for *Toward the Mark*. If you 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 the J. N. Darby translation.

MILK

"The truth shall make you free"

THE TRIUNE GOD

FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT

In a day when the foundations of our most holy faith are being attacked on all sides, and errors destructive of the very fundamentals of Christianity are boldly proclaimed, it becomes all who love the Lord and reverence His Word to be diligently "building themselves up," and so assuring themselves of the "things which they have learned" so as to "continue in them" (2 Tim. 3:14), and be able to lend a helping hand to others in danger of being led astray with "the error of the wicked" (2 Pet. 3:17). Secondhand knowledge is of little value in a day of stress. The enemy can easily wrest from us any truth held on mere traditional authority. Only that which we have learned from God, and hold in faith and love, in the communion of the Holy Ghost (2 Tim. 1:13-14) strengthens the inner man, and becomes shield and sword (Eph. 6:16-17) to the warrior in the day of battle.

"The fool hath said in his heart there is no God" (Ps. 14:1). Atheism denies His existence. Deism admits an original Cause, but denies His Sovereignty. Agnosticism says He is unknown and unknowable. Pantheism makes God part of existing things, as in Brahminism and other idolatrous systems. Revelation makes known a Living and True God, His character, His works, and His ways, and "the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple" (Ps. 19:7). To the word of God, our only safe guide in things Divine and Eternal, let us reverently turn.

ONE TRUE GOD

"There is one God" (1 Tim. 2:4), and "there is none other but He" (Mk. 12:32). His glory He "will not give unto another" (Isa. 42:8). The Creator and the Cause of all existence, material and spiritual, formed for Himself and His pleasure (Rev. 4:11); He requires and claims its allegiance. Eternal, Infinite, Omnipotent, Omniscient; God of Light and Love; in Him "we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28). Yet He is unknown and unknowable, alike in His mode of existence, His character, and His ways, save as He is pleased to reveal Himself to man. Concerning Him, the question may be asked as of old, "Canst thou by searching find out God?" (Job 11:7). "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork" (Ps. 19:1); but it is in His Son (Jn. 1:18), and through His Word, that God has been pleased to reveal Himself. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent" (Jn. 17:3).

ONE GOD IN THREE PERSONS

God is revealed in the Scriptures as one God in three Persons, each Divine, equally God, eternally one in Being: not three Gods, but three Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the Triune God whose nature and whose name is Love. This great truth was well expressed by Athanasius, a noble witness for God and the faith in the early Church, at a time when Arian and Sabellian errors were turning many away from the truth. He says, "**There is one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance; for there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one, the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal.**"

The English word "Trinity," which means "threefoldness," is not found in Scripture, yet it expresses more accurately than any other single English word this great Scriptural truth of three Persons yet one God, a truth which is announced and in part revealed in the Old

Testament, but fully developed and demonstrated in the New, by the Incarnation, Death, and Glorification of the Son, and the advent and work of the Spirit. Far beyond man's finite reason to grasp, it belongs to the Infinite and Eternal, a stumbling-stone to the worldly-wise, while faith receives and enjoys its truth. "No man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son" (Mt. 11:27), and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him. What "flesh and blood" could never make known of the Son, the Father reveals (Mt. 16:17). Such knowledge is now imparted by the Spirit (1 Co. 2:10-13) through the Word (2 Co. 3:17-18). Scripture reveals all that God has seen good for us to know in our present state, concerning this truth, and beyond that we are wise not to pry.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustrations of this great truth may be seen in the sun's light, which is white, but which, when passed through a prism, divides itself into the three primary colors—blue, red, and yellow; in man formed in the image of God, composed of spirit, soul, and body; and in other things, all of which, while bearing witness to the Triune God, their Maker, need to be used with reverent care.

When Patrick went to preach to the unlettered pagans in Ireland, he found great difficulty in making clear to them the truth of the Trinity. "Are there three Gods or one?" they asked. Perplexed, he looked on the ground, picked up a shamrock growing at his feet, and holding it up, said: "As there are three in one and one in three in this little plant, so is God." A very few steps in the quest of such knowledge brings us to the verge of the Infinite and Unknowable, where, not in irreverent speculation or unholy skepticism of which the baffled man of reason at this point becomes the victim, but in adoring worship of the All-wise and All-good God, who thus reveals yet hides Himself, the devout and longing soul exclaims: "Lo, these are part of His ways; but how little a portion is heard of Him" (Job 26:14).

