



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,

“We know that all things work together for good to them that love God” (Rom. 8:28).

This is a declaration that is especially comforting to the believer in times of perplexity and trial. There are seasons in our lives when all things seem to be against us, but it is then that we need a divine assurance like this. Faith says not, “we hope” but “we know.” This is one of things of which the child of God is privileged to speak with a calm and steady assurance. We know that all things work together. All the issues and circumstances that are going on around us, however dark and mysterious the outward aspects may be, let us not forget there is a divine purpose that is being steadily fulfilled. God’s will of love is being done and every event of life is contributing to its fulfillment. He desires our confidence, not only that we may be subject to His will, but that we may present our cares to Him. For by drawing near to God, our will is subdued and our heart is encouraged. Let faith grasp the fact that all things are working together for our good.

May the Lord use this issue to help you to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ and may you reflect Him in your life and walk.

Thanks for your encouraging e-mail and letters. Please keep praying for the Lord’s blessing on Toward The Mark.

Yours in our soon-coming Lord,

Emil S. Nashed

Please send your questions and comments to:

Toward The Mark

c/o Wayne Christian Assembly

60 Smith Lane

Wayne, New Jersey 07470-5354

Attention: Emil S. Nashed

www.towardthemark.org

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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 would like to receive an electronic version 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"

ARE YOU GROWING IN GRACE?

PART 2

Growth is one of the surest signs of healthy life. It is so, whether in the vegetable or animal kingdom, nor is it otherwise in the realm of grace. Growth, therefore, we expect to see in every Christian. In Nature, at a certain point, growth stops and decay sets in, but with the believer it should continue all his earthly days.

No sensible person expects the convert of yesterday to be anything but a babe. But we do not expect him to remain a babe. With a keen appetite for wholesome spiritual food, a good digestion, plenty of Heaven's fresh air and exercise, he is bound to grow. And the scripture, "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18) applies to every one of us.

HOW DO WE GROW?

Of late, a good deal has been said in public about the poor physique of thousands of children attending school. The practical question is, What is to be done? Will the case be met by giving them plenty to do in the way of exercise and activity? No, they have not the stamina or vigour for much of that. Shall we include some health instruction in the school studies, and teach them how the human body grows, adding cell to cell and tissue to tissue, the value of different kinds of food, and the laws governing the process of digestion?

Six years of such studies will not add as many inches to their stature as a six months' course of good feeding — substantial meals of suitable food, four times a day and seven days a week!

If you would grow, then select good spiritual food. Good food, remember. Not novels, light literature, or other worldly rubbish. And digest it. Take time to meditate and turn things over in your mind. When the ox chews the cud it generally lies down. In the same way spiritual digestion is greatly favored by a little quiet, with the knees bent in prayer.

The food of the Christian is in one word — CHRIST — "increasing in (or 'by,' see margin R.V.) the knowledge of God" (Col. 1:10) — and since it is in Christ that God is known to us, Peter puts it, "Grow in grace and *in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*"

It is good to know about Him, and everything that helps us in this direction is profitable, but the point of supreme importance is to know the Lord Jesus Christ Himself; to enjoy that holy intimacy which is the fruit of daily living and walking in His presence. Even here upon earth to be

"Close to His trusted side
In fellowship divine."

Then bit by bit we shall discover His many-sided glories, and appreciate the various characters in which He stands related to us. In the following lines we shall try to suggest a few of them.

The beginning of our acquaintance with Jesus is as

SAVIOUR — TO DELIVER:

To the anxious sinner, burdened with guilt, groaning under sin, and trembling before death and judgment, Jesus stands forth as Saviour. He has grappled with sin; He has died and is risen again. How perfect and attractive He is! No wonder that the newly-pardoned sinner cares for no one and nothing else.

Can you look back to a moment when you tasted the joy of salvation, as Israel did when on the further shore of the Red Sea's judgment flood they sang, saying, "I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously ... and He is become my salvation?" (Ex. 15:1-2). Or as it was with Israel centuries later, when David met Goliath of Gath, and in the name of Jehovah wrought deliverance? Then the awful tension and suspense was ended. A mighty thrill ran through the watching hosts, "and the men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted" (1 Sam. 17:52).

