

# *The Friendly Companion*



“And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed:...” (Luke 16. 26).

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*January 2005*



### OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

I expect most of you will know that Moses was the man whom the Holy Spirit guided to write the first five Books of the Bible. Did you know that the last of these five Books, Deuteronomy, was written in the last month of Moses' life? What a wonderful way to be occupied in the last days of his life, in writing the Word of God. In fact, in the Book of Deuteronomy we read that when God gave the children of Israel kings, each successive king was commanded to write out a complete copy of this Book for himself. I wonder how many of them obeyed this command? We know that Joshua was commanded to meditate in God's law day and night and also was not a forgetful reader, but one who did the will of God.

The Book is a remembering of all the way God had led His people during their long wilderness journeys and also a giving of the law a second time. God knew that, like us, they would have short memories for good things, so it was necessary to repeat His words time and time again. How strange it is that we can remember silly and wrong things so well, but right things are often forgotten. This is one of the fruits of the Fall which we each carry around with us.

"My memory's bad, but what is sad, can folly still retain."

This is why God commanded this Book to be read in the ears of the whole nation every seven years at the feast of Tabernacles. Also its words were graven on two large stones placed near the spot where the children of Israel crossed the River Jordan.

But you might say that this was for the Israelites and not us. Did you know it is said that the Book of Deuteronomy is referred to no less than one hundred times in the New Testament? But the greatest honour God placed upon this fifth Book of Moses, was when the Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son, quoted it in response to Satan's temptation in the wilderness.

If you have never done so before, why not read this last Book of Moses through for yourself, and may the Lord make

the reading of it a blessing to your soul. It would be a good way to start the New Year!

With best wishes from your sincere friend and Editor.

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### OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

The picture you see on our front cover this month is of a deep chasm called "Soldier's Leap" in Killiecrankie, Perthshire, Scotland. An inscription nearby reads:

*"The large flat rock down below on your right, at the water's edge, is said to be the site from which Donald MacBean, a Redcoat soldier (i.e. English) fleeing the Battle of Killiecrankie, leapt 5.5 metres (18 feet) across the River Garry whilst being pursued by Jacobite clansmen."*

We hope that after this remarkable feat, he escaped with his life for the time being. It reminds us, however, of an infinitely deeper chasm, over which the Lord Jesus tells us it is impossible for any to cross in any way whatsoever. This is that great gulf fixed by God between the lost and the saved in eternity. None will be able to leap out of a deserved hell into heaven. As death finds us, either in Christ or no, so our destiny will remain fixed to all eternity. How the rich man pleaded with Abraham, all to no avail, for a drop of water to cool his tongue, or even for one to rise from the dead and go and warn his brethren of the awful solemnity of being lost. He found the gulf could not be bridged by tears or entreaties. It is on this side of the grave that the mercy of God is to be found if we are to be saved at last.

It was this great gulf which finally separated the thieves on either side of the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. On which side of this eternal divide are we?

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Question: Are there more Gods than one?

Answer: There is but one only living and true God.

Deuteronomy 6. 4; Isaiah 45. 5-6; 21-22; 1 Timothy 2. 5.

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### AN EARLY LESSON

An elderly Christian lady looks back to the following incident which took place when she was about eight years of age. She was walking along a country lane with her mother, who was pushing a pram in which was her younger sister. On their way they met a lady who was a member of the same church as her mother and they were soon in conversation. Although the young girl could not understand much of the conversation, she did remember hearing her mother say, with tears running down her face: "I took that step without asking the Lord about it, and I feel that is why I am passing through this trial." In her childish way, the young girl thought that if ever her mother's God was her God, she must remember always to ask Him first about any step she might take in the future. This incident remains in her memory, even though she has passed through many years to reach the great age she is now.

*Contributed*

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### PROVIDENCE: THE WALDENSES AND THE WHEAT

*"The salvation of the righteous is of the LORD: He is their strength in the time of trouble." Psalm 37. 39.*

It is well-known that, in the year 1686, the Duke of Savoy was prevailed on by Louis XIV, to expel the Waldensian Christians from their native valleys. In 1689, eight or nine hundred of these persons, through great difficulties, returned. Dr. Calamy, in his "Life and Times," relates that M. Arnauld, their minister and leader, told him that when they had nearly reached their houses, pursued by a number of their enemies, they were in great danger of dying from want of provisions. Such, however, was the kindness of God to them, that a sudden thaw removed in one night a mass of snow from the fields, revealing a considerable quantity of wheat standing in the earth, ready for the sickle, that had been suddenly covered with snow, and which now, as unexpectedly, left it. On this corn they lived till other sources supplied them with food.

*Selected*

**FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES****HOLD MY HAND**

Do you like father to take your hand when you are on a steep or slippery path? How safe you feel with his strong hand holding you up!

One night the disciples were in a ship in the middle of the sea. As stormy waves were tossing it about, Jesus came walking on the sea toward them. Peter boldly asked if he might come to Jesus on the water. But as he walked on the sea, he saw how strong the wind was and became afraid. Beginning to sink, he cried out: *“Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand, and caught him ....”* He could not sink while Jesus was holding him up.

As a new year begins, and all through our lives, we need the Lord Jesus to hold our hand, to keep us safe and help us. The well-known little hymn is a good prayer:

“Jesus, Friend of little children,  
Be a Friend to me,  
Take my hand and ever keep me  
Close to Thee.”

**QUESTIONS:**

1. Who asked if he might come to Jesus on the water?
2. What did he cry out as he was beginning to sink?
3. What did Jesus stretch forth?

*Contributed*

*Send your answers to the Editor (see page 2 for the address). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.*

**ANSWERS TO DECEMBER QUESTIONS**

1. Simeon.
2. Into the temple.
3. No.

*“Hold Thou  
me up,  
and I shall  
be safe.”*

*Psalm 119.  
117.*

*BIBLE LESSONS***AN ANGEL APPEARS TO MARY**

About six months after the angel appeared to Zacharias, the same angel, Gabriel, was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth. Galilee was a much despised part of the country, and Nazareth was the most despised city of Galilee.

Many of the people living in Nazareth were very poor. Among them was a young woman named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a good, upright man named Joseph. He was also part of the poorer class and made his living as a carpenter.

Besides being poor, Mary and Joseph had something else in common. They were both descendants of David, Israel's most famous king. The house of David had become so small and poor, that nothing remained of its former greatness.

More importantly, they both possessed the fear of the Lord. Though they were poor in the world, they were rich toward God.

One day as Mary was busy with her work, the angel appeared unto her and said: "Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women." Mary was afraid and troubled at his presence and his words. The angel comforted her with the words: "Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name JESUS."

The angel said that her child would be called "the Son of the Highest," and the Lord God would give Him the throne of His father David. Of His kingdom there would be no end.

Do you remember the first promise God gave regarding His Son? It was in the Garden of Eden, when God said that the seed of the woman would bruise the head of Satan. Four thousand years had passed since that day. Many women in Israel had hoped they would be the mother of that promised child.

Each generation had hoped the promised seed would be



born in their lifetime. Those who first heard the promise had long since passed away, yet God was faithful to His word. Now the time had come for the promise to be fulfilled.

Mary wondered why she should be so highly favoured. She was so poor, and what was more, she was not yet married. How could she have a child, being a virgin?

God, who knows what questions His people have, instructed the angel to answer her: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

He told Mary that her cousin Elisabeth was also to have a son in her old age. To strengthen Mary's faith, he added: "For with God nothing shall be impossible." Would Mary disbelieve the words of the angel as Zacharias had? She answered the angel: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her."

*You can read about this in Luke chapter 1 verses 26 to 38.*

#### QUESTIONS:

1. What city was the angel sent to?
2. What was the name of the young woman he appeared to?
3. What name was she to give her child?
4. Whose Son would He be called?
5. What was said to strengthen Mary's faith? (7 words)

*G.L. TenBroeke*

*Please send your answers to the Editor (see address on page 2). Please mark the envelope: ANSWERS. Remember to give your name and address.*

#### ANSWERS TO DECEMBER QUESTIONS

- |                            |                        |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. An angel.               | 2. A message from God. |
| 3. John.                   | 4. Gabriel.            |
| 5. He was unable to speak. |                        |

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#### EDITOR'S POSTBAG

*First answers to the monthly questions have been received from ALICE COTTINGHAM; LOUISE DADSWELL; HELEN TURNER.*

### CHARLIE'S ACCOUNT

Charlie, who lived in the U.S.A., was twelve years old, and he especially enjoyed doing arithmetic problems. At the top of his class at school in this subject, he often was looking for problems to solve. He had learned to add, subtract, multiply, and divide, so he wanted to make use of his new skills. One evening, when alone with his father at home, he said: "Dad, give me a problem, and you will see how quickly I can do it."

"I will," said his father. "Are you ready?"

With paper and pencil at hand, Charlie listened intently.

Father said: "Some years ago there was a rich lady who found a little baby boy, wrapped in a blanket, lying at her doorstep. She lived in a small village, and nobody could tell to whom this child belonged. After doing all she could to find the parent, she decided to keep him and provide for his care. She arranged with someone to take care of him, and she paid the expenses."

"Now," said Father, "here is the problem. When the boy was twelve years old, she had a list of everything she had paid out. This was her list:

"A nurse for three years, at \$100 a year; clothes for twelve years, at \$20 a year; food for twelve years, at \$50 a year; lodgings for twelve years, at \$25 a year; education for six years, at \$10 a year; medical attention, three times, at \$10 each. Now work out the total cost."

Charlie immediately went to work, multiplying each line and then totalling the amounts: he arrived at \$1,530. "What a lot of money!" said Charlie.

"Yes, it is," replied Father. "But you must think that this was many years ago, and the amounts would be much larger today. Do you think that you could ever pay that much?"

"Oh, no," said Charlie. "All I have in my bank is the money which Grandpa gave me for my birthday."

"But, Charlie, are you aware that you owe all that and much more to a kind lady?"

Charlie looked somewhat confused, but Father continued:

“Are you not twelve years old? What kind lady nursed you, clothed you, fed you, and taught you many things? I think, Charlie, you forgot all that when you put on an angry face and went so slowly on an errand for your mother today.”

Charlie looked down, blushing, but saying nothing.

“Charlie, there is much more that could be added to the list. For twelve years Mother has loved you, watched over you, and prayed for you. No money can tell how much that love and those prayers are worth. When you grow up, you might pay the \$1,530, but how will you pay Mother for her love?”

Charlie’s eyes filled with tears, and he said: “I will not behave that way again. I can never pay what I have cost her.”

All boys and girls can learn from Charlie’s arithmetic lesson. Charlie realised that he was always ready and willing to receive, but he was not always ready to do what was asked of him. The commandment: “Honour thy father and thy mother,” was quickly forgotten when something was required of him. What about you?

*N.R.C. Banner of Truth*

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### **THE HUMBLE SPARROW (1)**

I expect that you are all familiar with sparrows. Very often we ignore them and regard them as common and not something to be taken any notice of when compared with other birds. Sparrows are among one of the most common birds in the world, and yet they were created by God with as much care as the majestic eagle or magnificent peacock. Everything about a bird’s design and flight has fascinated man for years.

When you see a little sparrow flying through the air, it looks so easy and it can fly through a tree or a bush with sticks and leaves and never hit anything. Sparrows dodge and fly and weave and are able to tell their feathers, with split second timing: “We need an adjustment here.” For instance, when they are flying when the weather is calm and a little bit of a

side wind catches them, they can adjust the feathers on their wings, even one degree, to compensate. They can turn, raise, or lower the feathers, and this function is all carried out from their brains. They can adjust individual feathers, different degrees.

Feathers are made of some of the strongest strength to weight ratio materials known to man and are effectively stronger than steel. Evolution teaches that feathers came from scales, because birds came from reptiles. Does a feather look like the result of scales? There is absolutely no relationship between feathers and scales. If birds came from reptiles, you would expect their bones to be like reptile bones. They are nothing like reptile bones. The sparrow's bones have lots of air pockets through them and can carry air into them like lungs. Their bones are lightweight and made for flying.

Man has never been able to approach the efficiency of birds with planes, in terms of their ability to fly. A sparrow's heart is so efficient it can beat up to 760 times per minute. This uses up a lot of energy and we often see sparrows looking for food or feeding and during the winter months they are often seen at bird tables as they struggle to survive the cold weather. This is because the sparrow has a very short digestive process with very concentrated digestive juices. A bird like the sparrow cannot carry much excess weight about, otherwise it cannot fly. The sparrow's design had to be there in its entirety from the beginning.

Sparrows, like other birds, have a brooding spot. When they lay their eggs, some of the downy feathers on the breast fall away. These are used to line the nest, which leaves a patch of bare skin on the sparrow and that skin is fascinating because the blood vessels in this area begin to multiply seven times more than usual and five times as big. When the skin touches the eggs a communication takes place from the egg, through the brooding spot to the brain and the bird can tell whether the eggs are the right temperature or not. That could not

evolve.

When a sparrow lands on a branch, being very light, it is liable to be easily blown off in a strong wind. Here we find another remarkable feature of design. The muscles and claw of the sparrow are designed in such a way that as it lands, the claw locks around the twig with considerable strength, even with its small weight.

Could a mindless, random, chance process that the theory of Evolution teaches, produce the sparrow? Of course not. God created sparrows with all their remarkable features, described above.

*J.P.S.*

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### PENKNIVES

(Substance of a Sunday School Address)

Reading the account of King Jehoiakim in Jeremiah 36, I found this only reference to a penknife in the Word of God started a train of thought. First, why a penknife? "He cut it with a penknife." When pens were quills, the ends frequently needed to be trimmed. So it was part of a scribe's (Jehudi's?) equipment, ready at hand.

I want to look at several "penknives" which attempt to destroy the Word of God. David, in the Psalms, likens the tongue to a razor or a sword. James, in his Epistle, writes of it as evil.

The first penknife is *DENIAL*.

In the Garden of Eden, the devil said: "...hath God said?" sowing doubt, then contradicted God's Word. God said: "...thou shalt surely die," (the consequence of disobedience). The devil said: "Ye shalt not surely die," and that life would be better if God's Word was ignored: "...ye shall be as gods."

"The seeds of evil once brought in,  
Increased and filled the world with sin."

The Lord said: "Whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will

I also deny before My Father.” (Denying God’s Word is denying Him.)

The second penknife is *DISLIKE*.

Look again at Jehoiakim: his dislike of the Word, showing that the sins of Judah were bringing God’s judgment, made no difference to its inspired truth. Jeremiah’s prophecy came to pass. The Word, re-written and preserved, was fulfilled. We may dislike the truth: “The wages of sin is death,” but it is truth. May we be helped to humble ourselves in confession and contrition that we may know, by God’s grace, the gift of eternal life. The Lord said: “Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me” (or My Word).

The third penknife is *DISBELIEF*.

Unbelief is a very busy penknife. It is in all of us by nature. Only when faith is given is this knife blunted. We can read the words of the Lord Jesus Himself: “Thy Word is truth,” and still doubt. We have the solemn example of Balaam, who prophesied blessing to Israel thrice, yet died with those who were trying to frustrate God’s expressed will. Balaam’s history makes us all tremble, especially preachers. He heard, and revealed, the Word of God, yet did not receive it in his own soul. The Word says: “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God” (or his Word) (Hebrews 3. 12).

The fourth penknife is *DISOBEDIENCE*.

This penknife is so subtle and so prevalent. Not a word needs to be spoken, just a walk, a life, which demonstrates disregard to the Word of God, (which itself demonstrates disobedience to the God of the Word), whether commandments, precepts, exhortations, or even Gospel invitation. How many people in the Bible disobeyed, with the consequence of chastisement, or even to perish in their sin to eternal misery. Many were given grace to repent; what great mercy was shown to some, King Manasseh for example. How the natural heart is shown in the answer to the instruction of

the Word of God: "... ask for the old paths ... and walk therein ...." The response was: "We will not walk therein," and "We will not hearken" (Jeremiah 6. 16, 17). When delivered from disobedience by the grace of God, what mercy is shown. Hebrews 2. 2, 3 reads: "For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation ... spoken by the Lord?" Oh, for the spirit of the Psalmist: "I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is within my heart" (Psalm 40. 8).

The fifth penknife is *DISSENTION* or *DISAGREEMENT* (Written denial).

What a many-bladed penknife to the Word of God are the writings of men. Two names heard in youth come to mind: Voltaire and Tom Paine, both atheists. The first upheld philosophy over the "bigotry of religion," the second published a book called "The age of reason," to discredit the Bible. Their efforts were as Jehoiakim's, but did "offend against those who believe," with solemn personal consequences. Neither died happily. God's Word is still a best-seller, though we hear little of either man nowadays. Darwin, although not alone in his accountability before God, (he lit a fire which others added to) was a roll-cutter. How his work, "The Origin of Species", spawning the false theory of evolution, has done much harm to the minds of men and has offended against the Word. Romans 3. 4 reads: "... let God be true, but every man a liar." The Lord said: "Many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many" (Matthew 24. 11). May we endure to the end, for the same shall be saved. Oh for the Psalmist's faith: "Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee" (Psalm 119. 11).

P.S. Since giving this address, I have been told that some believe that Darwin, on his deathbed, confessed his trust in salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ.

*A.P. Dawson*

### MEMORIES OF A BOILERMAKER

Today, March 13th 1961, is the fiftieth anniversary of my entering into the Railway Works as an office boy from 6.00 a.m. until 5.30 p.m. for five shillings a week (25p in today's money). I had been interviewed once before, but being nervous, I stammered and was thus put off. This caused great distress and anxiety to my father and mother. They looked around and enquired of Franklins in Cromwell Street whether they could teach me decorating. A time was given for an answer. Father kept saying: "What shall we do?" Mother said: "I think we will wait a little longer."

In the meantime, Mr. Raven came on a week evening and spoke from the words in Lamentations: "The LORD is good unto them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeketh Him." This greatly encouraged my mother, and shortly after, I was sent for and was engaged without any trouble whatever. I got on well and found favour with most.

The foreman called me into his office and asked me what I wanted to do when I left the office. I told him I wanted to be a boilermaker. It was for the boilermakers I was office boy. A few days after, I was sent for and I was offered the trade, much to the astonishment of some who could not get their sons into the trade.

When I came out of the office, I went to work on the boilers with a Londoner and alas, being young and lively, they soon made me as bad as themselves. Later, in the First World War, I travelled hundreds of miles doing outstation work, and was mercifully preserved as I did a lot of scaffold work. I was a shop representative on the old G.W.R. Temperance Union, and in 1922 was the last to receive a Gold Medal for obtaining the most members. (I still have this medal).

"But see how God's indulgent care  
Attends their wanderings here and there,  
Still hard at heel where'er they stray,  
With pricking thorns to hedge their way.



I used to do a lot of selling of draw tickets, and even whist drive tickets, for these people. On the last occasion, to my amazement, I could not sell a single ticket. I had to hand them back, unsold. This caused me some deep inward questioning as I returned home from the meeting, and as I walked along by St. Mark's Church, I seemed to see the emptiness of it all, and inwardly decided to resign and finish with it at the first opportunity. Soon after, more men were required in the AV shop Boiler Department, and I was sent there. I took this opportunity to resign from the Committee, and though pressed hard, I never changed my mind. I also served on the Shop Committee, but becoming sick of it all, I resigned that also. The chargeman I worked for made several attempts to get me moved, and at last I was asked to make one of a squad of three to work in the fireboxes of boilers on short repairs.

As I passed from one part of the shop to the other, those words came to me quite unexpectedly: "Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" One day, when busy in the firebox, something seemed to come over me and I could seem to see how I had been led around the works and now found myself back in the very shop where I first began. I felt almost overcome and, I believe, felt a little gratitude for preserving and upholding mercies thus far (1936 – 25 years).

In the firebox of a locomotive boiler, I received one of the sweetest days I ever experienced. Late 1953, I got onto the scaffold inside the firebox and picked up my tools to begin work. I had not been hammering many minutes, when I found myself singing, to the tune Haverhill, that beautiful hymn Number 10 in Gadsby's:

"'Twas with an everlasting love  
That God His own elect embraced;  
Before He made the worlds above,  
Or earth on her huge columns placed."

It came with such a sweetness and power, and it seemed the

more I hammered, the sweeter it became, and before I was aware, the tears began to flow: tears of amazement that such a wretch as I could ever be looked upon in mercy and everlasting love. I felt broken to pieces. When I had to get out of the boiler and mix with others, it stopped, but as soon as I returned to my firebox, it came again, and as sweet as at first, and so it continued through a never-to-be-forgotten day. Many days have passed since then, many changes I have seen, but I have been upheld until now. Who could have held me up but Thou?

“What shall I render unto the LORD for all His benefits toward me? .... I will offer to Thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD. I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all His people, In the courts of the LORD’S house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the LORD.” Psalm 116. 12, 17-19.