TRINITY ACTING IN UNITY

IN CREATION — "In (the) beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). The word "God" is **Elohim**, the plural of "Eloah," the object of worship — "created," brought into existence, out of nothing, "the heaven and the earth." Thus, in the eternal past, "in beginning," long before the clock of time was set going, the Eternal, Triune God — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — co-existed and acted in unity in the work of creation. Such is the first sentence of the Book of God: the truth it teaches runs through it to the end.

IN THE WORD, the original creation is attributed alike to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (see Rev. 4:11; Jn. 1:3; Ps. 104:30). It is of the Father, through the Son, by the Spirit. Originated with the Father, accomplished through the Son, effected by the Spirit, each acting unitedly and harmoniously. Thus the Divine purpose and way are perfect, as are their execution. In verse 3, where reconstruction of the ruined earth as an abode for man is in view, the Spirit personally is seen moving (see Dt. 32:11 for the same word), or fluttering over the dark, chaotic mass, foreshadowing His work of awakening, conviction, and regeneration in fallen man, while light and life are produced through the word (2 Co. 4:6). Although not distinctively the subject of Old Testament revelation, the Personality and operations of the Son (see Num. 32:32; Isa. 63:9; Mal. 3:1) and the Spirit are fully recognized (Isa. 48:16; 61:1), while in the New Testament the full manifestations, interrelations, harmonious actings, and dispensational workings of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are clearly announced and distinguished.

IN THE BAPTISMAL FORMULA of Mt. 28:19, "baptizing them into the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost;" in the Apostolic benediction of 2 Co. 13:14; and the Apocalyptic greeting of Revelation 1:4-6, **the Triune God in all diversity, equality, and Deity is fully recognized — Divine honor and Deity being here, as elsewhere, ascribed to each (Ro. 9:5; Heb. 1:8; Acts 5:3-4)**. The Son claims equality and unity (Jn. 10:30) with the Father (Jn. 5:20), and the Word proclaims (Jn. 1:1) His eternity, equality, and Divine Personality. Yet, in relation, the Son is filial as well as divine. Eternally the Son before all worlds, co-existent with the Father (Jn. 17:5,24; Pro. 8:22-31), His "well-beloved" (Mk. 12:6), in whom He

was “well pleased” (Mt. 3:17). **He who did not “become,” but eternally was the only begotten in the bosom of the Father** (Jn. 1:18), was “sent forth” (Gal. 4:4) to do the Father’s will (Jn. 4:34), not less Divine, yet, subordinate to Him, doing nothing of Himself (Jn. 5:19). In this respect alone is the Father said to be “greater” than the Son (Jn. 14:28), and the Son “subject” to the Father (1 Co. 15:24,28), not in essential, but in economic, filial, and dispensational relations.

IN INCARNATION — Trinity is seen again acting in unity. “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son” (Jn. 3:16), and He, who ever was in “the form of God,” of His own will took upon Him the bondservant’s form, saying, “Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God” (Heb. 10:9). In a body “prepared” by the Father, and by the Spirit formed (Lk. 1:35), “God sent forth His Son, made of a woman” (Gal. 4:4).

IN HIS DIVINE PERSONALITY, the Son of God, ever God and Man, two natures in one Person, always Divine, yet ever perfect Man.

IN SERVICE — At His baptism in Jordan, the Son obeys, the Father speaks from the open heavens, and the Spirit in dove-like form descends (Mt. 3:16-17); while throughout His public ministry the Son ever had the Father with Him (Jn. 8:29), and did all His mighty works by the Spirit (Mt. 12:28).

IN REDEMPTION — God the Father, is said to be the Originator of the scheme of redemption, the Giver and Sender of the Son; the Son accomplishes, as Sacrifice, Redeemer, Savior; and the Spirit bears witness to the completeness of that work (Heb. 10:17). The three Persons of the Godhead, in one sublime statement of the Sacred Word, are each mentioned as present at and sharing in the great work of Calvary, when “He (the Son), through the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God” (Heb. 9:14).

IN SALVATION, the election, choice, and call of the saved is ascribed to God the Father (Eph. 1:4; 1 Pe. 1:2; Ro. 8:28); their redemption, justification, and peace to the work of the Son (Eph. 1:7; Acts 13:39; Eph. 2:13); their regeneration, sanctification, and transformation to the Holy Spirit (Jn. 3:5; 1 Pe. 1:2; 2 Co. 3:17-18).

The threefold parable of Luke 15, in which the shepherd goes after the wandering sheep, the woman searches for the lost silver, and the father welcomes the repentant and returning prodigal, may surely further tell of the activities of the Triune God in the sinner’s salvation.