It was so with us. We have been delivered. Our days of mourning and suspense are over. The victory is won, and Jesus lives! And though perhaps years have rolled away since first we knew Him thus, the thrill of that moment is in our hearts today.

We do not advance far before we see the same Jesus in another character. He is

LORD — TO COMMAND:

The Gospel, of course, presents Him to us as Lord (2 Cor. 4:5). We not only believe with the heart unto righteousness, but also confess Him as Lord with the mouth unto salvation (Rom. 10:9-10). But some little time passes ere we realize what this means.

Jesus is in the place of authority. It is His to command, ours to gladly obey, and that means *the surrender of our wills to His.*

The conversion of the Apostle Paul was an ideal one. He reached the point of surrender very speedily (see Acts 9:5-6). While in the dust of the road to Damascus he acknowledged Jesus as his Lord, and his whole life was transformed. Most of us lag far behind him. Still, to that point all of us have to come.

We were talking to a Christian young man the other day, and during our conversation he referred several times to "the old days," when he was a worldly, easy-going believer, having just a languid interest in the things of God. He said, "I really believed on the Lord Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of my sins, and had I died I am sure I should have gone to heaven."

Still, they were "the old days," for a new day had dawned with the discovery that Jesus was his Lord, a Master to live for and to serve. Passing under this new management a great alteration took place. He was a different man.

Has this new day dawned in *your* history? If not, may it speedily come! It lies at the very beginning of Christian growth.

One of the first results of a hearty acknowledgment of the lordship of Christ is that the convert gets plunged into a good bit of trouble and soul exercise, since his very efforts to do the will of his newly found Master bring him into conflict with his own will.

Three things at least have to be learned:

First, the true character of the flesh (i.e., the old evil nature still within us): hopelessly bad. "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7: 18). If "*no good thing,*" then not even a *good* desire is to be found there. Yet how long it takes most of us to abandon all expectation of good or even improvement from within.

Second, the terrible power of the flesh. Such power that even the fact of being born again, and therefore possessing a new nature, does not *of itself* enable us to overcome. We find a man saying, "The good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do" (Rom. 7:19). He desired the good, proving the existence of the new nature within him; yet such was the power of the old that it overpowered the new, bringing him into captivity (Rom. 7:23), and making him a thoroughly wretched man (Rom. 7:24).

Have you never started out to live, as you supposed, a valiant Christian life for the Lord, only to find yourself defeated, not by giant foes without, but by the traitor “flesh” within?

This, then, is the lesson you are learning.

Thirdly, what God has done as regards the flesh in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. “God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (Rom. 8:3). What a relief it is to know this! God now treats the flesh as a condemned thing, and has done with it. It just remains for us to fall into line with God, and in our turn to treat it as a condemned thing, to be done with. This we *can* do, inasmuch as having believed in Jesus we have received the Holy Spirit, the new power, and He is more than a match for the power of the flesh.

Led by the Holy Spirit, we lift our eyes to heaven, and Jesus now becomes to us

AN OBJECT — TO CONTROL:

And this is the real secret of the believer's practical deliverance from the power of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Satan, the wily adversary and accuser, busies himself in attacking the *faith* of the saints (2Cor.11:3;1Th. 3:5; 1 Pet. 5:9), and hence to meet him the shield of faith is needed (Ep.6: 16).

The flesh supplies us with all those baser desires, which each of us knows too well, as also with every other desire not in accordance with the will of God.

The world — the gigantic system around us, which Satan and man have engineered between them in the vain hope of making the latter happy and contented without God — like Bunyan's great “Vanity Fair,” contains within itself attractions suitable to every taste and temperament, and all appealing to the lusts of the flesh within.

Though volumes could well be written as to the believer's deliverance from this threefold enemy, and the way of it, that deliverance itself is simply and sweetly enjoyed by those who, having learnt enough of the world and self to be sick of both, turn to Jesus and find in Him —

“... the Object bright and fair
To fill and satisfy the heart.”