*The late T.F. Hanks  
Swindon. 13 March 1961.*

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### **THE MARTYR SAVED**

It is related in the memoirs of the celebrated William Whiston, that a Protestant of the name of Barbar, in the days of Queen Mary, was sentenced to be burned. He walked to Smithfield, was bound to the stake, the faggots were piled around him, and the executioner only waited the word of command to apply the torch.

At this crisis, tidings came of the Queen’s death; the officers were compelled to stay proceedings till the pleasure of Elizabeth should be known; and thus the life of the good man was spared, to labour with some of his descendants successfully in the service of the Lord Jesus and His Church.

*Selected*

**WHY DO SHEEP ALL LOOK THE SAME WAY?**

*The late Leonard Broome, a former Editor of The Friendly Companion, said in his last hours: "It is a good thing when the sheep are all looking the same way." The relation of this saying by a fellow-minister prompted the following letter:*

Dear Friend,

Just a line to say we do hope you had a safe journey home last evening, and to thank you for coming. What a mercy it is that the sheep all look the same way! Do you know why they all look the same way? Well, in the distance they see the shepherd coming with a sack on his back, and they all want a portion out of that sack. And when he gets amongst them he does not throw all the feed down in a heap so that the strongest get the lot. Oh no, he spreads it out in a long thin line so the weakest get a little. Oh what a loving Shepherd He is. Do you see the point, brother? And yet I do remember the minister who often used to remind us of that solemn Scripture: "Like sheep they are laid in the grave." Oh how solemn. Oh how we do need a true witness in our soul. He has said we should make our calling and election sure. The good man in the Gospel could say: "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see," and the devil could not rob him of that. But oh how he seems to make our sight a poor misty sight. Brother, we do not war against flesh and blood, but against the power of hell, yet never known by many.

But I have to declare; oh how great is His mercy and loving kindness to such a wretch as I. We have to prove our nothingness and His fullness. Well, dear friend, may you be able to go on carrying the sack of the Gospel to feed the sheep. In Joseph's day they took the money to buy, but Joseph – Jesus – did not require their money. He could fill their sack, and so He ever will for all those that go down to Jesus for supply. I am sure you have already proved this to be true. "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." That dear man got it right. Oh for such men in the church today. What will the Lord do?

Well, must stay my line.

*John*

**A MESSAGE FROM HIS MAJESTY KING GEORGE VI**

"To all serving in my Forces by sea or land, or in the air, and indeed, to all my people engaged in the defence of the Realm, I commend the reading of this Book. For centuries the Bible has been a wholesome and strengthening influence in our national life, and it behoves us in these momentous days to turn with renewed faith to this Divine source of comfort and inspiration."

*September 15, 1939*

*This message was the Preface in an Active Service Edition of the Gospel of John issued by the Naval and Military Bible Society.*

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**BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES****THE HOLY SCRIPTURES OF TRUTH**

*This month in our Bible Study I would like to begin a survey of the Holy Scriptures.*

The Old Testament contains thirty-nine Books and the New Testament contains twenty-seven Books. These Books are not arranged in chronological order: that means not in the order that things happened in history. The order of the Old Testament Books is HISTORICAL – DEVOTIONAL – PROPHETICAL.

We must ever remember that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God and holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Therefore it is the holy, inerrant, infallible Word of God. The original Old Testament was mainly written in Hebrew; during the years of the Babylonian captivity some was written in Chaldee. The original New Testament was written in Greek. There was also a Greek version of the Old Testament in use at the time of Christ: this was called the Septuagint, or the seventy, as it was translated by seventy scholars at Alexandria. The most accurate translation in the English language is the Authorised or King James Version. The modern versions are not translated from reliable texts. God has richly blessed the Authorised Version, it has the seal of heaven upon it.

## THE HISTORICAL BOOKS

Moses wrote the first five Books: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, hence they are often referred to as the five Books of Moses or 'the Pentateuch.' Or sometimes, these Books are referred to as 'the Law,' because they contain the moral and the ceremonial law, which came by Moses. These Books also give us the history of the earth from its creation by God, clearly teaching us that the universe was created in six twenty-four-hour days. It did not evolve. With the exception of Numbers, these Books are named from the Greek Septuagint.

*GENESIS* is Greek for original or generation. Look at Matthew 1.1: "The Book of the generation (genesis) of Jesus Christ." This Book was obviously given to Moses by direct revelation from God. In it God gives us the minute details of: Creation; The Fall of Man; The Flood; The Tower of Babel and how different languages came about; the Call of Abram out of Ur of the Chaldees and the history of his children, Isaac and Jacob. This Book covers the longest period of any of the Books of Holy Scripture, about 2,369 years.

*EXODUS* is Greek for departure or going out. It gives us the particulars of the departure of the children of Israel from the land of Egypt. We see the transition of Israel from families to a nation; the raising up of Moses to lead them out of Egyptian bondage; the journey of the children of Israel in that waste howling wilderness and the LORD'S wonderful deliverances in spite of their sin; the giving of the Law of the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai. There are more types of Jesus Christ in Exodus than any other Book of Holy Scripture. It covers the period from the death of Joseph to the building of the Tabernacle in the wilderness, about 145 years.

*LEVITICUS*. The house of Levi was set apart for the service of the sanctuary. This Book records the many rites, washings, sacrifices and ordinances given by God, through Moses, for the children of Israel. These were to be performed by the Levites. In the Epistle to the Hebrews they are called 'shadows of good

things to come.’ They were shadows of the wonderful glory of the Person and work of Jesus Christ. Isaac Watts, the hymn writer, compares the Levitical worship with pure, simple, spiritual, gospel worship:

“But we have no such lengths to go,  
Nor wander far abroad;  
Where’er Thy saints assemble now,  
There is a house for God.”

**NUMBERS** – English name. This Book derives its name from the fact that it records the numbering of the children of Israel in their forty years’ journey through the wilderness. They were numbered first at Mount Sinai and then thirty-nine years later in the plains of Moab, before they crossed over the River Jordan to possess the Promised Land. God had solemnly said that of all the men of Israel that came out of Egypt, only Caleb and Joshua would enter the Promised Land. In Israel you were not regarded as a man until you were twenty years of age. We are solemnly told in the Epistle to the Hebrews: “So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.” This is one of the reasons why they were forty years in the wilderness and were numbered to show us that of the six hundred thousand men that came out of Egypt, only two entered the Promised Land. We have some of their history in the wilderness and various laws and statutes recorded. There is also the remarkable story of Balaam and how the dumb ass spoke to him with a human voice.

**DEUTERONOMY** – Greek for: ‘second law.’ Moses gave this Book in the thirty-ninth year of the wilderness journey in the plains of Moab, just before he died. This is not just a reiteration of the Law. Moses reminds the children of Israel of the mercies and the judgments that God had brought upon them in the wilderness and solemnly impresses upon them the need of obedience to the laws of God. Perhaps one of the watchwords of this Book is: “Thou shalt remember ....”

*This is the last of the five Books of Moses.*

*J.R. Rutt*

### BIBLE QUESTIONS

*A kind friend is contributing the questions this year. Younger readers might like to try the first five questions.*

This month's questions are about the case of a woman who anointed the Lord Jesus with ointment and they illustrate the necessity of always comparing Scripture with Scripture. Please read the accounts given in Matthew 26. 6-16; Mark 14. 3-11; Luke 7. 36-50; John 11. 2 and John 12. 1-9. The account given in Luke may well refer to a completely different incident from that recorded in the other gospels.

*Please send your answers with Scripture references to the Editor (see page 2 for the address). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.*

1. What was the name of the man at whose house the Lord Jesus was eating?
2. Only one of the gospels gives the woman's name. What was her name?
3. What was the name of the woman's brother?
4. What was the ointment contained in?
5. What was the ointment made of?
6. Three accounts mention the indignation of the disciples, but one mentions one disciple in particular. What was his name?
7. What terrible thing did this disciple do whilst he was upset at the woman's action in seemingly wasting the ointment?
8. What did the Lord Jesus say the woman had anointed Him for?
9. What promise did Jesus make concerning what the woman had done?
10. Only one account records anything the Lord Jesus said to the woman. What did He say?

*Contributed*

### ANSWERS TO DECEMBER QUESTIONS

*All the answers are taken from Matthew 2 unless otherwise stated.*

1. Herod; Archelaus (.1, .22).
2. Three times (.13, .19 and .22).
3. Micah. 5.2.
4. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy" (.10).

5. Gold, frankincense, and myrrh (.11).
6. Egypt (.13).
7. Until God brought him word (.13).
8. "Out of Egypt have I called My Son" (.15).
9. Four (.6, .15, .18 and .23).
10. "... that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets,  
He shall be called a Nazarene" (.23).

---

**"LEAD ME"**

Jesus, be my skilful Pilot,  
Guide me o'er life's troubled sea,  
Safe through every storm and tempest,  
Lord, conduct me near to Thee.

Choose the pathway in Thy wisdom,  
Let me only do Thy will,  
Whatsoe'er my lot comprises,  
Me with sweet submission fill.

May Thy favour, Thy rich blessing  
Be the height of my desire,  
O let other things be second—  
More than earth, Lord, I require!

Shouldst Thou earthly joy deny me,  
O deprive me not of this—  
Give the knowledge of Thy Person,  
May I ever watch and pray.

Fit me, Lord, I pray, for heaven,  
Bring me there at last with Thee,  
There when all my fears are over,  
Let me laud Thy wise decree.

*E. Jempson*



# *The Friendly Companion*



“For who hath despised the day of small things?”  
Zechariah 4. 10.

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*February 2005*

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### OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

The terrible tragedy in the Indian Ocean at the end of last year, when many thousands perished under the gigantic tidal waves caused by an under-sea earthquake, has filled us all with awe. At such a time of devastation it is right that we should ask ourselves one or two fundamental questions as to why these terrible events are coming to pass.

*First: Who is in control?*

Almost all of the commentators on this terrible event have put it down to natural causes; the shunting of the continental plates between Asia and India being the cause spoken of. Undoubtedly this is what we may call the second cause, but to leave it there is to deny the overruling power of our Creator, in whose hands are the whole of His created works. At His almighty behest and with His sovereign permission these things happen.

*Second: Why then did God permit it?*

Many reasons could be given, but one seems to stand out at this time in particular. God is very longsuffering with His earth. He waited nine hundred and sixty nine years after warning of the flood before He brought it to pass in Noah's day. Even now the earth awaits its final end, this time by fire, and all the while man abuses the longsuffering of God. It appears sadly that the vast majority of those who perished were desecrating the command to keep the Sabbath day holy. These things are to us a solemn warning that the earth will not continue for ever, but there will come a day which will be even more momentous than that terrible day of the tidal wave, the day of judgment when time shall end and the heavens and the earth will melt with fervent heat.

*Third: What should be our response?*

We should seek to help those who have survived this terrible tragedy with the means God has given us, by contributing to the funds that are being raised to relieve their distress.

We should also remember what the Lord Jesus said when a

terrible tragedy had taken away many lives whilst He was here on earth. He said that people were not to think that those who perished were more guilty than those who were spared. Rather, He gave the solemn exhortation: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

How can sinners find the repentance these events call for? We read most solemnly of Pharaoh whose heart was hardened after each successive calamity that God brought upon Egypt. Calamities don't bring repentance automatically. It is God who gives true repentance, and it is from Him we must seek this great and necessary grace. The wonder of God's mercy is that whenever sinners, being truly sorry for their sins, turn to Him, He is more willing to forgive them than they want to be forgiven. Moses said of the people of Israel of his own generation: "Oh that they were wise, ... that they would consider their latter end!"

May we be as wise in our generation as Moses wished for his own.

Your sincere friend and Editor.

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### OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

The coat of arms shown on our cover is that of the famous sailor, Sir Francis Drake. The Latin inscription reads: *sic parvis magna*, which means: *great deeds from small beginnings*. This was Drake's motto, and a very useful one it was too. How often great events depend on seemingly trivial circumstances. Napoleon is said to have lost the decisive Battle of Waterloo because one of his generals misread his master's handwriting, wrongly assuming that the battle was won when really the message was calling for urgent assistance.

The Bible tells us in another context of four very small things which are exceedingly wise: the ant, the coney, the locust and the spider.

Again, Zerubbabel was told not to despise the day of small things, even though the progress in building the temple was so

slow. God told him that the day would come, which it did, when all would be finished and those who laughed at him would be ashamed.

I wonder whether Sir Francis Drake had something else in mind when he chose that motto? Could it be that he had learned that if we are humble and diligent in doing the small things in life, we will live to prove that before honour is humility?

This was the lesson that the Lord Jesus Christ taught His disciples when He washed their feet. They were to seek to take the lowest place if they were to closely resemble their Master. May we follow the same example.

---

### FORGIVENESS

Nothing is harder to forgive than a malicious wrong – a harm done us, in a matter where we know we were right.

Sir Eardley Wilmot was an English baronet, widely known as a leader in social life, and a man of great personal dignity and force of character. Having been distinguished as a chief justice of the Court of Common Pleas, he was often consulted by friends as to perplexing social questions.

On one occasion a statesman came to him in great excitement over an injury just inflicted on him. He told the story with warmth, and used strong language in describing the malice which had inflicted the wrong.

“Is not my indignation righteous?” he asked impetuously. “Will it not be manly to resent such an injury?”

“Yes,” was the calm reply. “It will be manly to resent it, but it will be God-like to forgive it.”

The answer was so unexpected and so convincing, that the statesman had not another word to say. He afterwards confessed to a friend that Sir Eardley’s words caused his anger to suddenly depart, leaving him a different and better man.

*Selected*

*FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES***LIGHT**

When you go into a dark room, you cannot see what is inside or even know if the room is clean or dirty. There may be something harmful in it, or you may stumble and fall. If a light is turned on, you can quickly see all around.

In the beginning, light was the first thing God created. All was darkness: *“And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.”* He spoke the word, and it came to pass at once.

Our heart is like a dark room. If the light of God enters, the evil inside can be seen: sin in all we think and say and do. *“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light ....”* The light also shows a need for the heart to be made clean and saved from sin. The Lord Jesus came into the world as a Light and a Saviour. Jesus said: ***“I am the Light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”***

Questions:

1. What was the first thing God created?
2. What is like a dark room?
3. Who said: “I am the Light of the world”?

*Contributed*

*Send your answers to the Editor (see page 26 for the address). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.*

**ANSWERS TO JANUARY QUESTIONS**

1. Peter.
2. “Lord save me.”
3. His hand.

*“The  
entrance of  
Thy words  
giveth  
light.”*

*Psalm 119.  
130.*

**BIBLE LESSONS****THE BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST**

When the Lord is pleased to visit His people, their hearts are so filled with His love and goodness that they must tell others. Mary felt just the same. With haste she made her way from Nazareth to a city of Juda. She was going to visit her cousin, Elisabeth. Elisabeth would understand her joy and happiness, for she felt the same. She could hardly wait to get there! It was a long journey of about seventy miles.

As soon as Mary arrived and called out words of greeting, something wonderful took place. The Lord caused Elisabeth to know the secret that Mary had from the angel. She knew that Mary would be the mother of the Lord Jesus, the long-awaited Messiah.

Her heart was filled with the Holy Ghost. She called Mary blessed above all women, and blessed would be her Son. She was full of holy wonder; not that she would have a child in her old age, but rather that: “... *the mother of (her) Lord should come to (her)?*” Again she called Mary blessed for believing the word of the angel.

Mary, too, was filled with the Holy Spirit and broke out into a song of praise. What a wonderful time they had together, speaking of the great things the Lord had done for them! After nearly three months, Mary returned to her home in Nazareth.

After Mary left, the time came for Elisabeth’s baby to be born. The quiet home of Zacharias and Elisabeth was full of activity, as relatives and friends came to see the baby son and rejoice with them.

In Bible times, they did not name the baby until the eighth day. When the day arrived, their relatives and friends called him Zacharias, after his father. Children were usually named after their parents or grandparents. However, Elisabeth quickly answered: “... *he shall be called John.*”

There was no one in the family with that name. They thought Elisabeth must be mistaken. They looked at his aged father. Poor Zacharias was unable to hear or speak since the



day the angel met him in the temple. They made signs to ask him what he would have the child named. When they brought him a writing table, he wrote: "*His name is John.*" The people were amazed.

Immediately his mouth was opened and he praised God. Soon the news of these wonderful events went throughout the countryside. All who heard marvelled, wondering what manner of child he would be.

Now Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost. He began to prophesy what great things the Lord would do for His people in visiting them and bringing salvation unto them.

He also prophesied that his son would be "... *called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways.*" His work was to show the people that salvation was through the remission (forgiveness) of sins.

How Zacharias and Elisabeth would instruct their son in the Word of God, and in the promises He had given! When he was grown, John lived quietly in the desert until the Lord called him to preach unto Israel. This child became the great prophet, John the Baptist.

*You can read about this in Luke chapter 1 verses 39 to 80.*

#### QUESTIONS:

1. Who did Mary visit?
2. On what day was the baby named?
3. What name did the relatives try to give him?
4. What was he to show the people? (8 words)
5. Who did this child become? (3 words)

*G.L. TenBroeke*

*Please send your answers to the Editor (see address on page 26). Please mark the envelope: ANSWERS. Remember to give your name and address.*

#### ANSWERS TO JANUARY QUESTIONS

- |  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| 1. Nazareth.                                   | 2. Mary.           |
| 3. Jesus.                                      | 4. Of the Highest. |
| 5. "For with God nothing shall be impossible". |                    |

### THE HUMBLE SPARROW (2)

True Christians, throughout their lives, will often feel to be like the sparrow: insignificant, despised, often rejected by those who do not love God. It can be a lonely and difficult pathway, just as the prophet who wrote Psalm 102 felt: "I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house top. Mine enemies reproach me all the day; and they that are mad against me are sworn against me." Sparrows, by their very nature, are often found in noisy groups. Rarely do we see a single sparrow alone. In this respect it is similar to what the Shunammite woman said to Elisha in 2 Kings 4. 13: "I dwell among mine own people." The Christian, just as the sparrow, prefers to be in a flock of its own kind, likes to be found among God's people.

Perhaps one of you young ones may feel to be so unlike a Christian and yet wish to be found among them in faith. Pray that you may have an answer to another verse found also in the Psalms, in Psalm 84. 3: "Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thy altars, O LORD of hosts, my King, and my God." God watches over His sparrows, both naturally and spiritually, as we will see next.

We read in the Gospels of several references when Jesus, who created all things, spoke about the sparrow. Many regarded this bird as a thing of very small value when Jesus was here upon the earth. It is sad that many, especially the scribes and Pharisees, held the dear Saviour with equally low esteem. When He spoke of the sparrow, it shows us that it is very evident that He gives as much care and regard to the sparrow as He does to other more notable birds. Even more so, He cares for His spiritual sparrows.

There was once a great multitude of people gathered to hear Jesus teach, and in Luke 12. 6 we read this sentence: "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than

many sparrows.” In Matthew 10. 29 we find: “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.” We read in Isaiah 55. 11: “So shall My Word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” I expect that there was at least one hearer in that congregation who felt like a sparrow. Perhaps feeling forgotten, in trouble, of little worth in providence and more especially in grace. How low the dear Saviour stooped to reach His poor sparrows! “The very hairs of your head are all numbered!” He is just the same today. The sentence that He spoke then has been left on record for other sparrows. When you think of the care and skill that created the natural sparrow, how much more He cares for His people!

In the Saviour’s heart, His sparrows are very dear. Though they are such sinners, they are made to feel their sad state by nature and flee to Him and plead for mercy. Jesus paid for their ransom from sin with His own precious blood. To Him “the weakest is as dear as the strong.” Though His children may be worth nothing in the eyes of the world, they are of “more value than many sparrows” to Him. To be a sparrow in this world may not seem to be much of a life to the worldling, but what a prospect they have: “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

So next time you see some sparrows when you are out for a walk, or watching from the window of your home, may this scene in nature preach you a sermon and give you encouragement in your pathway.

*J.P.S.*

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#### EDITOR’S POSTBAG

*First answers to the monthly questions have been received from MARTINE PONT.*

### THE VALUE OF THE SCRIPTURES

Many years ago two men came one night to a missionary in a foreign country. They had walked a hundred miles out of their way to visit him. After some conversation with them, the missionary asked: "Do you have a Bible?"

One man said: "We have seen it and heard it read, but we only have some of the words of David. They do not belong to us alone, but to our whole family."

"Have you the words of David with you now?" asked the missionary.

They looked at each other, but at first did not answer. Perhaps they were afraid of placing something of such value in the hands of a stranger. However, because of the kindness of this stranger, one of them put his hand inside his cloak and took out what seemed to be a roll of cloth. He unrolled it carefully, removing several layers of wrappings, and finally showed the missionary a few old, torn, dingy leaves of the Book of Psalms. It was evident that these had been read, passed around, loaned to others, and re-read some more, until they were almost worn out.