IN COMMUNION, access (Eph. 2:18) and worship (Heb. 10:19-21; Phil. 3:3, R.V.), the believer knows and proves the efficacy of the way opened, the ministry of the living High Priest, and the Spirit-given strength and competency to “draw near,” to abide in the light, and to walk through life with God. Divine love, manifested in the gift of the Father (1 Jn. 4:9) and the death of the Son (Gal. 2:20), is “shed abroad” (Ro. 5:5) in the heart of the believer by the Holy Ghost, to be enjoyed experimentally by him.

IN THE CHURCH, as the House of God (1 Tim. 3:15) over which the Son is set (Heb. 3:6, R.V.) and in which the Spirit dwells (Eph. 2:22), all administration and operation for godly order and edification is undertaken by and wrought out under the supreme control of the Three-in-one God (1 Co. 12:3-5) through men, but not of them; and where the Divine Pattern is conformed to and room left for the Divine power to operate, now as of old, some will have to confess, “God is in you of a truth” (1 Co. 14:25).

IN GLORY — On the coming resurrection morning, the Spirit quickens (Rom. 8:11), the Son receives the raised and transformed saints (Jn. 14:3), and presents them to the Father with exceeding joy (Jude 24). In the Eternal state, God Himself shall be with His people (Rev. 21:3); they shall see the face of the Son, and serve Him (Rev. 22:3-4); while from the throne of God and the Lamb, the water of life, like a river—emblem of the Spirit’s fullness—will flow on for ever (see Jn. 7:38-39).

All the Father’s counsels claiming
Equal honor to the Son;
All the son’s effulgence beaming
Makes the Father’s glories known:
By the spirit, all—pervading,
Hosts unnumbered round the Lamb,
Ceaseless love and praise unfailing
Claiming for the Great I AM:
Father, Son, and Spirit known,
Heaven’s Eternal Three-in-One.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. In Dt. 6. 4, it is said: “The Lord our God is one Lord.” How does this accord with a Three-in-One God?

There are two words in the Hebrew language translated “one.” The first means absolutely and essentially one; the second, one in combination. The second is the word here used, and expresses the same great truth as the Lord Himself uttered when He said, “I and My Father are one” (Jn. 10:30).

2. In Gen. 1:1 we read “In the beginning God created;” and in Jn. 1:3 and Col. 1:16, creation is attributed to Christ. How are these statements reconciled?

Easily. The word “God” in Gen. 1:1 is Elohim, a plural word, the Eternal Triune God, who afterwards said, “Let us make man in our Image” (v. 26). The verb “created” is in the singular, expressing Trinity acting in Unity, which is elsewhere abundantly shown. Creation was equally the work of Father, Son, and Spirit. (See Eph. 3:9; Rev. 4:11; Job 26:13.)

3. It is said “No man hath seen God at any time” (Jn. 15). What does this mean, and how does it accord with Ex. 24:10, where it is said, “They saw the God of Israel?”

God, as God, in the plenitude of His character as God of Light and Love, was unknown in Old Testament times, and until He was “declared” by the Son. “At sundry times and in divers manners” (Heb. 1:1) He had manifested Himself in angelic and other forms, but it was not until the Son came forth, testifying, “He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father” (Jn. 14:9). Only in Christ who is “the Image of the invisible God” (Col. 1:15), “the brightness of His glory and the express image of His Person” (Heb. 1:3), is God fully made known.

J.R

Meat

"Sanctify them by the truth"

STRANGE FIRE

LEVITICUS 10

This solemn chapter is full of instruction, and in the time of departure in which we live is most needful. A number of important points may be seen here.

1. The worship of God must be free from human invention, v. 1

Aaron's two sons, Nadab and Abihu, took their censers and lit them with fire from a source other than the altar of burnt offerings and offered the incense before the Lord. It is most striking that in the last verse of the previous chapter we read of the fire coming out from the Lord and consuming the burnt offering and the fat. As there are no chapter divisions in the Hebrew text the narrative goes on uninterruptedly. **This fact makes the sins of the two young priests the more stark, for it was immediately after the Lord Himself had ignited His fire on the altar that they ignited theirs, for the incense, with fire from another source. The Hebrew word which is translated “strange” means alien or foreign, and is from a root which signifies “to turn aside.” The two young men had turned aside from what was due to the holy Lord and from the due order of His worship to introduce ideas alien to His order.**

On more than one occasion we see the Lord showing His approval by sending out fire from Himself to consume the sacrifices. Some confirmed the acceptableness of the offering, and Cain was shown that his offering was not acceptable. If fire from the Lord consumed Abel's offering and this was withheld from Cain's offering, it would be clear enough. While there is no text to support this idea, it is true that other instances of such divine approval are not wanting. We have already noticed one in chapter 9. The fire of the Lord also fell on Elijah's sacrifice on Carmel and on Solomon's offerings at the dedication of the temple (2 Chr. 7:1). This may establish the principle

that the fire of approval must be from God and that alien fire is not permissible.