Is Jesus *this* to your soul — an Object to love and live for? Paul said, “the law [or control] of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law [or control] of sin and death” (Rom. 8:2).

A striking illustration of the power of an object to control occurred when the first military aircraft made a trial trip round London. During the brief hour that it hovered over the Metropolis it became the object of a million pair of eyes. Everything else was forgotten. The latest fashions lost their attraction, shops were deserted, dinners left to get cold, the man of business dropped his pen and the student his books. Everybody stopped and gazed at this new object in the sky, and for the moment got clean delivered from their ordinary life.

It was the novelty of the thing that attracted, however. Not so with Jesus. He who has loved Him longest and known Him best most feels His blessed and permanent attractions. Summed up in one word, it is all centered in His mighty and eternal LOVE. Just as a powerful magnet will extricate a needle from a heap of sawdust, the magnetic love of Jesus will deliver a soul from any amount of worldly and fleshly rubbish. May God bring both readers and writer under its power increasingly.

If all this is to be kept up, we shall know and appreciate the Lord Jesus in another character, that is, as

HIGH PRIEST — TO SUSTAIN:

There are a good many Christians about who want to be more devoted, or to live “the higher life.” But though their desires are good, their circumstances are trying, and their performance poor. Are you one of them?

Possibly you are acquainted with the Epistle to the Hebrews, and therefore know well that Jesus *is* your great High Priest in heaven (4:14), **but the question is, Do you really and practically know Him *as* your great High Priest who sustains your soul day by day, amidst the many trials and difficulties of life?**

Only those whose faces are set in the right direction need expect the help of the Priest. To help a man on the wrong road is no real help at all. Hence the careless, worldly-minded believer will not get the help of the Priest; he needs the services of Jesus as Advocate to touch his conscience and put him right. The earnest-minded believer who heartily acknowledges Jesus as Lord, and loves Him as Object, will both need it and get it, the result being not only that he is carried safely on to heaven by and by, but also carried into the holiest (*i.e.*, the consciously realized presence of God) *now* (Heb. 10:19-22).

Nothing that can be said on the subject, however, will give such a sense of the grace and power of Jesus as our High Priest, as a little practical experience, gained in turning to Him in moments of difficulty and need. So take good heed to the exhortation: “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4: 16).

All this will teach us to look joyfully up to the Lord Jesus as

THE HEAD — TO DIRECT:

Christ is the Head of the Church, even as the husband is the head of the wife (Ep. 5:23). From Him, too, as Head all nourishment and supply for His body comes (Ep. 4:15-16).

Wisdom, direction, and nourishment are everyday needs, and the supply of them is not in ourselves, but in Him. As Head He is the overflowing source of all. To “hold the Head” (Col. 2:19), is to appreciate and cleave to Him as such, and thus to really find in Him that which makes us happily independent of man's wisdom in the way of rationalism (Col. 2:8), and his religion in the way of ritualism (Col. 2:20-23).

Christ is everything, and thus He becomes everything to the believer's heart. We look outside Him for nothing.

One word of warning. Do not think that each one of these steps in the knowledge of Christ stands alone. They are closely connected, and often merge into one another in the believer's history. The great end is that we may be thoroughly established; no longer children, but full grown men, Christ being everything to us.

F. B. Hole

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES!

- 1. In what book of the Bible is Canaan first described as a land flowing with milk and honey?**
- 2. Who was the commander of Solomon's army?**
- 3. How many times was Peter delivered from prison by an angel?**

MEAT

"Sanctify them by the truth"

THE ASSEMBLY:

FORETOLD: FOUNDED: FORMED: FURNISHED:

FUNCTIONING: FUTURE.