Tears came into the missionary's eyes when he saw them. He asked: "Have you ever seen the words of the Lord Jesus, or of John, or Paul, or Peter?"

"Yes," they said, "we have seen and heard them, but we have never owned them."

The missionary then brought out a New Testament with the Book of Psalms included, and showed it to them. "Now," said he, "if you will give me your few words of David, I will give you this. In it there are many words of David, and the words of the Lord Jesus, and John and Paul and Peter besides."

The men were amazed and delighted. However, first they wanted to see whether the words of David were the same in the missionary's Book as those on the pages which they had. When they found that they were, with thousands more of the same sort, their joy was unbounded. They willingly gave up their poor, tattered leaves and took the Book from the

missionary. With many words of thanks, they bid him farewell and started off upon their long journey home, rejoicing like those who had found a great treasure.

Young friends, we have the entire Word of God, but do we value it as highly as these men did? Do we realize the treasure we have in our homes? They were as Jeremiah, who said: "Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart." We pray that it may be for us also.

*Adapted from John Whitecross*

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### **MOTORCYCLES! (1)**

When I was young, my parents were not very well off (we didn't have an annual holiday, nor did we have a car until I was in my teens), but my father had a motorcycle, which I learnt to ride when I was sixteen, in 1968. For several years afterwards, until I finally gave up motorcycling about 1975, motorcycles seemed to figure closely in the Lord's merciful dealings with me on several occasions. This is the first of three of them.

I was not quite seventeen years old when I took my driving test for a motorcycle, and the occasion I still well remember, as the Lord was pleased to mingle His mercies in both providence and grace in a marked way. It was in July 1968 that the Lord first made me to feel the vanity of this world and eternity a solemn reality, so that my soul's salvation became my chief concern. Towards the end of 1968, the Lord was pleased to encourage me with several tokens for good, though often interspersed with much to cast me down under the increasing sense of my own unworthiness and sin. I well remember some days at school, so sorrowful that I hardly knew how to concentrate on the lessons. Not long into the New Year, whilst cycling to school one day, these words seemed to rest on my mind with a measure of awe and yet gracious support:

"When trouble, like a gloomy cloud,  
Has gathered thick and thundered loud,  
He near my soul has always stood;  
His loving-kindness, O how good!"

In my simplicity, I knew not what they meant, but a few weeks later on February 28th I took my motorcycle-driving test. The day was dull and overcast, and it started snowing – but the examiner continued the test and I failed. I was downcast. My provisional licence ran out on 5th April, and I had little money, and I could not take another test for a month, even if I applied for one straightaway. Yet that evening I felt a solemn persuasion that the Lord's hand was in this and that I should see it. At night I was reading in my Bible in the Book of Hebrews, and when I came to these words: "He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second," they seemed to point straight at my driving test. In the context the words concern the old and the new covenants, yet despite all seeming impossibilities, the personal application to me was concerning the trouble I was in. My grandmother gave me the money for another test, if I remember correctly, and when I received the notice, the test was arranged for March 28th – the earliest time it could possibly be, and before my licence expired. Yet that month was one of deep exercise concerning my own soul. I was brought again and again utterly empty to the Lord Jesus, and longing to know for myself the pardon of my sin. All false refuges were taken away, and I was left only with the longing desire for the Lord to appear. Two verses were so often on my mind and summarised all I desired:

"Assure my conscience of her part  
In the Redeemer's blood;  
And bear Thy witness with my heart  
That I am born of God."

"Eternal Source of joys divine,  
To Thee my soul aspires;  
O could I say, 'The Lord is mine,'  
'Tis all my soul desires."

I went out very little on the motorbike and a week before the test the front axle broke. It was finally repaired only the

day before the test, due to some difficulty in obtaining the parts.

On that Thursday evening, I went to the little chapel at Barton, where Mr. Eben. Clark was the pastor. I often used to go with my father on the motorbike, but that evening he could not come and I went alone, tempted and cast down. Mr. Clark preached from the words in John 14. 27: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Oh the difference I felt as the Lord sealed His own Word to me, so that under the sweet witness of the Spirit of God I felt my soul was at peace with God through the blood of the cross. In the joy of my heart, I could almost forget about the driving test the next day. I remember waiting for the examiner, feeling that the test was almost as nothing, for I had Christ in my heart, and He was to me just then: "The Chiefest among ten thousand ... altogether lovely." I took the test and passed it, wondering at the mercy of God to me in both providence and grace. The day following, I think, the clutch cable on the motorbike broke, and it was out of action for several more days. Yet God's timing in all this was perfect.

*(To be continued)*

*Contributed*

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### **FEAR OF WHAT PEOPLE THINK**

A great danger to young people is the fear of man's opinion.

"The fear of man" does indeed "bring a snare" (Proverbs 29. 25). It is terrible to observe the power which it has over most minds, and especially over the minds of the young. Few seem to have any opinions of their own, or think for themselves. Like dead fish, they go with the stream and tide: what others think right, they think right; and what others call wrong, they call wrong, too. Most men are like sheep, they follow a leader. If it was the fashion of the day to be Romanists, they would be Romanists – if to be Moslems, they would be Moslems. They

dread the idea of going against the current of the times. In a word, the opinion of the day becomes their religion, their creed, their Bible and their God.

The thought: “What will my friends say or think of me?” nips many a good inclination in the bud. The fear of being observed, laughed at, ridiculed, prevents many a good habit. There are Bibles that would be read this very day, if the owners dared. They know they ought to read them, but they are afraid: “What will people say?” There are knees that would be bent in prayer this very night, but the fear of man forbids it: “What would my wife, my brother, my friend, my companion say, if they saw me praying?” Alas, what wretched slavery this is, and yet how common! “I feared the people,” said Saul to Samuel: and so he transgressed the commandment of the LORD (1 Samuel 15. 24). “I am afraid of the Jews,” said Zedekiah, the graceless king of Judah; and so he disobeyed the advice which Jeremiah gave him (Jeremiah 38. 19). Herod was afraid of what his guests would think of him: so he did that which made him “exceeding sorry” – he beheaded John the Baptist. Pilate feared offending the Jews: so he did that which he knew in his conscience was unjust – he delivered up Jesus to be crucified. If this be not slavery, what is?

Young people, seek to be free from this bondage. I want you each to care nothing for man’s opinion when the path of duty is clear. Believe me, it is a great thing to be able to say: “No!” Here was good King Jehoshaphat’s weak point – he was too easy and yielding in his dealings with Ahab, and hence many of his troubles (1 Kings 22. 4). Learn to say, “No!” Let not the fear of not seeming good-natured make you unable to do it. “If sinners entice thee, consent thou not” (Proverbs 1. 10).

Consider only how *unreasonable* this fear of man is. How short-lived is man’s enmity, and how little harm he can do you! “Who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man, which shall be made as grass; and



forgettest the LORD thy Maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth?" (Isaiah 51. 12,13). And how thankless is this fear! None will really think better of you for it. Even the world respects those who act boldly for God. Never be afraid of doing what is right.

Remember the words of the Lord Jesus: "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10. 28). "When a man's ways please the LORD, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him" (Proverbs 16. 7).

Young people – care not for what the world says or thinks: you will not be with the world always. Can man save your soul? No. Will man be your judge in the great dreadful day of account? No. Can man give you a good conscience in life, a good hope in death, a good answer in the morning of the resurrection? No! no! no! Man can do nothing of the sort. Then "fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings. For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool" (Isaiah 51. 7,8). Call to mind the saying of good Colonel Gardiner: "I fear God, and therefore I have none else to fear." Oh to be like him!

Such are the warnings I give you. Lay them to heart. They are worth thinking over. I am much mistaken if they are not greatly needed. The Lord grant they may not have been given you in vain.

*J.C. Ryle*

---

Question: How many Persons are there in the Godhead?

Answer: There are three Persons in the Godhead – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; and these Three are One, the same in essence, and equal in power and glory.

Matthew 3. 16,17 & 12. 31,32; & 28. 19; John 5. 23 & 15. 26; 2 Corinthians 13. 14; 1 John 5. 7.

**“I WILL LIFT UP MINE EYES UNTO THE HILLS, FROM  
WHENCE COMETH MY HELP” (PSALM 121)**

Psalm 121 is a well-known Psalm. It is the second of fifteen Songs of degrees, which some think the Levites sung as they approached the temple in Jerusalem.

Perhaps you have heard it referred to as “the traveller’s Psalm.” Some people read this Psalm before going on a long journey, because of its reference to being kept and preserved. However, let us not think that the Psalm is limited to such circumstances; we are always in need of the help and preservation that the Psalm declares. May we be brought to know the spiritual blessings of this Psalm.

In the first verse of this Psalm, the Psalmist says he will lift up his eyes unto the hills from whence cometh his help. It is clear that his help does not come from the hills themselves. The marginal rendering asks a question: “Shall I lift up mine eyes to the hills?” and verse 2 says that his help comes “from the LORD, which made heaven and earth.” Thus it is the God of the hills that the Psalmist is looking to for his help, and so should we.

The hills speak to us of God Himself. Hills are much higher than we are, and so is God. His ways are higher than our ways, and His thoughts than our thoughts. How we should remember this, and seek help from God in a humble way, realising His greatness, holiness and majesty, and acknowledging that we are nothing. As we may look up to the hills, so in a very much greater sense, prayer is a looking up to the LORD God.

In the Scriptures, the hills are often referred to as “the everlasting hills.” Everything on this earth is changing; some things change rapidly, and others more slowly. The hills and mountains are perhaps some of the most permanent earthly things we can think of, yet even they shall all be dissolved one day. The LORD God is everlasting, and cannot change in any respect. What a comfort this is to His people in changing circumstances and especially in our day when changes seem to

be as rapid as ever! "I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." Let us also remember that He remains the same in all His attributes; His holiness; His omniscience, His word and His justice.

The hills and mountains have often been a refuge. We might think of David fleeing to the mountains of Judah to escape the hand of Saul. In our own land, in the 17th century, the Scottish Covenanters left their homes and took refuge in the hills, fleeing persecution. So spiritually, God is a refuge to all His people. We read in Psalm 9: "The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. And they that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee: for Thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek Thee." Each one of the Lord's people is taught by the Holy Spirit, convincing them of their sin and need of salvation. He also shows them the one Refuge for sinners:

"A refuge for sinners the gospel makes known,  
'Tis found in the merits of Jesus alone,  
The weary, the tempted, and burdened by sin  
Were never exempted from entering therein."

There are a number of hills and mountains mentioned in Scripture, and significant events happened on them. It may be found profitable to meditate on them, and with the teaching of the Holy Spirit, the spiritual significance of these hills may be a help to the seeking soul. If the Lord will, we will look at these in future articles.

*Contributed*

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A godly man, who was travelling through a jungle in Africa, lay at the foot of a tree to rest, when he was surrounded on one side by a tiger and on the other by a jackal! To flee from them was impossible, so committing himself to God he fell asleep. When he awoke the next morning, both beasts had gone. He left all with his God and feared nothing.

*Selected*

### JOACHIM AND THE WALDENSES

Maximilian, the Emperor of Germany, conversing one day in his coach with Johannes Crato, who was his principal physician, and a learned Protestant, was lamenting the divisions of Christians, and asked Crato which party, in his opinion, approached the nearest to apostolic simplicity. Crato replied that he thought that honour belonged to the brethren called Picards (these were also called Waldenses and Albigenses). The emperor said: "I think so too." This being reported to them, afforded them much encouragement, and induced them to dedicate to him a book of their devotions, for during the preceding year, God had marvellously preserved him from the guilt of their blood.

Joachim, a Novo Domo, chancellor of Bohemia, went to Vienna, and would give the emperor no rest until he procured for him a mandate for the revival of a former persecuting decree against them. Having obtained his commission, as he was leaving Vienna and passing a bridge over the Danube, the bridge gave way and fell, when Joachim and all his retinue were plunged into that great river; and all were drowned except six horsemen and one young nobleman, who, perceiving his lord in the water, caught hold of his gold chain and held him up until some fishermen came to their assistance; but they found Joachim dead, and his box containing the persecuting mandate had sunk beyond recovery. The young nobleman was so affected by the hand of God in this affair, that he joined the brethren in their religion, and the persecution dropped.

*Selected*

---

"Though the Mills of God grind slowly,  
They grind exceeding small,  
Though with patience He stands waiting,  
With exactness grinds He all."

*Longfellow*

**BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES**

**THE HOLY SCRIPTURES OF TRUTH**

*This month in our Bible Study I would like to continue a survey of the Holy Scriptures.*

**JOSHUA** – the Greek translation of this name is ‘Jesus, The Saviour.’ Joshua is a beautiful type of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is one of the few characters in Scripture of whom we read of no rebuke from God. We have recorded his conquest of the land of Canaan and the dividing of the land between the twelve tribes of Israel.

**JUDGES** – saviours or leaders. The judges were raised up of God, as they were needed, to deliver the children of Israel from the hand of their enemies. The LORD chastised the children of Israel when they forsook Him, by permitting their enemies to overcome them, but when they repented, raised up judges to deliver them. The judges ruled for about three hundred years from Joshua through to Samuel. There were thirteen judges; four of them are mentioned among the faithful witnesses in Hebrews 11; six of them are fully described in this Book. These are: Ehud; Deborah and Barak (who ruled together); Gideon; Abimelech; Jephthah; Samson.

**RUTH** – The Moabitess. This Book was written when the judges ruled in Israel and gives us a little insight into the customs that prevailed. But we see the remarkable, overruling providence of God. Ruth, though a Moabitess, was in the lineage of Christ, being King David’s great-grandmother.

**1 & 2 SAMUEL, 1 & 2 KINGS, 1 & 2 CHRONICLES.** The last judge was Samuel. Under the judges, Israel was what is termed a *theocracy*, which means governed directly by God through the Priesthood. Israel could say that Jehovah is our Judge, Jehovah is our Lawgiver, Jehovah is our King. The children of Israel desired a king. They wanted to be governed like the other nations. We solemnly read that God sent them a king in His wrath. This was King Saul. He was followed by godly King David, a man after God’s own heart. Matthew Henry makes the following observations concerning the Kings of Israel and

Judah:

David the devout; Solomon the wise; Rehoboam the simple; Abijah the valiant; Asa the upright; Jehoshaphat the religious; Jehoram the wicked; Ahaziah the profane; Joash the backslider; Amaziah the rash; Uzziah the mighty; Jotham the peaceable; Ahaz the idolater; Hezekiah the reformer; Manasseh the penitent; Amon the obscure; Josiah the tender-hearted; Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah: all wicked.

During this period, two great prophets of the LORD came on the scene: Elijah and Elisha. There were many others, such as Isaiah and Jeremiah. We also have the details of the building of Solomon's Temple, a truly magnificent building. These six books cover up to the Babylonish captivity.

*EZRA* – the scribe. Records the history of the return from captivity.

*NEHEMIAH* – The first governor of Jerusalem after the captivity. A history of the rebuilding of the city.

*ESTHER* – The Queen. A history during the captivity. The unique feature of this Book is that it is the only Book of Holy Scripture where the Name of God is not once mentioned but the finger of God is seen in all the minute providences.

*This is the close of the purely historical books.*

*J.R. Rutt*

---

Monica, the mother of Augustine, prayed earnestly to God that her godless boy should not go to Rome, where she feared he would be completely ruined. God did not grant her request, because He had something better in store. Augustine went to Rome and the Lord met with him there and called him by His grace.

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### BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month's questions all refer to Bible texts containing the words "as many as" – a phrase often used to describe a characteristic of a group of people. The last five questions are more difficult and younger children may omit them.

*Please give references for questions 6 to 10 and send your answers to the Editor (see page 26 for the address). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.*

1. What did "as many as were willing hearted" bring as an offering? (Exodus 35. 22)
2. What did "as many as had plagues" seek to do? (Mark 3. 10)
3. What happened to those described in question 2? (Matthew 14. 36)
4. What was the commandment of the king to "as many as ye shall find"? (Matthew 22. 9)
5. What did the Lord Jesus give to "as many as received Him"? (John 1. 12)
6. What does the Lord Jesus give to those whom His Father has given Him? (John 17)
7. Who "believed"? (Acts 13)
8. What description is given of those who are led by the Spirit of God? (Romans 8)
9. Who are those described as being under the curse of God? (Galatians 3)
10. What is one mark of a person whom God loves? (Revelation 3)

#### **ANSWERS TO JANUARY QUESTIONS**

1. Simon. (Matthew 26. 6; Mark 14. 3; Luke 7. 40)
2. Mary. (John 12. 3)
3. Lazarus. (John 11. 2)
4. A box made of alabaster. (Matthew 26. 7; Mark 14. 3; Luke 7. 37)
5. Spikenard. (John 12. 3)
6. Judas Iscariot. (John 12. 4)
7. He went to the chief priests to betray the Lord Jesus. (Matthew 26. 14; Mark 14. 10)
8. His burial. (Matthew 26. 12; Mark 14. 8; John 12. 7)
9. That what she had done would be spoken of as a memorial of her wherever the Gospel was preached. (Matthew 26. 13; Mark 14. 9).
10. "Thy sins are forgiven." (Luke 7. 48)

*Contributed.*

**THE THREE HEBREWS**

A mighty king in days of old,  
A golden image reared;  
And men to worship it were told,  
And they his anger feared.

A burning fiery furnace, he  
Commanded to be made;  
And cast in that sad place would be  
Whoever disobeyed.

Though idol worship did abound,  
Yet Jewish children three,  
True servants of the Lord were found,  
Who would not bow the knee.

Their bodies to be burned they gave,  
Nor shrunk from fiery pain;  
For well they knew their God would save,  
Or strengthen, or sustain.

What sight of wonder and of awe  
There met the Monarch's gaze!  
Unbound, unhurt, four men he saw,  
Walk mid the fiery blaze.

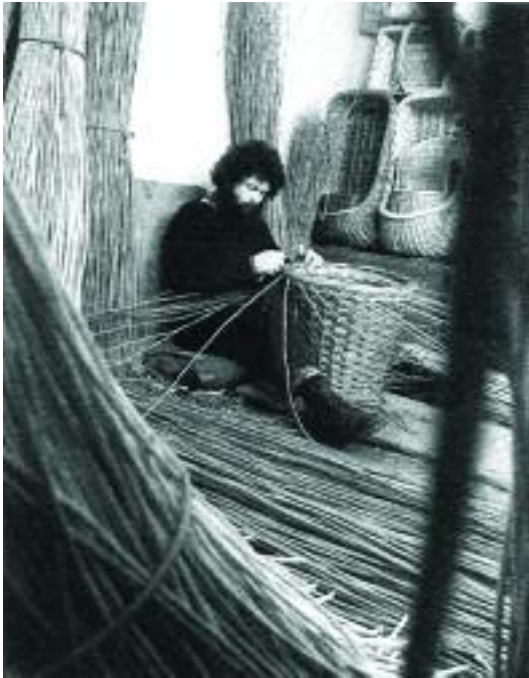
How well we know the wondrous tale:  
The Son of God was there!  
His servants' trust He did not fail,  
Who numbers every hair.

And now, as then, His arm is strong,  
To succour and defend;  
Oh, may we sing the victor's song,  
Enduring to the end.

*Anon.*



# *The Friendly Companion*



“Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket.” (Acts 9. 25)

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*March 2005*

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### OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

Sometimes you will hear ministers speak about *divine providence*. This expression might be puzzling to you.

As an illustration of what is meant by divine providence, the following incident in the life of the famous hymn-writer John Newton, is very helpful.

John Newton was at one time a customs-official at the Port of Liverpool. Among other duties, he had to inspect the cargo of ships entering the port on the incoming tide. To accomplish this he had to rely on being ferried to the various vessels as they approached the docks. He was exceedingly meticulous in this work, as we all should be in our efforts, and especially in the matter of timekeeping, so much so that clocks could almost be set by his movements. If he made an appointment, he made it a rule never to be late.

One day he was inexplicably delayed and was unable to catch the ferry in time to take him to an incoming vessel. Feeling his reputation for punctuality was being compromised, he was very upset. However, being a man of God, he wondered whether there was some unseen purpose in the delay. As the ferry he should have caught moved further away from the shore, suddenly there was a terrific explosion, which engulfed the ferry and its passengers, each of whom perished without warning.

Here John Newton saw the hand of God overruling his movements, and permitting the hindrance which prevented him from boarding the ferry.

Sometimes we may be frustrated at hindrances but may they not also be the merciful hand of a faithful God who holds all our times (even our delays) in His all-wise hands?

Those who believe in divine providence believe that nothing happens by chance, and that all things are ordered by Almighty God.

“The fictitious power of chance, and fortune I defy;  
My life’s minutest circumstance is subject to His eye.”

May we live remembering: "There is a God in heaven" who overrules and controls all events for the good of those who believe in His name, and for His glory.

In John Newton's case, the Lord had purposed that he should be a minister of the gospel, to preach Christ, and all the providences of his life were being used of God to bring that to pass.