There could have been collusion between the two priests. We read that they took “each of them his censer and put fire therein.” It may be that they discussed this matter and agreed to introduce this novel manner of worship. It was their idea, not the Lord’s commandment. It seems that no definite order had been given, but their sin consisted in doing what had not been commanded. Introducing ingenious human ideas into the worship of the Lord is, without doubt, fraught with danger. Immediately after they were struck down in judgment, Moses understood the meaning of it and said, “This is that the Lord spake: I will be sanctified in them that come before me.” **The Lord Himself knows perfectly what is acceptable to Him in our worship and our inventions do not come into that class.**

2. The worship of God must be free from human inspiration, v. 9

Conjectures on what caused the two young men to attempt the substitution of strange fire for fire from the altar have been made, and some have concluded that they were drunk and that, for this reason the Lord then introduced the prohibition of alcohol when the priests were serving in the tabernacle. They could have been drunk, of course, but it would appear to be an error to think that the Lord needed such a mistake to induce Him to bring in a new rule of conduct for the priests. **The fact is that as priests of the holy Lord they ought to have understood the need for sobriety and orderly behavior in the Lord’s presence.** There is at least one scriptural example of the danger of such insobriety. Noah had built an altar and offered sacrifices on it which had been acceptable to the Lord, and then he got drunk. **There could be no place in divine service for such behavior.** Things other than alcohol may provide such human stimuli and they can be seen everywhere in Christian circles today. The frothy ‘pop’ of so-called gospel-singing may be one example. Nothing that is not of divine origin, that is not of the Spirit, can have a place in God’s service. We are advised: “Be not drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit.” The apostle goes on to speak of singing and among his suggestions are spiritual songs, not songs of worldly origin.

3. The worship of God must be free from human inflation, v. 12

The influence of leaven is well known. In spite of attempts to give it a different meaning in Matthew 13, it seems, on the contrary, universally to have an evil meaning. When leaven is mixed with dough it permeates the lump and has the effect of inflating the entire mass. In this scripture the Lord prohibits its use for serving priests. **Nothing that has the effect of enlarging man or of inflating his sense of his own importance can be tolerated in presence of the Lord. Leaven, thought of as evil doctrine, always makes much of man after the flesh.** The truth of God shows that man of that order has been set aside altogether, not made much of. The only fitting attitude for man in his approach to God is one of true subjection and deep humility. God is concerned about His own glory (v. 3) and anything which is in any sense contrary to His honor, or would **militate** against it, is banned from His holy presence. In the instructions concerning His house God had made it known that there were to be no steps up to His altar. **We are to approach Him in worship on the lowly ground, which is our true place in His presence.** When He wishes to exalt us, He will do so in His own time (1 Pet. 5:6). Meanwhile, our proper place before Him is one of conscious lowliness and dependence.

4. The worship of God is to be without human impurity, vv.12-14

Man’s uncleanness, by nature, could find no place of standing in God’s presence. We can stand there only as cleansed persons. We see how impure Isaiah felt himself to be as he saw the Lord high and lifted up. Job also, though the best man on earth in his day, felt how unclean he was when his eye saw the Lord. **Our mortal taint is well enough known to us; how infinitely more so to a holy God! The words “most holy” (v. 12), ‘holy place’ (v. 13), and ‘clean place’ (v. 14) strongly emphasize the need for purity in the service of God and in His worship.** The idea of introducing the corrupt practices of the world around into His service is wholly obnoxious.

5. The worship of God is to be without human infirmity, v. 19

Aaron and his two surviving sons had neglected to carry out their service with regard to the sin offering (v. 16). Its blood had not been sprinkled in the holy place nor had they eaten its flesh there. Aaron and his family had suffered a traumatic experience which would certainly affect them profoundly, but they were instructed not to give way to the normal expressions of human sorrow and to remain in the precincts of the Lord's house (vv. 6-7). Significantly, they were reminded that the anointing was on them. **Even under the pressure of such grief, they were to behave as the Lord's anointed priests and not allow natural sentiments to intrude into their service as His priests and in His holy presence.** However, Moses being human, probably feeling his own frailty and failure, understood the failure of his brother and his sons, the two young priests, and seemed mollified by Aaron's plea (v. 19). However, as we see in the text, what they had omitted to do was really the Lord's commandment and they ought to have obeyed those instructions whatever else happened. The two sons who died had done what the Lord had not commanded; Aaron and his other sons failed to carry out what the Lord had commanded. **But human infirmity, however much we understand it and are marked by it, has no place in the service of God.**