PART 2

Before proceeding with this blessed theme it may be necessary to justify the designation used at the head of this paper. It is customary to refer to the "church": such an appellation conjures before the English mind some material edifice used for religious purposes. Does the word in its Scripture usage justify such a thought? **Decidedly not!** The word is used some 115 times in the New Testament, even apart from the reference in Hebrews 12:23. Three times it is used rightly in Acts — 19:32,39,41. That in Acts 7:38 refers to the congregation of Israel in the wilderness. The use of the word in Acts 19:37 is a mistranslation and should read "temple plunderers." The other three uses in the 19th chapter are related to the tumultuous gathering in Ephesus. **The word from which we get "church" is "ecclesia" — meaning "called out."** **In this and the following papers we desire to speak of this unique company of people who are God's called out ones, under six headings:**

- 1) Foretold, 2) Founded, 3) Formed, 4) Furnished, 5) Functioning, and 6) Future. Numbers 1-5 were the direct subject of the first article; number 6 that of this article.

Its Future:

In the previous paper we have looked at the Assembly under 5 headings: — Foretold, Founded, Formed, Furnished, and Functioning. We will now consider the Future of the Assembly,

Foretold by our Lord and Founded on the truth of Who He is, having been Formed on the day of Pentecost by the down coming of the Holy Spirit and completely Furnished by the apostolic teaching, with a view to Functioning correspondingly. To those who form the Assembly the Future is viewed with glad anticipation. They know, from the Scriptures of Truth — received in faith and in the power of the Spirit's application of them — that they possess a sure, steadfast, blessed, purifying hope (He. 6; Ti. 2; 1 Jn. 3:3). When our Lord comes to reign — for He must reign (1 Co. 15:25) — they shall be brought with Him by God (1 Th. 4:14). In order to this "the Lord Himself" shall first come for them. Those who sleep through Jesus and those who are alive and remain unto His coming shall be caught up together to meet Him in the air. Then shall be realised the change spoken of in 1 Co. 15:51-54.

The Scriptures also teach that we must all "stand before the judgment seat of Christ (God)" (Ro. 14:10; 1 Co. 3:13, 1 Co. 4:5; 2 Co. 5:10). Our responsible history in life and service shall then be reviewed.

Remember that when we read of reward or loss — 1 Co. 3:14-15 — there is no thought of punitive judgment, for we shall be like Him Who is the Judge (1 Jn. 3:2). There will be no raising of the matter of guilt there, for that has been dealt with satisfactorily in the God glorifying work of our Saviour in His sacrificial death for sin at Calvary. We can say with absolute assurance: "God will not payment twice demand, Once at my bleeding Surety's hand, and then again at mine." As to the judicial matter of our sins the apostle Peter has written, "Who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Pe. 2:24). Bore our sins! Where? *On the tree!* we repeat, not *to the tree*. How did He bear them? In His own body! the judicial work is done — for ever done — gloriously done. The matter of sins or sin will never be raised again!

“Praise Him again, again, for us the cross He bore.” 1 John 4:17-19 declares plainly and unequivocally, “Herein is our love (love with us) made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love (Him) because He first loved us.”

When the judgment seat review is over we read, “The Lord God omnipotent reigneth” and “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife has made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness(es) of the saints.”

The assembly shall then be brought into marital union with Christ, the Lamb. This, in view of sharing the administration of the kingdom with Him.

The assembly is here described as making herself ready, such is the outcome of the review at the judgment seat of her course in the world. In Ephesians 5:25-27 we learn that Christ had loved and given Himself for her that He might prepare her for the day of presentation. Then shall He present the Assembly to Himself, all glorious, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. Then shall be realised that which he had mentioned in His memorable prayer to His Father, “and the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou has sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me.”

There shall be displayed in glory such a unity and love that the world shall know beyond the slightest shadow of doubt that the Father had sent the Son.

After the one thousand years of kingdom glory with their righteous rule have run their appointed course, the Assembly — the only New Testament company that will retain its distinct and unique identity for eternity — shall be seen as the holy city, New Jerusalem, eternally fit for the new heavens and the new earth, coming down out of heaven from God.