With best wishes from your friend and Editor.

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### OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

On our cover this month, you will see a basket-maker at work. This is a skilled job. A master basket-maker is able to use several different types of natural materials, including hazel, rushes and even grass. The most common source of basketry is the willow which is one of the most supple of trees.

Baskets were common in Bible days. Perhaps the most famous of all the baskets was the one in which Paul was let down outside the wall of Damascus, to escape his persecutors. This must have been a large and strong basket that was made available by kind friends of the apostle, who aided his escape.

How true it is that sometimes by the strangest of means, God delivers His people from danger. Hezekiah was delivered from Rabshakeh's hand by a rumour, which caused his plans to be changed.

The poet says:

"But when the Lord's people have need,  
His goodness will find out a way."

How many times the Lord's people have found it to be so. Paul would have looked back on his escape in the basket as the hand of God.

It may be that you have a need for the Lord to appear for you. It might not be in the provision of a basket, but whatever way the Lord relieves, His people look on and say: "This is the LORD's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes."

But for that basket, Paul's life and ministry would have come to an abrupt end. However, the Lord had a great work for the apostle to be engaged in, and so a way of escape was made.

---

### THE POWER OF CONSCIENCE

We learn in John 8. 1-11: *the power of conscience*. We read of the accusers of the woman who had been taken in adultery, that when they heard our Lord's appeal: "... being convicted by their own conscience, they went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last." Wicked and hardened as they were, they felt something within which made them cowards. Fallen as human nature is, God has taken care to leave within every man a witness that will be heard.

Conscience is a most important part of our inward man, and plays a most prominent part in our spiritual history. It cannot save us. It never yet led any one to Christ. It is blind, and liable to be misled. It is lame and powerless, and cannot guide us to heaven. Yet conscience is not to be despised. It is the minister's best friend, when he stands up to rebuke sin from the pulpit. It is the mother's best friend, when she tries to restrain her children from evil and quicken them to do good. It is the teacher's best friend, when he presses home on boys and girls their moral duties. Happy is he who never stifles his conscience, but strives to keep it tender! Still happier is he who prays to have it enlightened by the Holy Ghost, and sprinkled with Christ's blood.

J.C. Ryle

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Question: Can God be frustrated in His purposes and designs?

Answer: No, for He works all things after the counsel of His own will, and will do all His pleasure.  
Job 23. 13; Isaiah 43. 13, & 46. 10; Matthew 28. 18; Ephesians 1. 11,12.

**FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES****REMEMBER ME**

Two thieves were crucified with the Lord Jesus: one on the right hand and the other on the left. They were being punished for the wrong things they had done. The Lord Jesus had done nothing wrong. His life was without sin.

At first both of the thieves were very unkind and spoke evil of the Lord Jesus. But then the heart of one thief was changed. He began to fear God and confessed his sins. He believed that Jesus was the Son of God, a Saviour and a King. *"And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom."*

Even while in such pain and suffering on the cross, the Lord Jesus heard and answered him: *"... Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise."*

David once prayed: *"Remember me, O LORD, with the favour that Thou bearest unto Thy people: O visit me with Thy salvation."* The Lord Jesus still hears the prayers of all who ask Him to remember them.

**QUESTIONS:**

1. With whom was the Lord Jesus crucified?
2. How many were changed?
3. What did he say to Jesus? (first three words)

*Contributed*

*Send your answers to the Editor (see page 50 for the address). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.*

**ANSWERS TO FEBRUARY QUESTIONS**

1. Light.
2. Our heart.
3. Jesus.

*“Lord,  
remember  
me when  
Thou comest  
into Thy  
kingdom.”  
Luke 23. 42.*

## BIBLE LESSONS

**JESUS IS BORN**

When Joseph learned that Mary, to whom he was betrothed (*engaged*), was expecting a child, he thought he should quietly put her away instead of marrying her. While thinking about these things, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. He told Joseph not to be afraid to take Mary for his wife, because her child was conceived through the power of the Holy Ghost and would be the promised Messiah. She was the one spoken of by the prophet Isaiah: *"Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."*

Just as Mary had been told to name her baby, Jesus, Joseph also was told that he must call the child: *"JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins."* His name was most important because it means "Jehovah's salvation." What a beautiful name for the Son of God! It was God the Father who gave Him this name.

When Joseph awoke from his sleep, he immediately obeyed the angel of the Lord and took Mary to be his wife.

One day a messenger came to the city of Nazareth. The people gathered around to hear him. Was he sent by Herod, the ruler of their country? No, he was sent by the great emperor Cæsar Augustus, who lived far away in Rome. He told the people that Cæsar had made a decree (a law) that all the people must go to the city of their forefathers to enrol their names and pay a tax.

What were Joseph and Mary to do? Mary was about to have her baby. Couldn't they wait until the Child was born? No, the law of Cæsar must be obeyed at once. Cæsar could never have imagined the real purpose of his decree. He thought it was for himself, but God used it to fulfil the Word of His promise. Long before, the Lord caused His prophet Micah to prophesy that Jesus, the promised Messiah, would be born at Bethlehem.

It was a long journey through the countryside of Samaria, over the hill country of Judah, and through the great city of



Jerusalem. Finally they reached the little town of Bethlehem. It was crowded with people, who like themselves had come to register their names and pay the tax.

How tired they must have been after their long journey. They stopped at the inn, hoping to find a place to stay. What a great disappointment! There was no room for them in the inn. What were they to do? Must they spend the night outside under the stars?

Soon they found shelter in a stable where the animals were kept. How dark and cold it must have been compared to the light and warmth of the inn.

Here in the stable Mary had her baby. What a humble place for the Son of God to be born. Quickly they wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger, where the cattle were fed.

The great Promise of all the ages was fulfilled in Bethlehem that night. Yet no one beside Joseph and Mary knew that the Saviour of mankind was born there in the lowly stable.

*You can read about this in Matthew chapter 1 verses 18 to 25 and Luke chapter 2 verses 1 to 7.*

#### QUESTIONS:

1. Who told Joseph not to be afraid to take Mary for his wife?
2. What does the name "Jesus" mean?
3. Who prophesied that Jesus would be born at Bethlehem?
4. Why could they not stay at the inn?
5. Where did they lay the baby Jesus?

*G.L. TenBroeke*

*Please send your answers to the Editor (see address on page 50). Please mark the envelope: ANSWERS. Remember to give your name and address.*

#### ANSWERS TO FEBRUARY QUESTIONS

1. Her cousin Elisabeth.
2. The eighth day.
3. Zacharias.
4. That salvation was through the remission of sins.
5. John the Baptist.

### **SO THAT YOU CAN HEAR A PIN DROP**

Scientists have discovered how we can hear a pin drop by means of a molecule that also enables us to feel cold and to savour pungent strong flavours such as mustard and cinnamon. This research by American scientists could help the development of new treatments for deafness.

When the eardrum vibrates, an equivalent sound is generated in the fluid within the inner ear. This structure, the cochlea, is tiled with cells that bristle with around 100 hairs arranged like organ pipes, tall ones at the back and short at the front. The key molecule that generates the electrical signal when the hairs move back and forth, has now been discovered. Scientists have been looking for this protein for a decade.

The molecule (called TRPA1) forms a trap-door that is tugged open when a passing sound makes the hair bundle tilt, allowing charged atoms to flood into the hair cell. This marks the beginning of an electrical signal that tells the brain about the pitch, volume and duration of a sound. This molecule is also a molecular channel and thin filaments connect channels in adjacent hairs, helping to pull them open when the hairs vibrate. Hair cells are remarkably sensitive. The quietest sounds move the hairs by only a few atomic diameters. In effect, the hair cells convert a mechanical stimulus into an electrical signal with molecular strings, springs and levers. Similar members of the TRP molecule family help insects see, and mammals taste and sense heat.

Scientists describe the discovery of this molecule as one of the most significant findings in sensory biology and have detailed an ingeniously simple but remarkably sensitive system. This has formed a key foundation in understanding the function of hearing and balance.

This discovery shows the wonderfully intricate design of the ear. We should be thankful to God if our hearing is clear, and seek to use this faculty well while we are able. Yet despite these amazing facts, scientists at large still champion the theory of evolution. How grieving this must be to God. To think that

man would rather believe that all things evolved over countless years out of confusion to where we are now.

If you were to talk to a scientist and say that you thought that cars evolved from trees, he would think you were out of your mind! “Man designed and made cars,” a scientist would say. And yet evolutionary scientists are no different in trying to believe the impossible, are they? Just look at the ear. How could that have evolved? Each part is placed in order, each there for an important purpose and function. The precision engineering in its design points to the Creator.

But there is another ear that each of us needs. Again, God must be in the design of that, too. That is, our spiritual ear. By nature, we are deaf to God’s ways and Word, as sinners. We cannot understand the way of faith – indeed our old nature does not want anything to do with it. Until God opens our spiritual ears, we are spiritually deaf. When our ears are opened, then God’s Word becomes a delight and we hear Him speak to us through it and by the preaching of His Word. We may also hear Him speak in our hearts.

May you younger children and young people be given the desire to have your spiritual ears opened as well as your natural ones. There is a good prayer in the Word of God that says: “Open Thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy Law.” To be able to see is similar to being able to hear, and the prayer could just as easily be re-written to say: “Open Thou mine ears that I may hear wondrous things out of Thy Law.” Spiritual sight and hearing are great mercies! Like young Samuel, may you pray: “Speak (Lord) for Thy servant heareth.”

*J.P.S.*

---

#### EDITOR’S POSTBAG

*First answers to the monthly questions have been received from MAIA ALDRIDGE; LUCY COTTINGHAM (sorry for omitting this before); JAMES CROWTER; OLIVER FUNNELL; ETHAN SAUNDERS and MARILENE VAN DE MUNT.*

### A DARK EPISODE

In the course of life's journey, however long or short it may be, much of our time is occupied with humdrum routine matters of human existence, i.e. "the daily round and the common task." Occasionally, however, something unusual and striking occurs in our own experience, producing maybe pleasure or alarm, and such an incident will stand out conspicuously in the memory, like a milestone by the roadside. Such was the case during the time about which we write.

During our comparatively short spell at part of the Western front (the Menin Road), early in 1918, there occurred one night something which was in itself so unusual (and happily rare), that it has left an indelible impression upon the mind.

Having been in and out of the front line on several occasions, we were once more, as a battalion, back at the large base camp at Dickebusch on rest.

In due time all men available were ordered to prepare, on a certain evening, for another "working party" behind the front line. A narrow gauge railway was in use for transport, and we travelled in miniature open trucks from the base camp for a distance of about three miles to the low hill which formed our reserve line, and also the stores held by the Royal Engineers, known as Canada Dump. Here, in the gathering darkness, we took up our respective loads and, company by company, in single file, slowly trudged along the narrow duckboard track, to deposit the required material at the outpost of the trench system.

Having unloaded our burdens, we set off back again to the supply dump, imagining in our youthful simplicity that the evening's work was done and visualising a swift, if not altogether smooth, return to Dickebusch. However, any pleasant thoughts of this nature were soon dispelled, when, upon arrival at the stores dump, another load awaited us.

Hearts and hopes fell, but there was nothing else to do but to take up the second burden and set off along the track once more, for, as the famous ballad has it: "Theirs not to reason

why, theirs but to do and die.”

The second trip was hard going, for each load was fairly heavy and awkward to carry, especially if it was a roll of barbed wire, and the foothold on a slippery wooden track was none too certain.

This added task was duly completed, and then followed the steady single-file trek back to the store dump, in the darkness and cold of a winter's night and with undeniable weariness.

Arrived once more at the “dump,” three companies of the working party moved off to the railhead, to return by the light railway to camp at Dickebusch.

The remaining fourth company, which was our own, was held back, and we were then informed that as some material still remained to be moved, we must make one more journey ourselves, to complete the night's work.

It was at this point that trouble arose, for several men refused to follow out this order, arguing hotly on the ground of unfairness.

“Why,” said they, “should three companies be allowed to return to camp, and our company alone be held back and forced to make a third journey, when we were already almost at the end of our strength?”

The number of men who thus objected amounted to a mere handful of the total company.

The rest of us at first treated the matter as just an outburst of “fed up-ness,” and it was felt that, with some good-humoured but straight talking, they would fall in with the main body and see the job through.

However, it was soon evident that this was not a “passing cloud,” but something more serious, amounting in fact to an adamant refusal to obey the latest order.

The officer in charge, who was quite young and well liked, pointed out to the objectors the folly and danger of persisting in their course, but unhappily his caution had no effect.

Much earnest conversation ensued amongst the remainder

of the company, in the chilly darkness of that winter's night, under the open canopy of heaven.

True, we were all very weary by this time, but no less truly did we realise that it was our bounden duty to obey the order given, and if there were any sense of grievance, this should be voiced later.

Several of our number, acting as spokesmen, thereupon took up the matter with our unruly comrades, in one more effort to turn them round, and bring them into line with the majority. This endeavour proved abortive and we were then faced with two alternatives. Either we (the majority) should obey the latest order, and finish the allotted task ourselves, and so leave the few recalcitrants to face the consequences of their disobedience alone, realising how serious those consequences could or would be. Alternatively (if all our efforts failed to move them), we should throw in our lot with the few hardened objectors, hoping that such united action would cover them, if indeed there is truth in the saying: "There is safety in numbers."

Our first alternative was finally turned down, although with heavy hearts, after one last endeavour to sway the few to reason and obedience proved unavailing. The sense of comradeship in wartime strongly affected our feelings, and perhaps blinded our judgment, to such an extent that we then and there agreed to make the fateful decision and to share their guilt and disobedience.

Theirs was a wilful act of refusal to obey, whilst ours was feelingly reluctant and indeed hateful. We knew at the outset we stood to suffer the same consequences, though we trusted that our united action might save them from the worst.

Thus, the whole company returned to camp at Dickebusch, under the heavy cloud of a command broken and an ordered task unfulfilled.

The trials which followed were painful, as might well be imagined, yet the extremity of punishment which could have

been exacted, mercifully did not materialise. The immediate consequences included a long route march, with full pack, and also loss of pay and leave. Besides this, we as a company suffered the ignominy of a public reprimand by the brigadier-general, before the rest of the battalion, who were all fully armed and formed into a square, whilst we stood together in the middle at attention in fatigue dress. Thus together we had to prove the truth of the Scripture: "The way of transgressors is hard" (Proverbs 13. 15).

Yet in this case the majority had, against their better feelings, sided with the disobedient minority, in order to save them if possible from the worst consequences of their own folly and obstinacy.

The sober consideration of such a matter as this might well give rise to other thoughts concerning our eternal destiny and the great work of Christ in salvation.

We read: "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Romans 8. 3). In deep humility He shared our low estate.

But even more than this we learn that: "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5. 21).

As one has said:

"He took the dying traitor's place,  
And suffered in his stead;  
For man (O miracle of grace!)  
For man the Saviour bled."

Here, it was not the many who shared the guilt of the few, but One alone, even the eternal Son of God, who in unspeakable love became the substitute for many. The Scripture doctrine of substitution is precious indeed to those who know something of the plague of their own hearts, and the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Such people will find no fault with the worthy Puritans of old, who stressed the vital need of conviction of sin by the power of the Holy Spirit, thus bringing

about "... repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20. 21). When inward conviction is a reality and Christ, the Lamb of God, is seen by faith: "Whose blood alone has power sufficient to atone," then it is He draws us to Himself. He has said: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me" (John 12. 32).

"Behold a scene of matchless grace,  
'Tis Jesus in the sinner's place;  
Heaven's brightest Glory sunk in shame,  
That rebels might adore His name."

*H. Salkeld*

*(Extracted from "The Vital Year")*

---

**"I WILL LIFT UP MINE EYES UNTO THE HILLS FROM  
WHENCE COMETH MY HELP" (PSALM 121)**

**(II)**

The covenant of grace is a covenant which the LORD made and secured; man had no part in it. (When you read "the LORD" in the Bible, it means Jehovah, the covenant God of His people.) Even in the natural covenant, notice the emphasis placed on what God has done: "And *I*, behold, *I* establish *My* covenant with you ... *I* do set my bow in the cloud ... when *I* bring a cloud over the earth ... *I* will remember *My* covenant ... This is the token of the covenant which I have established ..." (Genesis 9). In the covenant of grace, the Lord Jesus, the eternal Son of the Father, promised to redeem from sin all those that the Father had given to Him; man had no part in the making of that covenant. "This is the covenant that *I* will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the LORD; *I* will put *My* laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and *I* will be to them a God, and they shall be to *Me* a people ... for *I* will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will *I* remember no more" (Hebrews 8. 10,12).

The natural covenants made in time promise that natural



mercies will continue and the earth shall never again be overwhelmed by a flood. The covenant of grace, made before time began, is ordered in all things and sure. It is established in the heavens and will stand for ever. It provides spiritual mercies and eternal safety for the Lord's people. What help the Lord's tried people find in such a word as this: "Thus saith the LORD; If My covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth; then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David My servant" (Jeremiah 33. 25, 26). Feeling their sinfulness, they find help and comfort that the keeping of that covenant is not in their hands. They are eternally safe, through the covenant love of Christ, and the salvation He has secured.

John Kent's hymns are full of the covenant of grace; they are well worth reading prayerfully and over the years have been made a blessing to many of the Lord's people.

"This covenant, O believer, stands,  
Thy rising fears to quell;  
Sealed by thy Surety's bleeding hands;  
In all things ordered well."

*Contributed*

---

### **FATHERLY ADVICE TO THOSE WHO WOULD MARRY**

Philip Henry, who was, with Matthew Henry, a famous commentator on the Holy Bible, was approached by his daughter with the news that she wanted to marry a certain young man. As the young man was not known to him, he said to her:

"I don't know where he has come from."

To which she replied: "But I know where he is going."

To another of his children, this time a son, who told his father of his desire to marry, Philip Henry said: "Please God, and please yourself, and then you will please me. I wish you much holiness and then you will have much happiness."

*Selected*

**BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES****THE HOLY SCRIPTURES OF TRUTH**

*We now commence the poetical or devotional Books:*

**JOB** – This Book is believed to have been given to us by Moses. Job was probably contemporary with Abram. This cannot be ascertained but it was almost certainly written before the law was given. It gives an account of this wealthy and great man, the trial of his faith and subsequent deliverance.

**PSALMS** – This is a devotional Book recording the prayers and praises of some of the Lord's people. The principal psalmist is King David and no doubt by divine inspiration he compiled the Book of Psalms. He is called the sweet psalmist of Israel. There are psalms by Moses and Asaph. John Bunyan said: "The Psalms are the lungs of the Bible."

**PROVERBS** – Written principally by King Solomon. The opening passage of the Proverbs is a sufficient comment: "To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding; To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity; To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion. A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels: To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings." We find the wisdom of God in these Proverbs.

**ECCLESIASTES** – Written by King Solomon, it reveals the wisdom God gave him. The wisdom of God is opposite to man's fallen wisdom. This Book speaks of Death – Eternity – Judgment.

**SOLOMON'S SONG** – This is a deeply spiritual Book of sacred Hebrew poetry, written by King Solomon. It is called the Song of Songs as there is no other song to be compared to it. Dr. Gill calls it the Holy of Holies of the Scriptures. It records the sacred, intimate union and felt communion between Christ and His bride – The Church. The only real entrance we can have into this Book is by a personal experience of the love of Christ shed abroad in our heart. Christ is the Beloved. The

believer is the spouse.

*This is the close of the poetic or devotional books.*

*We now come to the prophets. These books are arranged into major and minor prophets, these terms relate only to the size of the books, not their contents. The same order as the historical books: first the prophecies before the captivity, Isaiah and Jeremiah, then during the Babylonian captivity, Ezekiel and Daniel.*

*The first four are major.*

**ISAIAH** – Prophesied during the reign of the kings. Often referred to as the evangelical prophet as he speaks so beautifully of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**JEREMIAH** – Prophesied just before the Babylonian captivity. He suffered greatly at the hands of the kings and princes of Israel as he exposed the sins of Israel and prophesied the captivity as God's solemn judgment. He is often referred to as the weeping prophet.

**LAMENTATIONS** – of Jeremiah the prophet after the fall of Jerusalem to the armies of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. The Book is an addendum to Jeremiah.

**EZEKIEL** – He prophesied during the Babylonian captivity. The prophet Jeremiah in the last verse of the Lamentations, declares: "But Thou hast utterly rejected us." We then have the opening of the prophet Ezekiel: "The word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was there upon him." (Ezekiel 1. 3) The LORD had not rejected His people, but all was working for their good.

**DANIEL** – A most remarkable man of God who held a very high position in the government in Babylon and served successive kings as the chief minister in the land of captivity. A man of great wisdom and great grace, he interpreted remarkable visions showing things that will come on earth to the end of time. Daniel lived right through the captivity of seventy years.