The serving priests were to eat the flesh of the sin offering. *It was their duty, by eating the offering, to identify themselves with the nation in the sin which had occasioned the offering.* Such an act would have had very striking significance in the circumstances of Nadab and Abihu's sin. **The rebellion which had promoted their disobedience was a human feature which could easily exist in their own hearts and so could readily develop.** They were to be aware of this and, in the holy place, eat the sin offering. This serves to underline for us the solemn truth, "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed, lest he fall" (1 Co. 10:12). The sin which led a dear brother into defeat may easily be the one which brings about my own fall. Eating the sin offering would keep this truth alive in our minds.

One more point may be mentioned, concerning the wave-breast and the heave-shoulder (vv. 14-15). **The food which the priest required to support them is found here. The wave-breast, taken from the breast of the offering, emphasizes the Lord's loving devotedness**

to the Father and to the completion of the work given Him by the Father to do. He had come to do His will and this would take Him to the cross, as we know. What enabled Him to go there, to endure all that such an experience would bring Him, was His deep and eternal love to the Father. **As the priests take that in and feed on it, their souls are supported by it, and their affections are nourished.**

Then the heave-shoulder was also to be eaten the holy place. **It is often remarked that this portion of the offering emphasizes its strength. This is not without truth; however the most powerful muscle in the ox is the huge ham muscle, and the great strength of the ox to pull lies there. But the muscles of the shoulder are the fore-quarters, and while these powerful muscles play some part in the pulling power of the ox, they also control the direction of movement.** It could be said of the Lord Jesus that he "steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem." This emphasizes the strength of His devotion and its direction. **This is precious food for the serving priest, and as priests to His God and Father, we need to be nourished on such food, that our affections may be maintained and that the direction of our path may be pleasing to God, for we are to walk here even as the Lord Jesus walked.**

J. Barnes

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES!

1. What is the only book in the Bible to mention God laughing?
2. Of what island was Sergius Paulus the deputy?
3. Who bore three sons and two daughters after giving up her first son to serve the Lord?

Exercise

"Exercise thyself unto piety"

SELF-SURRENDER

*Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.*

Isaac Watts (1674-1748), the writer of some 700 hymns, became known as "The Father of English Hymnody." The above-quoted verse, taken from his well-known work, "When I survey the wondrous cross," raises a question with each one of us as to the degree of our self-surrender. This subject is one that is found throughout the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation.

Living as we do in days when we hear so much about the teachings of Buddhist priests, Sikh gurus, and Hindu yogis, it is well to recognize that such theosophies are but the breeding grounds for asceticism, fanaticism, and meritorious works of achievement.

Christian self-surrender is not simply denying self of certain conveniences of life or of activities that, while legitimate, are without profit. Christian self-surrender is entirely unconditional and takes its character from the burnt-offering that was wholly consumed on the altar.

From the many examples we have in the Scriptures we will restrict ourselves to three believers, namely, Abraham, Amos, and Paul. Then we will finish with some details from the life of the Lord Jesus Himself.

Abraham: The first reference to self-sacrifice in Abraham's life is to be found in Genesis 12:4, "And Abram departed as Jehovah had said to him." The last one is in Genesis 22:10, "And Abraham stretched out his hand, and took the knife to slaughter his son."

One can readily understand the desire of the children of Israel to be free of the oppressive policy of the Pharaohs and leave the Fertile Crescent. **But the great moral victory of Abraham, in Genesis 12, was that, in spite of the wealth and attractions of Babylon, he was prepared to surrender all: his land, his kindred, and his father's house.**

In his supreme obedience of faith, recorded in Genesis 22, he surrenders his only son, the child of promise. Thus he not only laid on the altar his own future but that of the whole nation. But in this mountain transaction he came to know Jehovah-Jireh and learned that God can only rest in the sufficiency of His own surrender.

Amos: Probably the best-known words of Amos are:

"I was no prophet,
Neither was I a prophet's son;
but I was a herdsman
and a gatherer of sycamore fruit.
And Jehovah took me as I followed the flock,
and Jehovah said unto me,
Go, prophesy unto my people Israel."