The Assembly shall still possess the dual character which has been hers since the commencement of her history. She will be seen as a “Bride adorned for her Husband” — proof, were it needed, that Christ abides a Man for eternity. She will no longer be seen in the administrative character of wife, in which she has been active for the duration of the kingdom reign: rather will she be seen for eternity as the object of the satisfied affections of Christ, who had loved and given Himself for her.

The Assembly shall also be introduced for that period which Peter describes in the last verse of his second epistle as “The day of eternity” (New Translation) — in these words, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men.”

We have looked at the Assembly in these several and blessed ways: FORETOLD by our Lord; FOUNDED upon the glory of His Person as Son of the living God; FORMED, historically in the world; FURNISHED by the apostolic teaching; and FUNCTIONING as the Body, the Bride, and the Wife of Christ; also, as the House of God now, and growing to an holy Temple in the Lord for the day of display. Finally, in the eternal future, as the means of contact by God, not with Israel nor the nations, but with men. May we have grace and teaching by the Spirit so that, with divinely formed intelligence as to the master-piece of God, we may stand apart in sanctification and separation from all that which, in the religious world, is a denial of it.

N. Anderson

Exercise

"Exercise thyself unto piety"

"GREAT PRICE" FOR CHRISTIAN WOMEN

There are three things spoken of in the New Testament that are of "great price," or very costly.

- I. **The alabaster box of ointment that Mary poured upon the person of the Lord** in view of his burying; and the intelligence of love and adoration that lay behind that act was so exceedingly precious in the estimation of the Lord that He decreed then and there that, "whosoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her."
- II. **The pearl of great price, which is the church**, and for which, and to secure it for Himself, the Lord, the merchantman, sold all that He had, such was its unfading beauty in His eyes.
- III. **A meek and quiet spirit in a Christian woman** — this we read "is in the sight of God of great price" (1 Pet. 3:4).

Of no service that men can render is such a thing said, of no labor or toil have we such an eulogium; it is fragrant to God, as was Mary's ointment, it is beautiful in His eyes as the church is in Christ's. What could Christian women desire more than this?

Here is **fragrance** that the skill of the perfumer cannot produce, here is **an ornament** that no jeweler can devise, here is **beauty** that surpasses everything that art or nature can show and it is enduring, for that which is of great price in the sight of God, He will preserve forever.

And this is within the reach of every Christian woman.

Why should they seek great publicity in service or prominence in the eyes of men? Let them ponder over this word of God and go in for this, and as they develop and show this meek and quiet spirit they will be, by what they are rather than by what they do, of use to others, because precious to God.

We do not make little of service by making much of this. Women ministered to the Lord. Phoebe was a servant of the church and succourer of many and women labored with Paul in the gospel — all right and good in its place —

but the meek and quiet spirit exceeds everything, it is of great price in the sight of God.

ANSWERS TO SCRIPTURES SEARCH!

1. Exodus (3:8).
2. Benaiah (1 Kings 4:4)
3. Twice (Acts 5:17-29;12:1-17)

Rest

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

DOES GOD CARE FOR ME?

It is related of an astronomer that he was so overwhelmed by the vastness of creation that he felt that God could not take any interest in him, tiny atom as he felt himself to be. As his telescope revealed to his wondering eyes worlds upon worlds, bigger by far than our sun in many cases, he was staggered and he began to lose his faith.

After a time the astronomer was looking through a microscope. When he saw a tiny creature, invisible to the naked eye, disporting itself in a single drop of water in the joy of living, his faith began to revive again; he thought that if God could care for a tiny creature like that He could care for him.

Ah! if only he had read his Bible attentively he might have been saved the collapse of his faith, and the revival of his faith would have been on surer grounds than observing the very minute beauties that a microscope reveals.

Possibly there are many tried saints of God, who under the pressure of circumstances, begin to question if God cares for them. The glory of God is that He is sufficient for the very minute as well as the very vast.