*This is the close of the major prophets. We now commence*

*the minor prophets. These follow the same order as the previous books, before and after the captivity.*

**HOSEA, JOEL, AMOS, OBADIAH, JONAH, MICAH, NAHUM, HABAKKUK and ZEPHANIAH** – These all prophesied before the captivity, during the reign of the kings, warning of the solemn consequences of Israel's idolatry and the impending judgments from God by the Chaldeans; also prophesying of the coming of the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ.

**HAGGAI, ZECHARIAH and MALACHI** – These all prophesied after the captivity and speak of the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem and the hope of a more glorious day.

All of the prophets, both major and minor, give us a little glimpse of the wonderful glory of the Messiah's Kingdom, the spiritual kingdom of grace in the New Testament. They also, in varying degrees, write of the wonderful glory of the Person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, manifest in the flesh. They prophesy of the conversion of the Gentiles to God, in Christ. They speak of the solemn dispersal of the Jews after their rejection of Christ. Jonah is unique, in that it is more of a personal history than a prophecy. They also instruct us concerning the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and the final judgment of the world.

*This is the close of the Old Testament and the end of the prophets. Malachi's prophecy was about four hundred years before the coming of Christ.*

Josephus, the Jewish historian, tells us that the Hebrew Scriptures, meaning the Old Testament, were divided into three parts, as follows:

*First division of five books:*

**THE LAW** – Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.

*Second division of thirteen\* books:*

**THE PROPHETS** – Joshua, Judges & Ruth, Samuel 1 & 2, Kings 1 & 2, Isaiah, Jeremiah & Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, The

---

\* Where the books are joined together, they were counted as one book.

twelve minor Prophets, Job, Ezra & Nehemiah, Esther, Chronicles 1 & 2.

*The third division of four books:*

*THE HAGIOGRAPHIA* – Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Solomon's Song.

Dr. Gill tells us that this Hebrew division of the Old Testament is why the Lord Jesus Christ in Luke 24. 44 says the following: "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me." By the Psalms is meant the whole of the third part called the Hagiographia because it began with that book.

*J.R. Rutt*

---

**"HE THAT HATH THE SON HATH LIFE"**

'Tis he who hath the Son hath life,  
Though dead in sin before;  
And nothing of the wrath of God  
Can ever reach him more.

'Tis he who hath the Son hath life,  
And fears? He need have none!  
For into union he is brought  
With God's beloved Son.

'Tis he who hath the Son hath life,  
And light and joy are his;  
For in the Father's house itself  
A place his portion is.

And if his blessedness is great  
Who truly "hath the Son,"  
Most surely he who has Him not,  
Is wretched and undone.

*Anon.*

### LIST OF NAMES

The following young people have answered questions during the months July to December 2004. The total number is 329, which is most encouraging, and for which we would thank God.

Anthony and Fiona Ashby; Abigail Aston; Daniel and Naomi Aston; Emma, George and Thomas Aston; Matthew and Sarah Aston.

Alasdair and Alexander Bailey; Kathryn and Sarah Ball; Joseph and Samuel Banfield; Benjamin, Rachel and William Bos; Abigail, Daniel, Joanna and Nathan Broome; Jennifer Burbridge; Eleanor and Fiona Burgess; Lois and Lucy Burgess; Sophie Buss.

Christopher, Natalie and Nathan Christie; Harriet, Jacob, Martha and Oliver Collins; Karen, Matthew and Sarah Cooper; Lucy, Ruth and Samuel Cooper; Alice, Charlotte and William Cottingham; Gillian and Victoria Cottingham; Michael Cottingham; Lucy and Miriam Cottingham; Philip Cottington; Emma and Jessica Cottington; Joanna and Samuel Cottington; Abigail, Hannah and Sarah Crowter; Annabel and Kate Crowter; Jonathan and Victoria Crowter.

Christine, Esther and Louise Dadswell; Gijsbert, Henry, Joanna, Jonathan, Maarten, Marlene, Nicholas and Peter De Vogel.

Adam and Bethan Field; Esther, Naomi and Rebekah Field; Benjamin Funnell; Joseph, Juliet and Timothy Funnell.

Oliver and William Green; Stephen and Thomas Green.

Jacqueline, James and Richard Hallier; Edward Hanks; James Hanks; Eleanor and Jonathan Hare; Benjamin, Charlotte, Emily and Thomas Hart; Joseph, Joshua and Nathanael Hayden; Benjamin and Suzanna Hayden; Andrew, Marcus and Susanna Hickman; Bethan and Rosalind Hickman; Joanna and Thomas Hickman; Peter Hills; Martyn and Willem-Jan Holmwood; Jeremy Hyde.

Abigail Izzard.

Elisabeth, James, Jonathan, Rebecca, Susanna and William Kerley; Emma, Helen, Joanna, Joshua and Marianne Kerley; John and Thomas Kerley; Elizabeth and Harriet Kinderman; Edward, Matthew, Naomi, Richard, Samuel and Timothy Kingham; Elizabeth, Jennifer and Stephen Kingham.

Christopher, Edward and Thomas Large; James, Jonathan and Thomas Lewis; Edward and Joshua Lockey; Megan Lucas; Chloe and James de Lullington.

Murdo Macleod; Abigail, Martha, Philip and Samuel Main; Deborah and Pauline Main; Hannah McNaughten; Claudia and Florence

Mercer; James and Julia Mercer; Andrew Muddell; Andrew, Edward, Elizabeth, Rebecca, Samuel and William Munns.

Emily Northern.

Anna and Rebekah Pack; Thomas Pack; Helen, Matthew, Priscilla, Rebecca, Robert, Samuel and Sarah Parish; Anna, Chloe and Phebe Parsons; Ruth and Sarah Payne; Elizabeth, John, Mary and Philip Pickles; Heidi and James Playfoot; Jane, Naomi and Robert Pocock; Lynda and Marianne Pont; Edward Pont; Esther, Lukas and Martine Pont; Nathan Pont.

Bethany and Katie Ramsbottom; Joshua, Oliver and William Rayner; Matthew Rayner; Freddie and Harry Rokison.

Chloe Sadler; Jessica and Rosanna Salkeld; Charles, Edward, Emily and Rosaleen Saunders; Ethan Saunders; Jasmine, Joseph, Thomas and Timothy Saunders; Alexander, Emily and Philippa Sayers; Hannah and Thomas Sebaduka; Bryony Skelton; Benjamin, Christopher, Hannah and Kathryn Smith; Emma and Kate Stearn; Alexander, Emma and Jessica Stevens; Ellen and Rebekah Suckling.

Abigail Thorne; James and Paul Topping; Alison and Andrew Tugwell; Helen Turner.

Joanna, Natalie and Thomas Warboys; Esther and Thomas Wheatley; Ben Wigley; Abigail, Bethany and Charlotte Wilderspin; Rebekah and Sarah Wilderspin; Joanna, Matthew, Susie and Timothy Wiltshire; Craig, Heidi, Julia and Kelvin Woodhams; Edwin, Hannah, Joseph and Kate Woodhams; Benjamin, Jessica, Louise and Timothy Woodhams; Rebecca Woodhams, Lucy Woods.

#### OVERSEAS NAMES

Kyle and Miriam Aitch; Lydia Bleeker; Carina Breure; Michael and Thomas Casper; Jeremy, Luke and Peter Clarke; Jennifer, Marie and Melissa DeVries; Caleb and Kaira Glass; Kyle and Sharlene Greyn; Katelyn Kamp; Caleb, Elisabeth and Isaac Knol; Cori and Jeff Legemaat; Hannah Linna; Kyle and Thomas Marion; Kelly, Matthew and Thomas Mills; Paul Nowlan; Brian, Danielle, Kelsey, Kendrick, Lindsay and Megan Oudshoorn; Emily and Jonathan Quist; Jamie and Jeffery Sarenpa; Andre, John and Valentina Sweetman; Nathaniel TenBroeke; Bethany and Michaela Teunissen; Jessie, Mariah and Matthew Toogood; Willemien Van Leeuwen; Cody and Dylan White; Joel, Jonathan, Kristina, Lydia, Natalie and Nathan Ymker.

*May the Lord bless you each with the saving knowledge of the truths you have searched.*

### BIBLE QUESTIONS

*This month's questions are all about warnings. Younger children need only do five questions. Please give references for questions 7 to 10 and send your answers to the Editor (see page 50 for the address). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.*

1. What did God say a watchman should do? (Ezekiel 33. 7)
2. Which musical instrument was especially used to sound an alarm or warning in time of war? (Ezekiel 33. 3-4)
3. What would happen if the sound was unclear? (1 Corinthians 14. 8)
4. What promise did God give concerning this alarm? (Numbers 10. 9)
5. On which occasion especially do we read that God fulfilled this promise to the children of Israel? (Joshua 6)
6. What warning did Moses give to the children of Reuben and Gad? (Numbers 32. 23)
7. Which wicked city repented on hearing the warning of God's prophet? (Jonah)
8. Whom did God warn in a dream (two occasions)? (Matthew 2)
9. What warning did the Lord Jesus twice speak to the Jews who were concerned at the sinfulness of those who had suffered violent deaths? (Luke 13)
10. What warning had been given to those described as "a generation of vipers"? (Matthew 3)

### ANSWERS TO FEBRUARY QUESTIONS

1. Bracelets, and earrings, and rings, and tablets, all jewels of gold.
2. They pressed upon the Lord Jesus for to touch Him.
3. As many as touched were made perfectly whole.
4. As many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.
5. Power (the right or privilege) to become the sons of God.
6. Eternal life. (John 17. 2)
7. As many as were ordained to eternal life. (Acts 13. 48)
8. They are the sons of God. (Romans 8. 14)
9. As many as are of the works of the law. (Galatians 3. 10)
10. God rebukes and chastens them. (Revelation 3. 19)

*Contributed*



# *The Friendly Companion*



An Island Scene in the New Hebrides

“The isles shall wait for His law.”  
(Isaiah 42. 4)

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*April 2005*

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### OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

One of the things critics say of the Bible, especially of the Book of Genesis, is that the accounts of Creation, the Fall of Man and the Flood, are myths and at best only have a meaning as an allegory or parable.

If you study carefully the list of names given in Genesis 5, for example, you will find that during Adam's life he would have known Methuselah and Lamech, Noah's father. Noah himself knew Methuselah, who died the year the Flood came. After the Flood, Noah himself was alive for one hundred and fifty years of Abraham's life and for fifty years of Isaac's life.

This means that the early events of this world's history, as recorded in the Book of Genesis, would have been faithfully passed down by the witnesses of these events, giving us a faithful record. It was part of Moses' commission to record these in the Book of Genesis. God, who was with Moses' mouth, was also with his pen, so we have the infallible and inerrant record of truth in our Bible.

God not only laid the foundation of the world in Genesis, but also opened the revelation of truth. The whole of the rest of the Scriptures depend on the truth of Genesis. If, for example, we deny the Fall of Man, we say there is no need of a Saviour, and that the Lord Jesus Christ need never have come as a Man and suffered for sinners on the cross at Calvary.

If, however, the Holy Spirit of Truth has shone into your heart, you will know something of the Fall in your own nature, and you will know your need of a Saviour, even the Lord Jesus Christ. By your own experience you will be a witness to the great and fundamental truths of God's word about sin and salvation. There will be no doubts in your mind about the accuracy of Genesis then, but rather a longing to know that blood which speaketh better things than that of Abel, even that of the Lord Jesus Christ, to wash you from all sin and wrong.

May each of our readers desire to be so led of the Spirit.

With best wishes from your sincere friend and Editor.

**OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE*****A SABBATH DAY'S WORK ON ANIWA***

Our life and work will reveal itself to the reader, if I briefly outline a Sabbath Day on Aniwa. Breakfast is partaken of immediately after daylight. The church bell then rings, and ere it stops every worshipper is seated. The natives are guided in starting by the sunrise, and gather from farthest corners at this early hour. The first service is over in about an hour; there is an interval of twenty minutes; the bell is again rung, and the second service begins. We follow the ordinary Presbyterian ritual; but in every service I call upon an elder or church member to lead in one of the prayers, which they do with great alacrity and with much benefit to all concerned.

As the last worshipper leaves, at the close of the second service, the bell is sounded twice very deliberately, and that is the signal for the opening of my communicants' class. I carefully expound the church's Shorter Catechism and show how its teachings are built upon Holy Scripture, applying each truth to the conscience and the life. This class is conducted all the year round; and from it, step-by-step, our church members are drawn as the Lord opens up their way, the most of them attending two full years at least before being admitted to the Lord's Table. This discipline accounts for the fact that so very few of our baptized converts have ever fallen away – as few in proportion, I verily believe, as in churches at home. Meantime, many of the church members have been holding a prayer meeting amongst themselves in the adjoining school, a thing they started of their own free accord, in which they invoke God's blessing on all the work and worship of the day.

Having snatched a brief meal of tea, or a cold dinner cooked on Saturday, the bell rings within an hour, and our Sabbath school assembles, in which the whole inhabitants, young and old, take part, myself superintending and giving the address, as well as questioning on the lesson. Mrs. Paton meanwhile is teaching a large class of adult women, and the elders and best readers instructing the ordinary classes for about half-an-hour

or so.

About one o'clock the school is closed, and we then start off on our village tours. An experienced elder, with several teachers, takes one side of the island this Sabbath, I with another company taking the other side, and next Sabbath we reverse the order. A short service is conducted in the open air, or in schoolrooms, at every village that can be reached; and on their return they report to me cases of sickness, or any signs of progress in the work of the Lord. The whole island is thus steadily and methodically evangelised.

As the sun is setting I am creeping home from my village tour; and when darkness begins to approach, the canoe drum is beaten at every village, and the people assemble under the banyan-tree for evening village prayers. The elder or teacher presides. Five or six hymns are joyously sung, and five or six short prayers offered between, and thus the evening hour passes happily in the fellowship of God. On a calm evening, after Christianity had fairly taken hold of the people, and they loved to sing over and over again their favourite hymns, these village prayer-meetings formed a most blessed close to every day, and set the far distant bush echoing with the praises of God.

At the mission house, before retiring to rest, we assembled all the young people and any of our villagers who chose to join them. They sat round the dining-room floor in rows, sang hymns, read verses of the Bible, and asked and answered questions about the teaching of the day. About nine o'clock we dismissed them, but they pleaded to remain and hear our family worship in English. *John Paton (c.1858)*

---

Question: What are the decrees of God?

Answer: The decrees of God are His eternal purpose according to the counsel of His will, whereby, for His own glory, He has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.

Isaiah 46. 10; Romans 8. 28-30 & 9. 6-24; Ephesians 1. 11-12;

2 Thessalonians 2. 13-14.

*FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES***THE RIGHT WAY**

When the people of Israel went out of Egypt to a new land, how did they know the right way? “... *the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night*”(Exodus 13. 21). The LORD was always with them in the cloud. He showed them when to go forward and when to stop and rest.

Many times we need to be shown the right thing to do or the right way to go. Even more important, we need the Lord Jesus to show us the way to heaven. One of Jesus’ disciples asked: “*How can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, ... no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.*” The Bible has been given to teach us and guide us in right ways. It shows how heaven may be entered by a door called “*a new and living way*” opened by Jesus, who died and rose again for His people.

Questions:

1. Who went before the people of Israel in a pillar of cloud?
2. What did Jesus say to the disciple who asked to know the way? (4 words)
3. What has been given to guide us in right ways?

*Contributed*

*Send your answers to the Editor (see page 74 for the address). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.*

**ANSWERS TO MARCH QUESTIONS**

1. Two thieves.
2. One.
3. “Lord remember me.”

*“Teach me  
Thy way,  
O LORD,  
and lead  
me in a  
plain path.”*  
*Psalm 27. 11.*

## BIBLE LESSONS

## THE SHEPHERDS AND THE ANGELS

Cæsar the great emperor, Herod the governor, the elders of Israel, and all the other people were ignorant that the KING of kings and LORD of lords had been born in little Bethlehem. Sadly, even if someone had told them that the promised Messiah had been born in a stable, they would not have believed it. The MESSIAH born in a stable! Impossible! This is too humbling for proud hearts.

But, was there no one who would believe the good news? Outside the city of Bethlehem were fields for pasture. In these fields were shepherds *"keeping watch over their flocks by night."* Perhaps David, the great King of Israel, once kept his sheep in these fields many years before. They had to watch, lest a wild animal would come and take a sheep or lamb and eat it.

As they watched, suddenly a bright figure appeared before them. It was an angel of the Lord. Also, a glowing light shone all around them. The poor shepherds were terrified. Immediately the angel spoke very comforting words: *"Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, ... For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord ... Ye shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."*

The shepherds were full of holy awe; first at the messenger, but even more at the wonderful message. But look! What was happening now? The whole sky was filled with angels singing: *"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."* Never had such singing been heard on earth. What a glorious scene! A heavenly host was sent to sing at the birth of the Saviour to a company of poor shepherds, while the rest of Bethlehem lay fast asleep.

When the song was ended, the angels returned to heaven and the glorious light faded into the darkness of night. The shepherds had heard so many wonderful things, not least of which was the place where the Baby might be found. If He had



been born in a palace or some great home, they would not have dared to go unto Him. But, wonder of wonders, He was in a lowly stable!

Immediately they set out for Bethlehem to find the Babe. What about their sheep? Their sheep meant everything to them. Yet when the Lord blesses His people with heavenly visits, the things of earth fall away. Everything else is forgotten. Now they must find the Saviour.

How could they find the right stable in the dark of night? Here they would learn another secret. When His people walk in obedience to the Lord's commands, He "*directs their steps.*"

Soon they found the stable and the "*Babe lying in a manger,*" just as the angel had said.

Just like you, when you have heard some good news and like to tell everyone you meet, so the shepherds told Mary and Joseph the words of the angel.

After they left the stable, they began to tell everyone they met about the angel's visit and the Baby that was born.

Many people wondered at the words of the shepherds, "*But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.*"

*You can read about this in Luke chapter 2 verses 8 to 20.*

#### QUESTIONS:

1. Who were in the fields?
2. Who appeared unto them?
3. What did he bring them? (5 words)
4. What does the Lord direct for His people?
5. What two things did Mary do with the words of the shepherds? (10 words)

*G.L. TenBroeke*

*Please send your answers to the Editor (see address on page 74). Please mark the envelope: ANSWERS. Remember to give your name and address.*

#### ANSWERS TO MARCH QUESTIONS

1. An angel of the Lord.
2. Jehovah's salvation.
3. Micah.
4. There was no room for them.
5. In a manger.

**MOTORCYCLES! (II)**

The year 1971 is one I hope ever to remember as one of the most favoured in my life. Yet I was but young (18–19) and there are things I look back on now with shame and sorrow. But for the time the Lord seemed to pass over such things and it was not till later I was brought into bitter trouble and the Lord showed me so solemnly the cause of it in these words:

“He shall by means like these,  
Thy stubborn temper break,  
Soften thy heart by due degrees,  
And make thy spirit meek.”

How different God’s way of dealing with His people is from what they expect. Sometimes He seems to pass by their sin and only show them His mercy, as He did to Jacob at Bethel. Then later they are brought into bitter sorrow on account of their sin, and yet the remembrance of past mercies is a solemn confirmation that their whole salvation must be of grace alone.

I think it was early in the year that after several months of bitter desertion, the Lord Jesus made Himself so precious to me that for several weeks nothing but the name of Christ could hold my attention. I felt as John Bunyan says in one place, that it was as difficult then for my thoughts to turn to earthly things as many times since it has been to think on heavenly things. Towards the latter part of the year there were several occasions when the Lord so powerfully revealed His mercy to me. Once was when Mr. Jesse Delves preached at Barton on the August Bank Holiday special services from the text: “Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee.” On another occasion I remember coming home from chapel after the service on a Lord’s Day morning, and going into my bedroom, I took the hymnbook and opened on this verse, which was so sweetly sealed in my heart:

“Now look up with faith and see  
Him that bled for you and me,  
Seated on His glorious throne,  
Interceding for His own.

What can Christians have to fear,  
When they view the Saviour there?  
Hell is vanquished, heaven appeased,  
God is satisfied and pleased."

Indeed I did look up by faith and see the Lord Jesus bearing away all my sins in His sufferings and death. A third occasion was on the Lord's Day afternoon. I was upstairs in my bedroom and went down to play some hymns on the organ for a while. But something seemed wrong – it didn't seem to sound the same as usual, so I went upstairs again. Later I went down and tried again, but still the music seemed to have lost its taste. Whilst pondering over this, these words were spoken to me so sweetly:

"No music's like Thy charming name,  
Nor half so sweet can be."

Indeed, that expressed exactly how I did feel. And when the Lord Jesus has our hearts and affections, nothing else can hold them.