In Amos we see a man who was prepared to leave his lands, his herds and his fruit-fields in order to serve among a people who had little regard for his religion or his people. **This man of Judah was under a divine compulsion to surrender all that he possessed in the world to serve a people who not only refused his king but also his God.**

Arriving in his field of service one of the first words he heard was, "Thou seer, go, flee away into the land of Judah, and eat bread there, and prophesy there. But prophesy not again any more at Bethel; for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is the house of the kingdom." The people who had listened uncomplainingly to ministry affecting others, such as Damascus, Gazah, Tyre, Ammon, Moab, Judah, were not prepared to hear what God had to say to them. But Amos, sustained by his five heavenly visions, pursued his course and carried out his assigned mission.

Paul: Paul's unconditional surrender started the day he met the Lord Jesus on the road to Damascus. **His cry on that first encounter was, "What shall I do, Lord?" At the end he could write, "For I am already being poured out, and the time of my release is come."**

How wonderful to start and to finish one's life with such cries of committal. Throughout his life, from Damascus to Rome, his one burning ambition was to make much of Christ, as he does in Colossians, and much of His assembly, as in Ephesians.

The stirring surrender of the apostle should surely awaken similar desires in all of our hearts, "But surely I count also all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all, and count them to be filth, that I may gain Christ" (Phil. 3:8).

Lord Jesus: In the life of the Lord Jesus there was no trace of self, self-indulgence or self-interest: all was of self-abasement and self-abnegation as in the words, "But I am a worm, and no man, a reproach of men, and the despised of all people" (Ps. 22:6).

At birth how subject are the words, "Behold, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me—To do thy good pleasure, my God, is my delight, and thy law is within my heart" (Ps. 40:7-8).

In life He could say, "My meat is that I should do the will of him that has sent me, and that I should finish his work" (Jn. 4:34).

In death we hear the cry of total dependence, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit" (Lk. 23:46).

The call of the Lord Jesus is as real today as it was 2,000 years ago, "Whoever desires to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me" (Mk. 8:34). The word translated "deny" is a compound verb that has no greater intensity anywhere in the New Testament.

In one of his letters JND wrote: "The true heart is occupied with Christ, and in a certain sense and measure self is gone. The right thought is not to think of self at all, save as we have to judge it."

N.S

REST

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

THE MYSTERY OF GOD

REVELATION 10:7

The word "mystery" occurs over twenty times in the New Testament and not once in the Old. It is a word which conveys to us that the things of God are not understood by natural means, but they are written in the Scriptures which are understood only by those who have the gift of the Holy Spirit of God. The Spirit has the key to every mystery, and will unfold them to the saints of God who seek light as to them. There are some fifteen distinctive mysteries, and we wish to speak of this one, hoping it will be a word of consolation to the tried and sorrowing ones amongst the saints of God. In point of time it will be the last one to be unfolded to us, as we shall see.

The mystery of God mentioned in Revelation 10 is not the same as the mystery of God referred to in Colossians 2. In the latter Scripture it is an unfolding of the *counsel* of God which took shape before time began, and as having in view the blessing of both Gentiles and Jews. Here it is concerned with the *ways* of God, and has blessing for both heaven and earth in view. **The mystery of God in Colossians began to be effected when Christ took His place in glory at the right hand of God, and the Holy Spirit came upon the Christian company, formed Christ in them, and attached them to Him in glory; but the mystery in Revelation 10 began in the garden of Eden, and will not be completed until the world-to-come. It has to do with the ways of God on earth; why He allows the evil and the suffering and the persecution of the saints of God. How often have the suffering saints in all dispensations cried out "Why? Why? Why?"**

At times God has allowed circumstances to come upon the saints which have raised the agonizing cry to God, **“Why has this been allowed in my life?” Yet no answer, no solution to their problem has been given. We may well ask, “Will there ever be an answer, will there be an unfolding by God as to why He has allowed these distressing things to affect his people?”**

We have the assurance that all will be revealed, and all the evil which has been allowed in this world will be seen to have an answer. This is taught in the passage to which we have called attention. That this passage has a universal character is obvious, but while it does include all things, we have in mind to speak of it as it affects us today. There can be no doubt but that we shall see all revealed at the judgment seat of Christ; but the earthly saints and the world at large will not see this revealing until the moment to which this passage looks on.

We have been mystified at times when we have taken account of the evils which have been perpetrated in this world, and perhaps have wondered why God allowed them to happen. All is involved in this passage, for we shall see that it stands related to the testimony of God through the prophets and saints of all dispensations.