As a rule great men attend to great things and leave little things to the care of little men. There are men who can only attend to little things, and are not capable of attending to great things. How blessed it is to turn to our God and know that while He sustains the mighty universe, of whose vast extent man knows but little, He notes the falling tear of His saint. The psalmist could say, "Thou tellest my wanderings: put Thou my tears into Thy bottle: are they not in Thy book?" (Ps. 56:8).

When the Lord gave His commission to His disciples, and showed to them that the day would come when their persecutors would seek to put them to death, and succeed as we know all too well, He said to them, "Are not two sparrows sold for five farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?" The sparrow so worthless that if a customer bought two-farthings worth an extra bird would be thrown

in! Then the disciples were reminded that they were of more value than many sparrows and that the very hairs of their head were all numbered. How wonderful that God can care for such details, yet this is the glory of God that it is so!

Again we read, "Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" (Mt. 6:26). Again, we are told to "consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" (Mt. 6:28-30).

How encouraging it is to dwell on these passages of Scripture. How it comforts the heart and encourages the saint of God to trust in His care that covers the upholding of the universe and the needs of the worthless sparrow or the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven. How much more will He care for His blood-bought people. It is interesting to observe that when God records the original creation He does so in one verse of ten words (Ge. 1:1). When He describes the origin of the stars that stud the vast expanse of space in their millions He does so in five words: "He made the stars also" (Ge. 1:16).

And then we find no less than over thirteen chapters devoted to the history of one man – Abraham, besides copious allusions to him in no less than ten New Testament books, notably Romans, Galatians, Hebrews, and James.

And yet in the eyes of the astronomer this earth is but a mere speck of dust in the universe, and Abraham a tiny atom in that speck. How could the great God in heaven take notice of such utter insignificance? Yet we read, "The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham" (Acts 7:2).

He was but a poor idolator in Ur of the Chaldees, but when he knew God as the God of glory everything for him was changed. He stands as the example for us all. He is the fountain head of promise for faith.

We need not go into the details of Abraham's life. To refer to it is sufficient for our purpose.

Moral things are greater than material things. Man is after all greater than the whole of the material universe. Inanimate creation cannot commune with God. Man can. Herein stands his greatness, as given by God, and his responsibility. It brings into perspective the terrible ruin of the fall. It is infinitely sad to see unregenerate men living like the beasts below them in the fact that they have no sense of the claims of God, nay, often are violently opposed to God from whom they derive all they possess in the way of life – health, food, shelter. Wisdom in the humblest saint – God-given – is more than the tiara of glittering diamonds in the head of a proud empress. The following eloquent passage in the book of Job proves this: (read Job 28:12-19)

Do we not learn a lesson here? **God does not explain astronomy, or chemistry, or a thousand and one things of great interest, but He does tell us at great length of His dealings with one man – Job – in the book that is called by his name, consisting of forty-two chapters; He does let us know for our profit the exercises of His saints in their distresses and troubles, as seen in the one hundred and fifty Psalms, that constitute a special portion of Scripture.**

Above all, have we not the amazing fact that “the mighty God, the everlasting Father” (Is. 9. 6) should stoop to man's estate in order to bless man and bring him into the heights of blessing that will shine through the eternal ages when the vast universe that we see shall have fulfilled its purpose and been burned up?

So we end our meditation with the magnificent verse, “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” (Ro. 8:32). His love is as much expressed when He gives us sorrows as when He gives joy, when He gives clouds as when He gives sunshine. So we answer the question of our title, “Does God care for me?” with an emphatic, adoring, worshipping, YES!

A. J. Pollock

SEA TURTLES

“O Lord how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all ;”(Psalm 104:24)

I love learning about wildlife, but when it comes to sea turtles, many of the “facts” seems simply unbelievable. One of the more common statements about these marvelous creatures is that “in many ways turtles are living fossils that have changed little since they first appeared about 200 million years ago.” Yes, we find turtles in the fossil record, and we find them today – thus they are called “living fossils.” But the reality is that turtles appear suddenly in the fossil record with no hint of a nonturtle ancestor. The statement about “200 million years ago” is made as if that period of time is an observed historical fact. It is not.