I wondered why the Lord should favour me thus, and whether something was coming upon me. Something did come which I never expected, and shortly after, on October 20th, I was involved in a serious accident on my motorcycle on returning home from work (I was on an industrial placement for a year while at college studying for a degree). A car turned right, straight in front of me and I went into the bonnet of the car at 50 mph and was flung over the top on to the other side of the road. My left leg was broken in two places and I was in hospital for almost six weeks, most of the time in traction and unable to get out of bed. (A pin was pushed through my ankle and attached to cords which ran over a pulley on the end of the bed to which weights were attached to pull the leg straight.) Yet even in this the Lord surrounded me with His mercy, and many times since I have almost wished I could go through it again if only I might be favoured as I was then.

On the way home from work, I had called to see my brother at college, and suggested he should come home with me, promising to take him back later in the evening. He refused to come but could not give any reason. Little more than half-an-hour later I was in an ambulance on my way to hospital, where I had an emergency operation to set my broken bones. The first night in hospital was the most uncomfortable I have ever had, but in the morning about breakfast time, I was broken to pieces when these words were spoken so powerfully: "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever." The sweet sense of the Lord's lovingkindness and merciful care over me seemed to overflow all the natural inconveniences of my position. I could truly sing:

"Not the fair palaces  
To which the great resort,  
Are once to be compared to this,  
Where Jesus holds His court."

And the Lord Jesus has been often pleased to "hold His court" in a hospital bed.

*(To be continued)*

*Contributed*

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It is said that there was once, if not still now, a courtroom in the State of Ohio which was so designed that rain which fell on the north side would eventually find its way to Lake Ontario and the Gulf of St Lawrence, whilst that on the south side would go into the Mississippi and the Gulf of Mexico. Two thousand miles lies between these two seas, yet just a puff of wind one way or another, determines the destination of each raindrop. So God's purposes often seem to hang on very small events, to us even insignificant, but in His mind how sure is the outcome.

*Selected*

**“I WILL LIFT UP MINE EYES UNTO THE HILLS,  
FROM WHENCE COMETH MY HELP” (III)**

**ARARAT**

We are considering the various hills of Scripture, and how they are made a help to the Lord's people. It is clear that hills were formed at the time of Creation, as in Genesis 7 it is said that the mountains and high hills were all covered by the flood. The first hills with a particular mention in the Bible are the mountains of Ararat, which are best known as the place on which the ark rested after the flood (Genesis 8. 4). (Notice the Bible says mountains in the plural, rather than a single mountain, which indicates a region, rather than a specific location.) The mountains of Ararat are in north-eastern Turkey close to the border with Armenia. Mount Ararat itself is 5,165 metres (16,940 feet) high – almost four times the height of Ben Nevis in Scotland – and the peak is permanently covered in snow.

It was on the mountains of Ararat that God gave covenant promises to Noah, and to all generations that follow. Firstly, He vowed that while the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter and day and night will continue – and so it has. Secondly, He made a covenant saying there should never again be a flood over the whole earth. To give a token of this covenant, God caused a rainbow to appear in the sky. Even though the days in which we live are so evil, and are deserving of an overwhelming judgment, yet God remains faithful to His promise, and the world will not again suffer such a flood. So when we think of the mountains of Ararat, we think of the covenants that God has made.

A covenant is a fixed agreement between two or more people to carry out certain things they have promised, for the benefit of someone. For example, a person may covenant with a charity to give a certain amount of money each year. They sign a document as an evidence of the covenant.

When God made the natural covenant, He gave the rainbow as an evidence of that covenant. At school we are taught how

the sunlight is diffracted (or split) into its various colours which are seen in the rainbow. It is a wonder of creation, that white light is composed of all those different colours. Such knowledge is not to be discounted, but may we be given faith to see a far greater and better covenant.

The Bible refers to the covenant of works which the holy law of God demands of each one of mankind. It promises life but only if the holy law of God is fully satisfied. Adam and Eve could not keep it; none of us can possibly keep it. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God, and so it is not a covenant of life. All who are found under this covenant must perish, "because they continued not in it." We need to be brought completely away from this covenant to a better one, the covenant of grace, and to look to the Lord alone for salvation.

God placed the bow in the cloud as a token of the natural covenant between Him and the earth. Seeing the rainbow, the Lord's people are reminded of the natural covenant God made on the mountains of Ararat, and they may be favoured to consider an infinitely greater covenant than the natural covenants or the covenant of works – the covenant of grace. All blessings and all help the Lord's people receive are as a result of that covenant.

"The covenant of free grace  
As made with Christ, our Head,  
Is stored with precious promises  
By which our souls are fed.

The solemn oath of God  
Confirms each promise true;  
And Jesus, with His precious blood  
Has sealed the covenant too.

Hence all our comforts flow,  
And balm for every fear;  
May we, by sweet experience know  
How choice, how rich they are!"

We have the rainbow in the cloud as a sign of the natural covenant, but there is no natural sign of the covenant of grace, and so we need to be given faith to behold it and its blessings.

*Contributed*

*(The remainder of this article appeared in March 2005.)*

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### THE LOST PRAYER

As Mr. J.C. Burgess was making his way to a prayer meeting at Dauntsey Chapel one dark winter's evening, he was composing a most wonderful prayer and hoping to be called on to pray. Unknown to him, some workmen that day had been digging a hole in the road and had forgotten to put out the warning lights. Into this hole he tumbled with his man-made prayer. When he got out of the hole, he had lost his prayer and desire to pray at the prayer meeting. When he arrived at the chapel, to his great dismay he was called on to pray. The friends said afterwards they had never heard him so well in prayer.

*A.G.R.*

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### THE ONLY ONE RIGHT

I was still teaching. After a while I was given full responsibility for religious education throughout a large school. It was heavy work, but satisfying in some ways, for it kept me out of much of which I could not approve. The English staff put on the annual Nativity Play. I would not touch it, so I was a "speckled bird." To a Roman Catholic who said it was beautiful, I replied: "It is blasphemy," and she replied: "You are in a shocking minority." I believe the Lord gave me my answer. I said: "Elijah was the only one right, but he *was* right."

*E. Styles*

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### EDITOR'S POSTBAG

*First answers to the monthly questions have been received from ANNE STREATER, BENJAMIN and JOHN VAN VUGT.*

**THE BLIND MARTYR**

## Chapter 1

“He comes to the light”

One of the most godly kings that ever reigned in England was Edward VI. He was a true Protestant who made the Bible his standard, and not the church of Rome. He was taught by the Spirit to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ alone for salvation, and not to rely on a priest. During his short reign he gave great encouragement to those who believed as he did and there were hopes that as he was so young, the country could look forward to a prolonged period of religious freedom. However, God’s ways are not our ways, for when he was only sixteen years of age, he died, and with him were buried for a time all the hopes of the Reformation in England.

During the period of his brief reign, there lived at Gloucester, a young lad who was totally blind. His parents were not sympathetic to the Reformation principles and they brought him up to pray to the Virgin Mary, and to believe that at the communion service called the Mass by the Roman Catholic church, the bread and wine were actually changed into the body and blood of Christ, and were to be worshipped as such. Also, that the word of the priest was to be obeyed without question.

This young boy, whose name was Thomas Drowry, although so sadly afflicted, was nevertheless determined not to let his disability hinder him from doing what others did, and because he had an enquiring mind, did not just take for granted the things he had been brought up to believe in.

One memorable day, he slipped into Gloucester Cathedral, where a renowned preacher called Dr. Williams was preaching. In his sermon, he showed from Scripture that prayers to any but God through the Lord Jesus Christ, were wrong, and that the bread and wine were to be looked on as representations of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus, and were not to be worshipped. As Thomas listened intently, his spiritual eyes were opened to see that the Lord Jesus Christ is the only way



of salvation and that to put our trust in any other, is to miss the way to heaven. Although at first the light he received in his soul was small, it grew until he became truly convinced of the great truths of the gospel. This great change was to be a very costly one for Thomas, but one he never regretted.

In 1553 Edward died at Greenwich, and though he had decreed that his cousin, Lady Jane Grey, another Protestant, should succeed him, it was soon evident that his sister Mary, an ardent Catholic, had enough power and support to depose Lady Jane, which she did, having her beheaded for treason.

Mary's support for the Roman Catholic cause was absolute. She would not tolerate any of the Reformation principles. Hundreds of Protestant ministers were turned out of their churches, and Romish priests substituted; priests who had married and who were sympathetic to the cause of the Reformation were imprisoned, and later on many suffered martyrdom as will soon be clear.

But what of Dr. Williams? He could see that the tide had turned in favour of the Roman Catholic religion, so to save his reputation he now began to preach against the very truths he had so vehemently proclaimed in Thomas's hearing. He now became the friend of the very men whom he had excommunicated for heresy during Edward's reign! He strove hard to get higher in the church and succeeded, but his name remains stained with blood. But what about Thomas? Unlike Dr. Williams, Thomas had received the truth into his heart by the power of the Holy Spirit, and he could not be persuaded otherwise. So now he became a marked person because he put his trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, and not the church. God gave him special strength to face the new troubles that had come upon him.

*(To be continued)*

*Adapted*

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Every well-spent day must begin with God.

### **SOUND AND UNSOUND MUSIC**

Last month I wrote about the ear and the wonderful design that God has applied to it so that we can hear even very faint noises. The ability to hear is a very wonderful gift from God and we should not abuse it.

As well as being able to hear speech, we can also hear music. In the day in which we live, there is much that we need grace not to listen to. God made man for His praise but we are often surrounded by the noise of those who have no wish to be found doing that. Many of you children and young people are surrounded from school age onwards by wrong speech, conversation and music. For example, children's birthday parties are often turned into "discos." Your parents will, quite rightly, not allow you to go, and you may perhaps feel upset about this and wonder why they are keeping you from your friends. Very many shops also have loud music beating in them and you may wonder why you do not have the same music in your home.

There are many things wrong with the music that we often hear around us. Firstly the music itself is not harmonious. It is not relaxing or peaceful and therefore cannot be good for you. Secondly, the words themselves are often very bad. Those that create such music do not love God. Coming from unholy hearts, you will find that the words put forward encourage wrong thoughts, actions and words in the hearts of those who listen. This is part of Satan's plan.

Then, there are the people themselves who create the music. What are their lives like? It is striking to notice that many of them die very young. This may be through drug abuse, suicide, accidents or by so-called natural causes, such as heart attacks. Many end up in court charged with offences. Often there are broken marriages, adulterous affairs and many other sins following them. So why do people seek to become so-called stars? The main reasons are for wealth, pleasure and fame and very often it leads to an early grave. Their lives are not God-honouring and Christians should pray to be kept from

these temptations that Satan seeks more and more to surround us with.

How different then are the lives of those who seek to praise God rightly! Yes, they are sinners and often feel to come short of what they should be, and yet there is in their heart a desire to praise God. The Psalmist David wrote many Psalms praising God, and throughout the Bible we have some of the hymns of praise that God's people sang. The Holy Bible itself is a book of praise to God who gave it, from Genesis to Revelation.

The praises that the Christian is taught to sing are a complete contrast to the world's songs. The prime reason for their praise is to honour God and not man. It does not give fame to the singer, but rather to their Heavenly Father. You will notice that the music that accompanies them is harmonious and pleasant to the heart and soul. It is relaxing to the ears and often helps thought and concentration. When sung with a God-given, prayerful heart, the answers to those prayers, and the joy that follows, are more than this world can ever give or dream of.

“Jesus, Friend of little children,  
Be a friend to me.  
Take my hand and ever keep me,  
Close to Thee.”

A simple, child's prayer, and yet if one of you little ones should say that prayer with a real need for God to answer it, you will be richer than anyone can be. To have Jesus as your Friend at all times, leading you safely on as one of His sheep, is the greatest favour any sinner can have. Those who sing and pray like that will one day be found with Him in heaven. Those who make the music we often hear about us, have no wish to have Jesus as their friend. They want to live their lives just as they please and Satan would certainly not want them to have any thoughts about their end.

We read an interesting statement in Revelation 14. 3: “And they sung as it were a new song before the throne.” This is

speaking of all those who will be found in heaven. God's people sing His praises here below, but it will be to a greater extent in heaven. God's people begin to learn the praises that are sung in heaven, here on earth, but as one hymnwriter wrote: "In a nobler, sweeter song, I'll sing Thy power to save." No music will ever compare with the anthems that will sound in heaven. There have been instances, when just before God's people have died, they have heard very beautiful music that no-one else can hear. What a comfort this must be at life's end! What about those in hell? There are no anthems in hell. The nearest that we read is: "and there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

May you children be given a prayer in your hearts to begin learning the praises of heaven here on earth.

J.P.S.

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### THE BEST VERSIONS

*Selected from the 1904 Annual Report of the Trinitarian Bible Society.*

One of the resolutions at the 1904 Annual Meeting pledged the Society to the "circulation of the best versions which can be obtained," and the Report contained the following statements:

"How infinitely important, then, is it, that the Bibles we send out should contain (as far as we can assure it) only and exactly what He has said, and what He can speak of and acknowledge as 'My words' ....We ought to leave nothing undone in order to secure that every translation shall be as near to human perfection as human capability can make it."

Satan's first words were: 'Yea, hath God said?' and the answer was given in *a false version* of what God had said. In that answer there was an *omission* from, and an *addition* to, and an *alteration* of what God had said. These are the only three ways in which the Word of God can be adulterated, and these are the three marks which have characterised all the false versions of that Word from that day to this...."

*BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES***THE HOLY SCRIPTURES OF TRUTH***THE NEW TESTAMENT OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST*

The New Testament contains twenty-seven books: four gospels bearing the name of the writers; The Acts of the Apostles; nine epistles (letters) of the Apostle Paul to churches; four epistles of the Apostle Paul to individuals; an epistle of Paul to the believing Jews in the early church, the Hebrews; then we have seven epistles bearing the names of the writers, the Apostles, James, Peter, John and Jude; then the Book of the Revelation of John the Divine, given to him by Jesus Christ on the Isle of Patmos.

*THE FOUR GOSPELS – MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE & JOHN* – Each of the gospels gives us an account, from the perspective of these four evangelists, of the life and discourses of our Lord Jesus Christ: His incarnation – His baptism – His ministry – His miracles – His sufferings – His death – His resurrection – His ascension into glory – His second coming to judge the world in righteousness – the end of the world – eternity.

*THE ACTS of the APOSTLES* – This gives us a record of the early church under the ministry of the apostles, the settlement of churches among the Gentiles and the acts of the apostles in the ministry of the word and the working of miracles, the journeys and persecutions they endured for Christ's sake.

*ROMANS, CORINTHIANS 1 & 2, GALATIANS, EPHESIANS, PHILIPPIANS, COLOSSIANS and THESSALONIANS 1 & 2* – These nine epistles to churches are named after the places where the churches were situated, they were all written by the Apostle Paul.

*TIMOTHY 1 & 2, TITUS and PHILEMON* – These four epistles written by Paul to individuals are named after the people to whom they were written. These men were all ministers of the gospel.

*THE EPISTLE to the HEBREWS* was not written to a church but to Hebrew or Jewish believers in the early church, who suffered sorely at the hands of their own brethren.

In these epistles, the Apostle lays out New Testament church order; he most beautifully exalts the Lord Jesus Christ as the sum and substance of all real religion. Whether he deals with Doctrine, Experience or Practice, he continually centres everything in Christ Jesus; he continually uses such expressions as: “in Him,” “through Him,” “by Him,” “unto Him.”

*JAMES, PETER 1 & 2, JOHN 1, 2 & 3 and JUDE* – These remaining seven epistles are named after the apostles who wrote them. These epistles are very searching and separating.

*THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE.* – The Lord Jesus Christ gave these revelations directly to John on the Isle of Patmos. This Book commences with the letters to the seven churches of Asia. The prophecies then cover the period of time from the first coming to the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, usually referred to in Scripture as the “last days.” The fundamental teaching is that though the powers of Satan will be unleashed against the church in these last days, and at times it will appear that he is in power, yet the church of God will prove again and again and again: “Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth” (Revelation 19. 6). We also have some glorious revelations of the future glory and happiness of the saints in heaven but also the awful terrors of the damned in hell.

Finally, let us consider the solemn concluding admonition in the word of God: “For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. (Revelation 22. 18-21)

*J.R. Rutt*

### BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month's questions are about *REPENTANCE*. The last five questions are more difficult and younger children may omit them. Please give references for questions 6 to 10 and send your answers to the Editor (see page 74 for the address). Please give your name and address and write the word *ANSWERS* on the envelope.

1. Who does God command to repent? (Acts 17. 30)
2. Write out Acts 5. 31, which shows that God must give repentance.
3. Who did Jesus say He came to call? (Matthew 9. 13)
4. What did the prodigal son say when he realised the awful state his sin had brought him into? (Luke 15. 18,19)
5. What prayer did the publican use in expression of his repentance? (Luke 18. 13)
6. Which king of Israel acknowledged his sin, but was more concerned about his own honour than God's? (1 Samuel 15)
7. Which wicked man "repented himself," but never knew what godly sorrow is? (Matthew 27)
8. Who said: "Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned," and on what occasion did he confess his sin in this way? (Psalm 51)
9. Why did the Apostle Paul rejoice when the Corinthians were sorry? (2 Corinthians 7)
10. What promise is given to any who confess: "I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not"? (Job 33)

### ANSWERS TO MARCH QUESTIONS

1. "Thou shalt hear the word at My mouth, and warn them from Me."
2. The trumpet.
3. "For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?"
4. "Ye shall be remembered before the LORD your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies."
5. At the overthrow of Jericho. (Joshua 6. 20,21)
6. "Be sure your sin will find you out."
7. Nineveh. (Jonah 3. 10)

8. The wise men (Matthew 2. 12) and Joseph (Matthew 2. 22)  
9. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke 13. 3, 5)  
10. "Flee from the wrath to come." (Matthew 3. 7)

*Contributed*

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**"THE EYE OF GOD"**

Almighty God, whose eyes behold

All that there is to see –

And in the Bible, I am told,

O God, Thou seest me.

All that I think, or do, or say,

Is fully known to Thee;

At home, abroad, at work, or play,

Great God, Thou seest me.

Should others tempt me to do wrong,

If I belong to Thee,

Then this remembrance makes me strong:

Thou always seest me.

And if to Jesus Christ I pray

Wherever I may be,

'Twill be my comfort day by day,

To know Thou seest me.

Jesus will ne'er His child cast out,

Who looks to Calvary's tree;

'Tis known in heaven without a doubt,

For God, Thou seest me.

May this thought govern all my ways:

Thou seest even me;

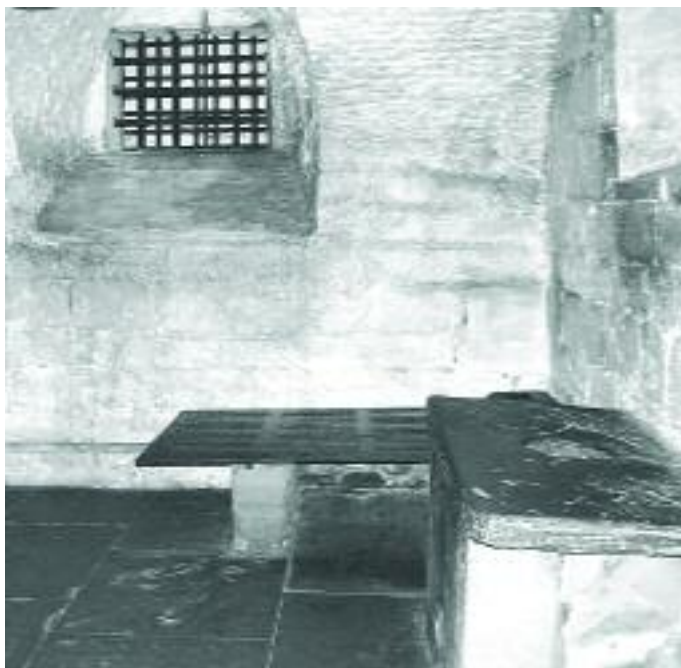
Till I my blessed Saviour praise,

When His dear face I see.

*F.T. Waller*



# *The Friendly Companion*



A Prison Cell in York Castle  
(Picture by kind permission of Mr. David Ford)

“Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made  
without ceasing of the church unto God for him.”  
(Acts 12. 5)

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*May 2005*

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## OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

Many of you will have been hearing of the death of the leader of the Roman Catholic Church, called the Pope, and may have been wondering what to think about this man whose popularity seems to have swept the world.

We would not doubt that there are some things for which he stood that were right. In many ways he seemed to give a moral lead that is sadly lacking in our own state church. Many have concluded from this and his apparently appealing disposition that he was a man of God. However when we examine his true beliefs and the system over which he presided we must come to the conclusion that he was guided by the spirit of antichrist rather than the true Spirit of Christ.

Firstly, we are forbidden to call any man Father, in a spiritual sense. The very name Pope, means Father, and by it its bearer claims to be the father of all the Christian family on earth and indeed of all the rulers of the world. This is a false and an idolatrous claim, as is the claim to be the true successor of the Apostle Peter and also the Vicar of Christ. [A vicar is a representative or a substitute for someone else.]