God has ever given testimony that He would bring blessing to this earth in spite of all the evil influences which abound. It may have appeared as though God had forgotten His promises as we have waited in patience in this day of apparent delay. **But we are quite assured that, if God has promised certain things, he will certainly bring them to pass in His own time, and not according to our thoughts. Meanwhile, He allows our faith to be tested by the many trials we are called upon to endure, and we need, as Abraham the father of those who have faith needed, to have the assurance “that what He had promised, He was able also to perform” (Rom. 4:21).**

At the beginning of Revelation chapter 10, we read of an angel lifting up his hand to heaven, with one foot on the sea and the other foot on the earth, thus claiming the universe for God. **We understand this to be a picture of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His service to God, about to take hold of the universe and to administer all things for the glory of God.**

In view of this He says, “that there should be no longer delay.” We are also assured that the precise moment for this to be effected will be when the seventh angel begins to sound. **This will be the moment when God will no longer act in “mystery,” nor will any longer bear with the evil, but show clearly that which he has been working to secure both in heaven and earth.**

In chapter 11:15, we read, “And the seventh angel sounded.” This is the time referred to by the angel in chapter 10, the time of the unfolding, when it will be revealed to all why God has acted as He has done in His dealings in this world. What shall we do when we see this unfolding? We shall fall on our faces and give God thanks! Christ will then have universal dominion, and in that power will reward the saints for every moment spent in His service in this world. All that was promised in the prophets will be brought into effect, and the saints who have waited and served will be suitably rewarded. The destroyers of the earth will themselves be destroyed; all will be ordered in heaven and on earth for the glory of God, and all will be filled with the greatness of Christ. **The reason for the providential dealings of God will then be known; and the heavenly company, seen in the character of the twenty-four elders, will worship God and give Him thanks.**

Until that moment let us not attempt to question the ways of God, either regarding ourselves or regarding the nations, but let us be assured that when we do see all in the day of display, we shall see that God has made no mistake, and that those very sorrows which caused us so many tears today, will in that day be the very cause of thanksgiving.

G. Davison

THE ICE AGE

Antarctica today is almost completely covered in ice, and so much of Greenland.

But did you know that great sheet of ice used to be in many other places, like south Africa, Italy, Tasmania (Australia) and even Ohio(USA)where did that ice come from, and where has it gone?

Ice, Ice and more Ice.

Around 4,500 years ago, God judge the sin of mankind with globe-covering watery catastrophe (Genesis 6-9). Many scientists who believe the Bible explain that this flood provided just the right conditions for the great sheet of ice to form afterward.

At the beginning of the flood when 'the fountains of the great deep' broke open, hot water from inside the earth gushed into the oceans, eventually covering the land.

At the end of the flood, the waters drained off the land into the oceans. But they were still warmer than they are today from all the volcanic activity caused by the 'fountains' breaking open and the land masses moving around.

Being warmer, the water in the oceans evaporated faster than it does today. Clouds of water vapor formed and moved over the land, like we see on the weather reports today. But these clouds were bigger, carrying more water, than today's clouds, because there was more evaporation from the oceans. So, there was much more snow and rain in the years after the flood.

Also, the snow fell over a much larger area in places that do not have snow today. That is because the volcanoes had blasted so much fine dust high into the air that the sun's warmth was blocked from the earth. So places which are warm today were much cooler then.

With all the volcanic dust and clouds keeping the land cool, the snow on the ground didn't melt during the summer. Instead, it turned to ice,

and gradually built up thick ice sheets which eventually covered about one –third of the land on the earth!

After many years, the oceans cooled down .so with less evaporation; there was less snow-fall. Also, the volcanoes weren't as active and dust cleared away, letting the sun's warmth through to melt the snow and ice each summer. Eventually, the 'ice age 'was over

Altogether, the ice age lasted around 700 years- 500 years to build up and 200 years to melt back.

Some parts of the world are still covered with ice, especially on and near the snow –capped mountains. Often the ice moves slowly down the steep slops. These glaciers, as they are called grind up the rock they creep over, carve U sapped valleys, leave grooved marks behind, and also carry heap of broken rock long distances. That is why we know that there must have once been much bigger ice sheets than we have today. We see the telltale u –shaped valleys, grooved marks and heaps of crushed rocks and boulders in many places around the world

The bible tells about one of the descendants of Noah (a man named Job), who possibly experienced the effects of the ice age. God asked Job, 'out of whose womb came the ice? and the frost of the heavens, who fathered it? The waters are hidden like stone, and the face of the deep is frozen' (Job38:29-30).

Creation Magazine

ANSWERS TO SCRIPTURES SEARCH!