Sea turtles are excellent swimmers. Their powerful paddle-like flippers take them great distances at speeds of between 1 and 1.4 mph. Satellites have tracked them crisscrossing the oceans. Sea turtles are excellent divers as well. Leatherbacks, in particular, can dive thousands of feet as they search for their favorite dish, jellyfish. Normally, the incredible pressure at such depths would rupture air-filled lungs. However, these turtles are designed to expel the air from their lungs, which collapse. The turtles then use the oxygen stored in their red blood cells and muscles. Compared to most other animals, they have a higher concentration of red blood cells and lots of myoglobin, an oxygen-binding protein found in muscle.

And then there's the problem of salt water. Ingesting it would kill the turtles if they didn't have specialized salt glands that empty into the eyes, much like tear ducts, ridding their bodies of excess salt. Females may look like they are crying when they come on shore to lay their eggs. But the secretions from these glands protect the turtle's eyes as they dig in the sand to make nests for their eggs.

So where did sea turtles come from? This is not primarily an observational science question, but a historical science

question. The answer requires many assumptions about an unseen past. Evolutionists assume that all living things share a common ancestor and have developed through time by naturalistic processes. This view is not supported by the fossil record and conflicts with the historical account given in Genesis.

From Genesis 1, we learn that God created living things according to their kind around 6,000 years ago. Creationists are not sure if sea turtles were created as a distinct kind of sea creature on Day 5, or if they were part of the turtle kind created on Day 5. Seven species of sea turtles make up two separate families. In the family Cheloniidae, a number of different species have interbred and produced hybrids. For example, loggerhead sea turtles have formed hybrids with Kemp's ridley, olive ridley, hawksbill, and green sea turtles. Since they are able to reproduce together, it seems logical that they belong to the same created kind.

Two sea turtles species have not been observed to produce hybrids: the flatback turtle, which is in the family Cheloniidae, and the leatherback, which is the only living member of the family Dermochelyidae. As have been pointed out elsewhere, however, the inability to produce offspring does not necessarily mean that these two turtles are from different kinds. In fact, after studying the characteristics of turtles, creation scientists have concluded that all sea turtles are probably descendants of just one created kind. Though sea turtles vary in appearance, habitat, and diet, several key characteristics clearly identify them as sea turtles.

God intended for animals to reproduce and fill the earth. He provided sea turtles with incredible variability that has allowed them to thrive in variety of oceanic niches worldwide. Sea turtles have many specializations and are intriguing to watch and study. An honest look at the facts reveals that they have been around for thousands (not millions) of years. There is no indication they ever were or ever will be anything but turtles.

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QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q. A Christian friend brought up in a discussion with me Revelation 3:5, that one can have their name blotted out from the **book of life**. He made the claim that this then means that we must walk worthy so we can escape from the wrath to come. I went home and did some research on the **book of life** and see that there are several other references (Re. 20:12, 20:15, 22:19) that show people being judged, and even sent to the lake of fire as a result of not being in the **book of life**. My questions are:

1) What is the **Book of Life**?

2) How can one's name be taken out? Certainly we cannot lose our salvation: that would imply the blood of Christ is insufficient (contrary to 1 Jn. 1:7). Can you give some help?

Maranatha
Matthew G.

A. Dear Mathew:

I believe it is important to understand that in the scriptures we are presented with a "Book" which speaks of the manifold purposes and counsels of God. This same book has different characteristics to reveal these purposes to us. Just as Christ offered himself once, but there are different features of it that allow us to appreciate more of Him, so there are different features of "the book":

- ❖ Thy book, Nu. 32:32-33: **God's government on earth in judgment upon sin.**
- ❖ Volume of the book, Ps. 40:7, He. 10:7: **Pleasure, mystery and counsel of his will** (Ep. 1).
- ❖ Book of life or living (same word), Ps. 69:28: **relates to God's government as well, in that He maintains righteousness** (vv. 27-28).
- ❖ Book of remembrance, Mal 3:16: **Eternal rewards due to faithfulness and fearing Him** (Heb 11:6).
- ❖ Book of life, Ph. 4:3: **Eternal unity** (Jn. 17:21).
- ❖ Book of life, Re 3:5: **Eternal security** (Jn. 10:28-29). (Note that every time it is recorded that someone requested blotting out another, it was of man and never of the Blessed God.)
- ❖ Book of life of the slain Lamb, Rev 13:8: **Eternal homage and praise to the TRUE GOD** (Jn. 4:21, 24).
- ❖ Book of life, Re. 17:8: **Eternal wonder of Christ and His Assembly** (Ep. 5:27,32).