Secondly, his adoration of the Virgin Mary was totally unscriptural. On his coffin was the letter M signifying where he placed his trust for his eternal safety. The word of God tells us: "There is one mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus." If he died trusting in her merit rather than Christ's he did not die in the faith of God's elect.

Thirdly, the whole system of Roman Catholicism rests on the premise that it is through the Church of Rome and its rites and ceremonies that men are saved. A Roman Catholic rests his salvation on the church rather than Christ alone. The word of God teaches us that salvation is of grace. The whole system of Roman Catholicism is one of salvation by works, contrary to the truth.

Some years ago I saw a poster which read something like this:

“No authority, but the Word of God,  
No priest but Christ,  
No sacrifice but the cross of Christ.”

On this ground and no other all true Christians stand. May God teach us and enable us so to do.

With best wishes from your sincere friend and Editor

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### OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

The picture on the front of our magazine this month shows a prison cell. In fact, it is the cell in York Castle, where the famous highwayman, Dick Turpin, spent his last night before he was hanged for his ill deeds. It was in just such a cell that the Apostle Peter was kept prior to the day before Herod intended to execute him, as he had already done to James. We know, however, that Herod's plans were thwarted by the miraculous deliverance of Peter from his prison cell, by the angel. This was in answer to the urgent and instant prayer made on his behalf by the church at Jerusalem. Many of God's people over the years have had to suffer imprisonment for the truth's sake in the same way. Far better to be in prison for the sake of the truth, than to be like Dick Turpin, who was suffering the due reward of his evil and violent life.

Around the year 1642, a little group of believers who were Baptists, met in a cottage at a village near Sevenoaks in Kent. As this was then, in fact, an illegal gathering, spies reported the matter to the local magistrate. He sent his officers to the service, and all the men were taken into custody, no doubt into cells like the one shown. The next day they were brought before the Justices and after being closely examined, to their immense surprise, they were released without charge.

Full of joy and thanksgiving at this sudden and unexpected turn of events, they returned to the meeting room to give thanks to God. They found still there, to their surprise, the

women from whom they had been forcibly removed the previous evening. The women had spent the whole night in fasting and prayer, on behalf of the prisoners. Just as in Peter's case, their prayers were answered, and they had the joy of seeing their brethren again in the House of God.

One good man rightly said: "There are more things wrought by prayer than this world dreams of." How true!

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### A DOG IN THE CHAPEL

There once lived in the north of England a poor woman who had a drunken, swearing husband. For long years she prayed for him, but there was no sign of repentance. The woman was accustomed to worship in a little chapel, and her dog always followed her, and curled himself up under her seat during the service, and then accompanied his mistress home. At last the woman died, but the dog still continued to attend regularly as it was in the habit of doing. One day the husband, greatly wondering where the dog went to, followed it, when to his astonishment he saw it enter the little place of worship. Attracted by this singular incident, he thought to himself: "I may as well go in for once." He did so, and there God the Holy Spirit brought the Word home with power to his heart, and he was brought to feel his need of Jesus, and to cry for mercy and salvation to Him. So the woman's prayers in her lifetime were answered after her death.

*The Protestant Echo 1900*

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### EDITOR'S POSTBAG:

*First answers to the monthly questions have been received from JONATHAN BURTON; JAMES CHEWTER; JAMES CROWTER; EDWARD GREEN; LUKE HAYDEN; JONATHAN PACK; JOHN, LUKE and SANDRA SEYMOUR; CHLOE WOODS.*

*FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES***THE TRUTH**

How important it is to tell the truth! Those who always speak the truth are trusted, and their words believed. Those who tell a lie, sin against God and harm themselves and others.

When God put Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, He told them: *"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."* Satan came in the form of a serpent and said: *"Ye shall not surely die."* Because Eve believed the lie of Satan rather than the truth of God, death came into the world. The Word of God (the Holy Bible) is *"true from the beginning."* Satan is *"a liar, and the father of it."*

The Lord Jesus said: ***"I am ... the truth."*** He came into the world to *"bear witness unto the truth."* All His words are faithful and true. May the Lord teach you to believe His Word and to trust in Him.

**QUESTIONS:**

1. What is true from the beginning?
2. Who said: *"I am ... the truth"?*
3. What did He come to bear witness unto?

*Contributed*

*Send your answers to the Editor (see page 98 for the address). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.*

**ANSWERS TO APRIL QUESTIONS**

1. The LORD
2. I am the way.
3. The Bible

*“Lead me  
in Thy  
truth, and  
teach me.”  
Psalm 25. 5.*

## BIBLE LESSONS

## SIMEON AND ANNA

Do you remember what God gave to Moses on Mount Sinai? It was the Law of God. Besides the Ten Commandments, there were many other laws the children of Israel must keep. One such commandment regarded the birth of children. If a son was born, he was to be circumcised on the eighth day and given his name. You remember that John the Baptist was named on the eighth day. Mary and Joseph had been told by the angel of God what to call the Baby. He was named JESUS.

If you study the Word of God, you will find that the Lord Jesus has many other names besides JESUS. The Prophet Isaiah said: *"His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."* All His names tell what He is to His people.

After forty days, they were to take their firstborn son to the temple *"to present him to the Lord,"* and to offer a sacrifice. When Joseph and Mary brought the Baby Jesus, they were so poor they could not afford to bring a lamb. Though poor, they were not excused from bringing a sacrifice. Instead of a lamb they could bring *"a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."* Yet the very Baby in their arms was *"The Lamb of God"* Himself.

On the day that Joseph and Mary were making their way to the temple with the Baby Jesus, the Holy Spirit was directing the steps of a man named Simeon to go to the temple. Simeon was a godly, gracious man who was waiting for a special revelation. God had promised him *"... that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ."*

As he stood in the temple, perhaps he wondered what the strong feelings and powerful leadings in his heart meant. As soon as Mary and Joseph brought the Baby Jesus into the temple, the Spirit revealed to him that this Baby was the long-awaited Saviour. Was he disappointed or offended that the Saviour appeared as a helpless baby? No, indeed not. He took the Baby in his arms and blessed God saying: *"Lord, now*



*lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace ... For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation.*" As Simeon spoke many wonderful things about the Baby, Joseph and Mary were amazed.

Simeon then blessed them in the name of the Lord. Last of all, he told Mary some very solemn things. One thing was that her Child was set for *"the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against;"* meaning that not everyone would believe in Him, for many would reject, despise, and mock Him. The second thing was even more sorrowful: *"Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also."* It was as though he could see the day when Mary would stand near the cross at Calvary, while her Son and Saviour suffered the thorns and the nails, and the sword was thrust into His side.

While Simeon was holding the Baby Jesus, another figure approached. It was an old woman whose name was Anna. She was a prophetess. As a young woman she had the joy of marrying a husband, but after a few years her husband died. What a heavy trial! After the death of her husband, Anna spent all her time in the temple serving God. Day and night she could be found praying unto God. What a good religion she had. She, too, was waiting for the coming Messiah.

When Anna saw Simeon holding the Baby Jesus, she also gave thanks and praised God for His merciful kindness in giving His own Son. Quickly she went out to tell others, who *"looked for redemption,"* that the Lord Jesus was born.

*You can read about this in Luke chapter 2 verses 21 to 39.*

#### QUESTIONS:

1. What five names did Isaiah give to Jesus?
2. Who directed Simeon to the temple?
3. What special promise had God given him?
4. What did he tell Mary would pierce her own soul?
5. Who spent all her time in the temple serving God?

*Please send your answers to the Editor (see address on page 98). Please mark the envelope ANSWERS. Remember to give your name and address.)*

*G.L. TenBroeke*

**ANSWERS TO APRIL QUESTIONS**

1. Shepherds.
  2. An angel of the Lord.
  3. Good tidings of great joy.
  4. Their steps.
  5. Kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.
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**“AM I MY BROTHER’S KEEPER?”**

This true story comes from Australia, where some of our readers live.

Two brothers lived in the outback (away from the town) not far from a river. They were aged twelve and six respectively. One thing they both liked from an early age was to go fishing. The trouble was that the younger just could not keep still and often frightened away the fish. So one day, the elder brother decided he would creep silently out of the house without telling his younger brother, and try to have an hour fishing on his own, free from disturbance. He managed to reach a quiet spot on the bank, hidden as he thought from all eyes. He settled down and watched his float after he had cast the line. After a while he caught a large fish, which made him very happy. Suddenly there was a big plop in the water. At first he thought it must have been a big fish, but when another plop came soon after, he began to suspect that someone was throwing stones into the water. All fishermen know that to disturb the water in this way drives away the fish. When yet another large plop landed right beside his float, his eye caught sight of his younger brother on the other side of the river, just about to hurl another stone.

Now the younger brother was very wrong to do this, but what happened next was just as bad! The older brother picked up a clod of earth and hurled it across the bank. He only meant to scare his younger brother away, and usually he missed his aim when he threw stones. This clod, however, went directly across the river and smack into the face of his younger brother! “I am going to tell Dad of you!” he shouted, as the blood began to pour down his face.

The older brother knew that he would be in trouble when he got home. His afternoon spoiled, he slowly packed up his fishing tackle, and taking with him the large fish he had caught, hoping that it might get him out of trouble, he slowly wended his way home.

When he got there, his father was waiting for him, ready to punish him. Even the large fish he had caught didn't save him from his father's anger! He had to learn that as the older brother, he was to look after his younger brother when they were out together, and was responsible for his safety. Perhaps he began to say: "Am I my brother's keeper?" but his father showed him that he was.

But another lesson comes to us from these two brothers. It all started with one wrong step. If the older brother had explained to his parents and to his younger brother why he wanted to go on his own, instead of slyly trying to get out unseen, then the sad chapter of events would not have taken place at all! Of course, the younger brother was also very wrong to throw the stones. In the end they both were wrong and had to suffer for it. Happily the two brothers soon became friends again and had many happy hours fishing together after that. Both of them realised that they needed to be forgiven.

In the Bible, however, we read of two brothers where the quarrel did not end so happily. This time, the fault was all on the side of the elder brother Cain, who was so jealous of his brother Abel, that he murdered him. When God asked him where his brother Abel was, Cain insolently asked the question: "Am I my brother's keeper?" It was too late, however, to put matters right on this occasion, as Abel lay slain on the ground. Sadly, unlike the brothers in our story, Cain was never really sorry for his sin, and it was never forgiven.

These things teach us that we need to be kept in all our actions from our own spirit and to seek the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom it was said: "Even Christ pleased not Himself."

*Adapted from J. Cromarty*

### DIVINE PROVIDENCE

An illustration of what is meant by divine providence in the March 2005 *Friendly Companion*, reminded me of an incident in World War I (1914-18).

James was a young soldier in the 1914-18 war. On one occasion when in the trenches, the enemy began to attack our army with shells. As James was standing there, he thought he saw a movement by his feet, and stooping down to investigate, there was a little mouse running around at the bottom of the trench. At that moment a shell landed very near the trench in which he stood, killing and wounding soldiers on either side of him. Who caused the mouse to attract his attention at that moment? Why was *his* life spared?

Some time later, James was again in the trenches when the command was given to the company to leave the trenches and advance towards enemy lines. Many young men were killed and wounded, and this time James was severely wounded too, but while he was left there on the battlefield, surrounded by the dead and dying, the Lord spoke to him with the words of the hymnwriter:

“Plagues and deaths around me fly;  
Till He bids, I cannot die;  
Not a single shaft can hit,  
Till the God of love sees fit.”

Eventually, James was rescued and his wounds were attended to. When he was considered to be fit enough to travel, he was sent back to hospital in England to continue his recovery. This was the end of active service for him. Again, *his* life was spared, when so many others were killed instantly, or died later from their injuries. Why? Well, we know that God is a Sovereign and has a right to do as He wills, but as in the case of John Newton, the Lord purposed that James was to be a gospel minister. James was the late J.C. Burgess, for many years pastor at Mount Zion chapel, Bournemouth.

*Contributed*

**THE BLIND MARTYR****Chapter 2     “The Clouds Gather”**

The winter of 1553 had passed. It was Thursday afternoon, February 8th, 1554. Thomas was in his cottage a little way out of Gloucester, when he heard the sound of galloping hooves pass by in the road towards the town. His acute sense of hearing told him that the riders were not local men. Soon he heard the sounds of many footsteps as crowds were hurrying along the road past his home towards Gloucester. What could it all mean? An old lady, also a true believer like Thomas, began to say: “Our good Bishop of Gloucester, Dr. Hooper, ...” but she was too full of grief to finish. Thomas instinctively knew what was happening. Bishop Hooper was at that moment being brought into Gloucester from Newgate prison in London, to die! Thomas could hear the muffled sobs of many in the crowds, some of whom were praying aloud that the Lord would give Bishop Hooper strength and grace to bear the fire and glorify God in his death.

“Where are they taking him?” asked Thomas. “To the house of Master Ingram,” the old lady replied.

“Could you see his face?” he asked. “Not very well,” she replied, “his head was covered with a hood over his hat.”

“Did he walk?” “No,” was the answer, “he was on horseback.”

“Who was that who galloped in first and then came back with the other riders?” “It was one of the guards. Queen Mary had sent six of her soldiers to bring him here. I suppose they were afraid of unrest, so this one went ahead to warn the mayor and sheriff to be prepared,” was the reply.

Thomas was going to ask where Bishop Hooper was to be burnt, but the question seemed too dreadful to even ask, so instead tears poured down his sightless face.

That evening was a very solemn one for Thomas and others who believed as he did. He could see that the good Bishop might not be the only one who would suffer at the stake for Christ’s sake. What if he should be the next one? Could he

stand such a test? So he turned to the Lord in prayer and prayed that the precious promise: “As thy days, so shall thy strength be,” would be true for him.

It was a dreadful day in Gloucester, February 9th 1554. Thomas drank in all he could hear of the terrible events. The words Bishop Hooper spoke to the weeping crowds who followed him to the great elm tree where he used to preach Christ to them; the way in which he had to lean upon his staff because his back was in so much pain; the temptations put before him to recant; the showing to him of the Queen’s pardon if he would deny the faith; the undressing of the martyr; the gunpowder placed around him; the greenness of the wood which was slow to burn; the length of time he suffered until the winds turned to blow the fire on to him. All these things filled Thomas’s heart, especially the words of the Bishop to one who said that life is sweet and death is bitter: “True it is that death is bitter and life is sweet; but the death to come is more bitter, and the life to come more sweet.”

*(To be continued)*

*Adapted*

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### **“ONLY BELIEVE”**

*“Only believe” (Mark 5. 36).*

One of the slogans of the Reformation is *sola fide*, which means *by faith only*. People living during the Middle Ages did not consider faith to be so crucial; rather, they especially focused on the sacraments. They considered the water of baptism, the bread of the mass, and the absolution of the priest to have magical power – which was, to them, a major thing. Faith was not important at all. You did not have to understand much, and you did not need anything but to be a faithful member of the church.

Today we hear something similar concerning faith. Again, faith has become insignificant, and we hear that we must “only believe.” To me it sounds as though believing is not difficult, and that you may easily do it. “Just believe,” people say. To validate “just believe,” people quote the Scriptures where the

Lord spoke to Jairus: "Only believe." But do they, and do we, understand what that means? Think of the word *only*.

The word *only* can be used in different ways. Compare the meaning of *only* in the following sentences: "The island can be reached *only* by boat," or, "It is *only* a theory." What a difference in meaning there is! The first sentence refers to the sole possibility and the only means. The second sentence expresses that something is not that important: "It is only a theory." So what did the Lord say to Jairus, whose daughter had already died? That only a little faith would solve it? That faith was no more than snapping your fingers? Or did the Lord mean to say that faith was necessary as the *only* way to receive God's grace?

We know from other places in God's Word that faith is never referred to as a childish and simplistic matter. Think now of Jairus – to believe that the Lord Jesus will quicken your deceased daughter from the dead is not insignificant at all. I would say it is impossible to believe that. And yet, that was the *only* way. Without faith it is impossible to please God. The Lord could do no wonders in Nazareth because of their unbelief! In Hebrews 11. 6 we read that he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

Dear reader, do we know of the necessity of that faith? Do we know of the empty beggar's hand? Have we lost all our self-righteousness and learned to come without good works, without worthiness, without experiences, and without the approval of ministers or elders?

Only by a true faith can a sinner receive forgiveness. Whosoever believeth in the Second Person, in the Son of God, will not perish, but have everlasting life. *That* is the faith the Lord works in the heart. Sacraments do not convey grace; faith is the only means the Lord uses. It is the channel the Lord uses. Such faith, a true faith, is a gift of God. Do not be offended when you read that. That opens the door for the

greatest of sinners. However, the Lord is not stating that we must come with a self-made faith, an artificial faith. No, the Lord looks upon that people who have no expectation of self but are expecting even faith from above. Then they must say: "Help Thou mine unbelief."

*Rev. P. van Ruitenburg. (N.R.C. Banner of Truth)*

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### **MOTORCYCLES! (II continued)**

Apart from one short season mentioned below, I did not lose that sweet spirituality of mind the whole time I was confined to bed and several times, especially during the first two weeks, the Lord most powerfully shone into my soul. One evening – and sleeping was not easy with the bed tilted up all the time – I had gone to sleep, and this verse came so powerfully, that I awoke singing it before I fully realised where I was:

"He crowns thy life with love,  
When ransomed from the grave;  
He that redeemed my soul from hell  
Has sovereign power to save."

Blessed be God who had delivered my life from natural death and my soul from eternal wrath. With what sweet delight could I praise Him. One verse which most blessedly described my feelings (and how many times since I have wished I could say it as I did then) was this:

"Thou art the sea of love,  
Where all my pleasures roll;  
The circle where my passions move,  
And centre of my soul."

But then there was one time which is not at all to my credit, though the Lord mercifully overruled it. Some of the other patients in the ward were talking together, and though I cannot remember what it was about, I know it was wrong, and was said in such a way that made me laugh. Immediately I felt so condemned in my soul because I had been laughing at sin,



and the Lord withdrew His sweet face behind a cloud and left me to mourn my sin and shame. And no sorrow is as bitter as when we feel we have grieved a dear Saviour who has done so much for us. I think it was only a day or so later, when mourning over my sin, that the Lord returned in these words which broke my heart to pieces:

“Yet, when they mourned their faults,  
He hearkened to their groans,  
Brought His own covenant to His thoughts,  
And called them still His sons.”

I do not think I ever saw so clearly the wonders of redeeming grace and how it was manifest to the chief of sinners. I leave those who have been in a like place to judge of my feelings. Well might I say:

“Love and grief my heart dividing,  
With my tears His feet I’ll bathe.”

I remember one day someone commiserating with me on the trial I had, being in bed all day in such an uncomfortable position; but I could see no trial at all – it was the happiest time of my life. After this, the Lord was pleased to withdraw the powerful sense of His presence in measure, though my mind was sweetly stayed upon Him, often with sweet meditation upon His Word. But I did long once more for Him to come again, and many times prayed that if it was His will, He might give me another sweet visit before I left hospital. Just a few days before I was discharged, I was reading, I think a funeral sermon in an old “Sower” magazine, when my heart began to melt in union with the experience being related of the one who had died. Then I came to these words and they were given to me so powerfully: “In this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.” Then a few lines later, these words were quoted, which seemed a most precious seal on all the Lord had done for me:

“Away sad doubt and anxious fear,  
Mercy and love are written there.”

Indeed these words seemed to summarise the whole of the Lord’s dealings with me whilst in hospital. I couldn’t keep the tears from my eyes, and one of the nurses came and asked if anything was the matter. Shortly after this, I was taken out of traction and a new plaster put on my leg, and as soon as I could get out of bed, I sensibly felt the Lord withdraw the sweetness of His presence from me. The memory of the Lord’s kindness has never been forgotten, even though I have been in many storms since.

I remained with my leg in plaster for a total of seventeen weeks. Early in 1972, I was due to start work with a new employer as part of my industrial training at college, so I bought a new motorcycle and for several weeks went backwards and forwards to work with my leg still in plaster. I think some people thought the accident would have put me off motorcycling!

*(To be continued)*

*Contributed*

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### “KEPT”

The move from an educational environment to employment is a very big milestone in anyone’s life. It is also a very vulnerable time. There are many problems that are endured at school, but when employment is started, much more is seen of the influence of the world and the devil, than ever before.

It is now that prayer, and the prayers that parents and friends have offered up to Almighty God, are needed to keep the young from falling away. I hope and trust that you will pray about your future employment. It is a great mercy to see God preparing a way before you so that when you start work you feel to be where God intends, but even there, God’s keeping power will be needed, together with much prayer.