1. **The Book of Psalms (2:4, 37:13, 59:8)**
2. **Cyprus (Acts 13:4-7)**
3. **Hannah (1 Samuel 2:21)**

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q. What is the meaning of Matthew 3:11 “He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire?”

Jesse G.

A. Dear Jesse,

The question you raise is one often misunderstood. Many would link these verses with the coming down of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and **in application** it is appropriate (Acts 2). However, the only safe way **to interpret** scripture is in its context.

Matthew’s Gospel is the presentation of the King and is largely taken up with the truth of the Kingdom. John the Baptist in speaking says, “the Kingdom of the heavens is drawn nigh” (Mt. 3:2). John is baptizing Jews who are repenting in light of the coming of their Messiah. **There is One coming who will baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire. The Lord Jesus, as that One who is also the King, has been rejected, and His earthly Kingdom has been deferred until He returns as the Mighty One who will reign for the Millennium. Until that time arrives, the Holy Spirit will be poured out upon those who repent, both Jew and Gentile, the redeemed who are introduced into the Kingdom of the Heavens, and then the fire of judgment upon the rest (Mt. 25).** In the meantime, the Kingdom of the Heavens as set out in the seven parables of Mt. 13 is now the “heavenly side” of the Kingdom. That is the kingdom ruled from heaven, the King being absent in Heaven and the citizens of the Kingdom waiting for His return at the rapture. Then the clock will start again for the introduction of the earthly Kingdom. What a wondrous majestic answer to the rejection in Matthew 11 and 12 will be seen in that day of Glory. In the meantime, “what manner of persons ought we to be?” (2 Pet. 3:11).

JAP

THE CALL

Part 1

What powerful, mighty Voice, so near, calls me from earth apart -
Reaches, with tones so still, so clear, from th’ unseen world, my heart?

‘Tis solemn, yet it draws with power, and sweetness yet unknown;
It speaks the language of an hour when earth’s for ever gone.

It soothes, yet solemnizes all; what yet of nature is
Lies silent, through the heavenly call; no earthly voice like this!

‘Tis His. Yes, yes; no other sound could move my heart like this;
The voice of Him that earlier bound through grace that heart to His-

In other accents now, ‘tis true, than once my spirit woke,
To life and peace, through which it grew under his gracious yoke.

Blest Lord, Thou speak’st! ‘Twas erst Thy voice that led my heart to thee;
That drew me to that better choice where grace has set me free.

Then would’st Thou that I should rejoice, and walk by faith below;
Enough, that I had heard Thy voice, and learnt Thy love’s deep woe-

Thy glory, Lord. This living waste thenceforth no rest could give;
My path was on with earnest haste, Lord, in Thy rest to live.

Yes, then ‘twas faith – Thy word; by now Thyself my soul draw’st nigh,
My soul with nearer thoughts to bow of brighter worlds on high.

And oh! how all that eye can see to others now belongs!
The eternal home’s so nigh to me -my soul’s eternal songs.

For Thou are near; thou call’st me now in love I long have known,
While waiting on Thy will below, till Thou my hopes should’st crown.

And Thou would’st have me soon with Thee; thou, Lord, my portion art;
Thou hast revealed thyself to me - thy nature to my heart.

J. N. Darby

The Unwelcome Visitor

“Yes,” answers the man to the knocking on the door of his office in the late evening, “What do you want?”

“Oh! It is just to speak a little about your soul and its eternal destiny. But I see you are busy.”

“Well, yes, I am very busy,” replied the business man as he continues to review his financial papers, his last year profits and next year goals.

The visitor put out his hand to say “Goodbye,” and drawing close to the astonished man, whispered solemnly in his ear — “Suppose I had been Death?”

Dear friend,

Time is passing fast; another year is here. Have you made time to think about God? Have you faced the most pressing and vital matter that can engage your attention?

Where will you spend eternity? Heaven or Hell?

Sin is a reality, and nothing short of the atoning death of the Son of God suffices to meet God’s righteous claims, and to enable Him to offer you forgiveness of sins, salvation, eternal life through simple faith in His dear Son.

Sin is a reality, and the judgment pronounced by God upon sin is a reality. In due season you will have to face that judgment. The power of sin in your life is a reality too. You cannot grapple with that power and overcome it in your own strength. You need a Savior. The Savior is knocking on the door of your heart now. Would you open to him before it is too late? He, the sinless one, paid for your sins on the cross. He is raised from among the dead and is offering to you now the free gift of eternal life. He is coming again soon and you will have to meet Him.

Will you meet Him as your SAVIOR or as your JUDGE?

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31). “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be SAVED” (Romans 10:9).