- ❖ Book of life, Re. 20:12,15: **Eternal judgment of those who have no life in Christ** (Jn. 3:36).
- ❖ Book of life of the Lamb, Re. 21:27: **Blessed conformity to the Lamb in being pure as He is pure** (1 Jn. 3:2).

As to the second part of the question, let us first of all point out some scriptures that will help us to understand the believer's eternal security, and second, to say something about your reference from Revelation. It is essential for us to know that as Christians we are exhorted to be faithful (Re. 2:10, Mt. 25:21, etc.) but we are never told that our eternal security and destiny is dependent on us. If we thought this way, then the work of Christ was not sufficient to save and secure me. God forbid! In John 10:28-29 the Lord said **no one** can pluck them out of His hand and the Father's, and thus I learn that neither Satan, the world, nor **even I** are greater than the Father and the Son. When our work comes short and we fail miserably, we are still His (1 Co. 3:14-15); when our hidden things of darkness come to light, we are still His (1 Co. 4:5); when our assessment of Christ is poor and our evil associations brings discipline upon us, we are still His (1 Co. 11:30-32). As to Revelation 3:5, it is said that at that time, when faithful individuals left certain religious systems of man they would take away their memberships and withdraw their names from their circle. The Lord Jesus deals with his own differently, in that He assures them that **He will not blot his name** since He engraved their names for eternal blessing. Also in Rev. 12:11, the blood of the Lamb is the sacred means to overcome, "not **man**." The same writer in his epistles declares, "ye have overcome the wicked one" (1 Jn. 2:13-14) and in 1 John 5:4-5, new birth was the means of overcoming which is the work of God (Jn. 1:12-13.) Of course there are many references to show that it is God's work from beginning to end that will secure the believer and not the condition of the believer.

See also issue #3 at www.towardthemark.org the article titled (They shall never perish). I hope these few thoughts would be of help, and that the security we have in Christ Jesus will not cause us to slack in being faithful, but rather to be more and more conformed into His image.

Much love in Christ,

JA

THE ENDLESS SONG

PART 2

"Praise the Lamb!" At once awaking,
The gathered hosts their voices throng;
Loud and wide - each tongue partaking -
Rolls renewed the endless song.

Grateful incense this, ascending,
Rises to the Father's throne;
Every knee to Christ is bending;
All the mind in heaven is one.

All the Father's counsels claiming
Equal honours to the Son;
All the Son's effulgence beaming -
Glory of His Father's throne.

By the Spirit all-pervading,
Radiant hosts unnumber'd round,
Breathing glory never-fading,
Echo back the blissful sound.

Joyful now the wide creation
Rests in undisturbed repose;
Blest in Jesus' full salvation,
Sorrow now nor thralldom knows.

Rich the streams of bounty flowing-
Common blessings from above,
Life and holy joy, bestowing -
Tell of God's unwearied love.

Hark! the heavenly notes again!
Loudly swells the air-borne praise;
Throughout creation's vault, "Amen!"
"Amen!" responsive joy doth raise.

J. N. Darby

CAN WE KNOW?

Surely the following passages from God's Word are sufficient, without comment or addition to bring the assurance of salvation to any seeking soul.

Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses (Acts 13:38-39).

To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins (Acts 10:43).

To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus (Romans. 3:26).

But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness (Romans. 4:5).

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans. 5:1).

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit (Romans. 8:1).

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life (John. 5:24).

These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God (1 John. 5:13).