One of the most corrupting influences that I have seen about me during my experience at work, is that of public

houses and drink. The havoc that excess drinking has caused to our national economy cannot be calculated. This, however, pales into insignificance when the damage to our nation spiritually, is considered. Excess drinking is a scourge upon the nations of the earth, and Satan uses it to bring out the very worst in human nature. The lost days of work, the addiction to alcohol, the broken homes and marriages, together with the loss of man's moral principles and the forgetting of God, are but a few of the fruits of this great temptation. The Bible has many warnings against drunkenness and excess drinking. We would do well to remember and take heed to them. It is my hope that the following account may be an encouragement to one and another who may soon be starting, or have recently started, employment, and are faced with the difficulty of being encouraged to drink.

In the summer of 1989, I was asked by my employer to go to London for a period of six weeks with some other colleagues, to learn a new job. At the end of this time, I was to bring the work back to the office where I was working. Being nineteen, with a career ahead of me, I was very pleased to be given this opportunity. During the day, the experience of working in London's financial "Square Mile" was very interesting and I enjoyed my new role very much. In the evenings, however, things were rather different. Often I used to have my evening meal and spend the remainder in my hotel room. Occasionally I would go out sightseeing. It soon became apparent, however, that most of my colleagues wanted to spend evenings in the public house or at the hotel bar, and it wasn't long before I was pressed to join them.

Being different is a lonely path to walk, and it is far better, and easier in the long run, to make your position clear to the world at the first opportunity. It is very hard to say: "No," particularly when it is to people that you have to work with on a daily basis. You will often find, though, as you go on in employment, that teams of colleagues change rapidly and it is

not long before you can be working with a completely different group of people and they will tend to forget all that has happened in the past. It is, therefore, better to have your conscience right with God and not to be pleasing colleagues who you may be with for a short time only. In the end the world will respect you more for standing by your principles.

I trust that it was by God's grace that I was enabled to resist their invitations during this time. I had hoped that having said "No," once, that would be the end of the matter. I had to learn though, that when you are alone in a pathway, the world watches and will, if it can, trip you up in a weak moment and the questions kept being asked. One evening, a group of my colleagues came to my hotel room and insisted that I go with them to the hotel bar. Eventually they went away. As it was mid-summer the heat was intense in London, which made me feel very tired. As a result, I felt very lonely and low in spirit. I picked up my Bible that was on the table and it opened at John 14, and I started to read. I couldn't begin to describe my feelings upon reading the first three verses of that chapter. The end of verse three was as far as I got. I felt to be the most favoured sinner in the whole of the Capital and the very best of Friends felt to be very near. When I thought of my colleagues in the hotel bar, I felt very sorry for them. They were drinking the pleasures of this world. How different was my lot! The events of that evening have probably been long forgotten by them, but it was an evening that I shall never forget.

Times like this are very rare, but they make the world a very dead place. The temptations of the world will still come and the same grace is needed to resist them. Often we find ourselves easy targets and the "fear of man" is as strong as ever. It is only by prayer and God's grace that we will be kept from temptation, and whilst we would not in any way make any excuse or licence for sin, it is a great mercy that "if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

*J.P.S.*

*BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES***THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY AND ITS CHARACTERS**

You will have noticed in our recent survey of the Holy Scriptures that some of the books of the Bible were written during the time when the children of Israel were captives in the land of Babylon. We hear a lot today of the country called Iraq: well this is where the ancient Babylon was. It is also believed to be where the Garden of Eden was.

The children of Israel departed from serving the LORD Jehovah and turned to the gods of the heathen. The LORD raised up His servants to exhort them to repentance: to repent means to turn around and face the opposite direction. Jeremiah, who prophesied just before the captivity said this: "If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the LORD, return unto Me: and if thou wilt put away thine abominations out of My sight, then shalt thou not remove" (Jeremiah 4. 1). We could multiply similar quotations from the prophets. The LORD very patiently raised up His servants to warn Israel and Judah that the consequences of their sin would lead to captivity, as a punishment for their sins. We see in this example how the Lord deals with His children. In Proverbs we read: "My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of His correction: For whom the LORD loveth He correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth" (Proverbs 3. 11-12). This is quoted by the Apostle Paul in Hebrews 12. The captivity was a mark of the LORD's love to Israel.

"God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform;  
He plants His footsteps in the sea,  
And rides upon the storm."

In Jeremiah we read of the **length of the captivity**: in other words, the LORD did not intend to destroy Israel, only to chastise: "Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Because ye have not heard My words, Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the LORD, and Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this

land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations. Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle. And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon **seventy years**" (Jeremiah 25. 8-11).

Jeremiah lived to see the captivity and so great and awful were the desolations of the land of Israel, that he thought the LORD had completely rejected them. In the last verse of the Lamentations of Jeremiah we read: "But Thou hast utterly rejected us; Thou art very wroth against us" (Lamentations 5. 22). This shows us that our feelings are not always right. Jeremiah was a godly man, a discerning man, but he was not always right. Sometimes in the churches there is a dispute over a certain issue, and someone says: "I feel this, or I feel that." What we should say is: "What saith the Scriptures?" Our feelings are not infallible, but the Holy Scriptures are. To prove this point, let us look at Ezekiel 1, which immediately follows Lamentations. "Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. In the fifth day of the month, which was the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity, The word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was there upon him" (Ezekiel 1. 1-3). In other words, the LORD had not rejected His people. He was still sending His servants to them.

During this period of the Captivity, the LORD raised up some remarkable characters from among the Jewish captives. As the Lord may be pleased to help us, I would like to look at some of these characters during the next few months.

*J.R. Rutt*

### BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about the *FORGIVENESS* or *REMISSION OF SIN*. Younger children need only do five questions. Please give references for questions 7 to 10 and send your answers to the Editor (see page 98 for the address). Please give your name and address and write the word *ANSWERS* on the envelope.

1. What word does David use in Psalm 25. 11 which means the same as 'forgive'?
2. How many times was Peter to forgive his brother who had sinned against him? (Matthew 18. 21-22)
3. What does the Apostle Paul say is necessary for the remission of sin (three words)? (Hebrews 9. 22)
4. Who is described as 'blessed' in Psalm 32. 1?
5. What warning did the Lord Jesus speak about forgiveness after having taught his disciples to pray? (Matthew 6. 15)
6. How many times did Solomon, in his prayer at the dedication of the temple, plead with God for forgiveness? (2 Chronicles 6)
7. What four things were seen in those God promised to forgive in answer to Solomon's prayer? (2 Chronicles 7)
8. Who did Peter say should receive remission of sins? (Acts 10)
9. Why did the poor woman we read of at the end of Luke 7 love the Lord Jesus so much?
10. Who prayed to be forgiven, but never repented of his sin, and being hardened, finally perished? (Exodus 10)

### ANSWERS TO APRIL QUESTIONS

1. "All men, everywhere."
2. "Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins."
3. "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."
4. "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants."
5. "God, be merciful to me a sinner."
6. Saul. (1 Samuel 15. 30)
7. Judas Iscariot. (Matthew 27. 3-5)
8. David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba. (Psalm 51 heading and verse 4)

9. Because they "sorrowed to repentance" or, they "were made sorry after a godly manner." (2 Corinthians 7. 9)  
10. "He (God) will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light." (Job 33. 27-28)

*Contributed*

---

**ON HEARING THE REPORT OF A MINISTER'S FALL**

Alas! How busy mortals seem  
To spread reports and ruin him,  
    O'ertaken with a fault;  
Yea, even saints, too, catch the sound,  
And gladly spread the matter round,  
    Well pleased to see him halt.

Did we but see their own abode,  
And tell th' appalling sight abroad,  
    The world would cry out: "*Shame!*"  
Keen-eyed, as vultures, to espy,  
And spread abroad with ecstasy  
    The faults I will not name.

Where is the man that knows his heart,  
Can ever act so base a part  
    As strike the dying dead?  
Oh no! true Christian love compels,  
And with delight he never tells,  
    But grieves at what is said.

Good God, look on Thy church below,  
That every child of Thine may know  
    And practise, too, Thy laws:  
Rather a brother's fault conceal,  
Than to the carnal world reveal  
    Things to reproach Thy cause.

*H. Fowler*



# *The Friendly Companion*



“LORD, I have loved the habitation of Thy house,  
and the place where Thine honour dwelleth.”  
(Psalm 26. 8)

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*June 2005*

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### OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

June is with us already, and how quickly is the year passing away! Here in England it is now midsummer, but of course our readers in Australia and New Zealand are in the middle of their winter! Our longest day of sunlight is their shortest day! Soon, however, it will all be reversed and, God willing, by the time another six months of our lives are spent, we in England will need our coats to go out in and our Southern Hemisphere friends hopefully, will be basking in the sun.

All of these changing times and seasons are wonderfully managed and balanced by our Creator. It would never do if it were always summer, nor likewise if winter never ended. So in our lives it is important to remember that there will be changes that come. The Bible speaks about adversity as well as prosperity. God's people prove that He can make both their troubles and their joys to be a blessing to them. Sometimes their greatest apparent troubles turn out to be the greatest blessings. What a terrible trouble it was for the eleven disciples to see the Lord Jesus Christ taken from them and crucified. It took all the joy out of their lives. Yet what a great blessing it is that Christ did suffer, bleed and die, and then rise again. Paul could say that Christ was delivered (*to be crucified*) for our offences, and raised again for our justification (*pardon*). The disciples lived to thank God that it was so and to preach the glad tidings of a risen Jesus to others.

Job was asked the question: "Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of Him which is perfect in knowledge?" When you think of the millions of gallons contained in the clouds, and yet they don't topple out of the sky! But in God's own time and way they drop down their moisture for the good of the earth beneath.

Perhaps some of our readers are under some heavy clouds in their lives. Remember, they are balanced by God. Good William Cowper, the hymn-writer and poet, who suffered from a severe mental depression for most of his life, said:

“Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;  
The clouds ye so much dread  
Are big with mercy, and shall break  
In blessings on your head.”

May we be encouraged to believe that even our darkest clouds are in His hand.

With best wishes from your sincere friend and Editor.

---

### OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

The front cover picture shows a chapel that many of our readers will be familiar with. It is Kirkland Chapel, near Garstang in Lancashire. If you go into the well-kept graveyard you will eventually come across a gravestone to a man called William Dunderdale. Some years ago, the story of this good man's life appeared in the *Cheering Words* magazine. Here it is reproduced by kind permission of the editor, our friend, Mr. Oldham.

William Dunderdale was born in 1811, and when he grew up he worked on a farm in the Lancashire foothills not far from Morecambe Bay. Like most young lads then, he lived in at the farm, and soon grew like the other lads there, spending the evenings playing cards, and coming more and more to hate the religion of his mother and father. All his mother could do was to pray over her absent son, and at last the Lord answered her prayers; God met with him, and showed him how godless he was, and where his soul would end if he went on as he was – for when God gives our souls eyes, it is amazing how quickly we see so much we need to. So it was William began to pray – in the ditches, away in the fields, far from man, alone with God. And at last he was brought by the Holy Spirit to know and feel that his sins were forgiven by the atoning sacrifice of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and joy and peace came with the believing.

He married, and they settled with his mother, and he began daily reading and prayer from the very start. How thankful his

mother was. And in 1834, in a clay-pit on Primrose Hill Farm at Nateby, a few miles north of Preston, Lancashire, he was baptized as a believer, and two years later his wife followed him.

He became tenant of a small farm, and beneath the turf lay peat several feet thick. This could be cut in slabs, and after it was dry it was used as fuel by nearly everybody in the area; people today still remember seeing stacks of peat, cut in the summer, drying in open stacks by the roadside all the way down to Knott End on the coast; then, when it was dry, a corner was dipped in paraffin, and the fire was soon ablaze. Well, William's farm had much peat, and he worked at it well – once he had a hundred stacks drying, when they all caught fire; it was a loss, and everyone around knew it. Going to the grocer's just after, he found a kind friend had left him five shillings (25p) to help compensate a little; so he told the shopkeeper instead to send a half-a-crown's (12½p) worth of meal each to two people he named, and not to say where it had come from. It proved later that neither of them had any food in the house when the welcome flour arrived. Incidentally, underneath the peat, feet down, old tree-trunks are often found, proving the origin of these beds at the time of the Flood; and sea-shells there are too on the tops of the nearby hills.

Well, William Dunderdale had a big family, and they all married partners outside the chapel circle, and brought their partners with them. One of the Dunderdale girls married a farmer some miles away who went to church; and they agreed at first to go each alternate Sunday to his church and her chapel. The first part of the road was the same way; then they came to a T junction – left was to church, right to chapel. Coming in their horse and trap to the T one Sunday, the wife feeling less and less easy with the arrangement, said: "Oh, I wish we didn't change about like this." So, coming to the T, her husband said: "Very well: we'll settle it once and for all.

Next week at the T, I'll throw the reins on the horse's neck, and whichever way it takes, there we'll go always, church or chapel!" Oh how the wife prayed that week, and even more so as Sunday arrived. Leaving Longridge, along the road they came; how earnestly she cried to God as they came to the T; and oh, the horse, with the reins thrown on its neck, turned to chapel. So it was that at length the husband came not only under the truth, but to love the truth, and in the end, to preach the unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ.

Well, William lived to see a chapel built, wonderfully provided; heard William Gadsby preach the opening sermon from Exodus 3. 14; saw his son William called by grace, and baptized; saw his children's children, and peace upon Israel. "Happy is that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the LORD" (Psalm 144. 15). Reader, seek to know Him, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent – eternal life depends on it!

---

### **THE BLIND MARTYR**

#### **Chapter 3 "The Final Trial"**

Scarcely had the fires died down from Bishop Hooper's martyrdom, than others were lit. Some gave way and recanted but many stood firm and stood the fiery test. Blind Thomas listened attentively to all these happenings and he became more and more convinced that even though he was blind, that would not spare him from the merciless cruelty of those who were determined to stamp out the spreading flame of truth.

In October 1555, Thomas heard of the martyrdom of Latimer and Ridley. Not long after this he himself was arrested and taken to Gloucester, but his faith stood firm by God's grace.

At his last trial the chancellor said to him: "Do you believe that after the words of consecration spoken by the priest, that the bread and wine truly become the body of Christ?"

"No, indeed I do not," replied Thomas unflinchingly, as he

turned his blind eyes to the chancellor.

"Then you are a heretic and must be burned. But who taught you these heresies?"

Thomas knew the voice of the speaker well. It was none other than the Dr. Williams whose teachings had been used of God to open Thomas's eyes to the truth. He was now chancellor and the judge before whom Thomas stood.

"You, Dr. Williams," said Thomas. "You taught me this, what you now call heresy. You said in this very place, that the bread and the wine were symbols of the body of Christ and not His actual flesh and blood, as the Roman Church teaches."

"Then," said the chancellor, without the least feeling of shame, "do as I do, and you will escape the fire."

"Though you, Master Chancellor, can so easily dispense with yourself and mock both God, the world and your conscience, yet I will not do so. I will not recant!" said Thomas.

"Then the Lord have mercy on you, for I will read the accusation and sentence against you," said the angry chancellor.

"God's will be fulfilled," said the brave lad.

"Shame," said the registrar, turning angrily to the chancellor. "Will you read the sentence against this poor lad and condemn yourself in so doing? Get away and get someone else more worthy to pronounce against him."

"No, Registrar," replied the chancellor, "I will obey the law and give sentence as the law requires." So he did and the poor blind youth was handed over to the authorities to be burned. He was brought to the stake on May 18th 1556, and died rejoicing that he was counted worthy to suffer in the same cause in which the good Bishop of Gloucester had died little more than two years earlier.

Now he sees with new eyes the Lord Jesus Christ face to face, for whom he had such love while he lived his short life here on earth.

*Adapted*

**FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES****LIFE**

Do you love to see a new baby, with its dear little face and tiny hands and feet? Each new baby is a precious gift from God. Only God can form a body and give it life.

In the beginning: *"the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."* Man was not made like the animals. He was created *"in the image of God"* and given a soul (spirit) that will live for ever. One day the body will die and *"the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."* It will either be saved in heaven or lost in hell.

The Lord Jesus is able to give eternal life. He gave His own life for His people and will bring each one of them to live with Him in heaven. Jesus said: *"I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish."*

**QUESTIONS:**

1. What was man given that will live for ever?
2. Who is able to give eternal life?
3. What did He give for His people?

*Contributed*

*Send your answers to the Editor (see page 122 for the address). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.*

**ANSWERS TO MAY QUESTIONS**

1. The Word of God.    2. The Lord Jesus    3. The truth
- 

**EDITOR'S POSTBAG**

*First answers to the monthly questions have been received from DENA, FRED, JACOB, and JULIE VAN-GEMERT.*



*“I am  
come  
that they  
might  
have life ...”  
John 10. 10.*

**BIBLE LESSONS****WISE MEN SEE A SPECIAL STAR**

Multitudes of people in Jerusalem and Bethlehem and all the cities of Israel remained ignorant of the birth of Jesus. Far away in another country to the east lived some wise men who studied the stars. Perhaps you have enjoyed watching the stars on a clear night and tried to make out certain formations. Well, these wise men were masters at it.

One night, as they looked at the stars, they discovered a new star they had never seen before. Were they just imagining it? No, there it was again the next night and the next. What could it mean? God soon made them know by this star that the promised Messiah, the great KING of the Jews had been born.

Because they feared God, they desired to see the new King, whom God had sent to be the Saviour of the world. Besides being wise, they were very rich; thus they prepared some costly gifts to bring as a present to the new King. For many days they travelled across the barren desert. What a long way it was! The hope of seeing the new King inspired their hearts to keep going on.

Finally they arrived at the country of the Jews. Thinking that such a King would be born in a palace, they made their way to the city of Jerusalem, where the rulers lived. They began to ask the people: *"Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him."*

What a disappointment! No one knew anything about such a King. How could this be? His wonderful birth was revealed to them in a far away country, while those nearby were completely unaware of it.

The news of the strange visitors and their words reached the palace where Herod lived. Soon Herod and all of Jerusalem were full of fear. Herod was a very wicked and envious man. Hearing that a King was born, he was afraid that he would lose his position as ruler of Judæa. There was only one thing to do; he must find this Child and kill Him.

He quickly called the chief priests and scribes (men who studied and taught the books of the Old Testament) and asked

them where Christ should be born. This was easy for the priests and scribes. They could answer immediately that the prophet Micah had written long before that Christ should come out of Bethlehem.

Having learned the place where Christ was to be born, Herod secretly called for the wise men. He wished to know the exact time when the star first appeared. Next, he told them to go to Bethlehem, about six miles away: *“and search diligently for the young Child.”* After they had found Him, they were to let him know, so he could go and worship Him also. With the wise men promising to bring word again, Herod thought everything was working according to his plan. We must remember that it was not Herod alone who wished the Child to be killed. No, the great enemy was really Satan (or the Devil).

Leaving Herod's palace, the wise men began the journey to Bethlehem. What a busy day it had been, the greater part being occupied with events at Jerusalem. After all the stir in the city, it seemed strange that no one wanted to go with them to find the new King. As they left the city, the evening shadows were lengthening. But look! What was appearing low in the sky, shining upon the road ahead? It was the star they had seen in the east country, moving slowly before them. Now they knew they were not mistaken. *“When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.”*

*You can read about this in Matthew chapter 2 verses 1 – 10.*

#### QUESTIONS:

1. By what did God make the wise men know the Messiah was born?
2. What did Herod intend to do when he found the Child?
3. What did Herod tell the wise men to do at Bethlehem? (6 words).
4. Who was really the great enemy wanting the Child Jesus to be killed?
5. What did the wise men do when they saw the star again?

*Please send your answers to the Editor (see address on page 122). Please mark the envelope ANSWERS. Remember to give your name and address.*

*G.L. TenBroeke*

### **ANSWERS TO MAY QUESTIONS**

1. Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.
  2. The Holy Spirit.
  3. That he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.
  4. A sword.
  5. Anna.
- 

### **THE OVERRULING HAND OF GOD**

Dear young friends, I thought you might like to hear of an event that occurred on our cattle farm several weeks ago that displays to me the all-seeing eye and overruling hand of God that still reigns today.

We were in the middle of the calving season, which involves working throughout the day and at night. During the night we check the in-calf heifers every four hours in case one of them begins calving and needs some assistance. On one particular evening at about 10 o'clock, I knew I must try and get three to four hours sleep to recover from the day's labours, before having to get up at 2 o'clock the next morning to see if there were any newly-born calves or cows in need of a helping hand.

Diligently the alarm clock was set for 1.55 a.m. As I lay down to rest I fully expected to be awoken by the "ringing sound" of the clock at the appointed time. However, feeling the weariness of having been up every night for a week, when I did awake it was not to the sound of the alarm clock "ringing" in my ear, but rather to the sudden realisation that I had overslept by two hours and to my dismay it was now 4 o'clock in the morning. Hastily dressing, I went out to the barn and wondered what trouble I was about to find amongst the stock,

as I could hear a cow and calf in distress. Quickly, with a torch I checked around all the pens of animals and in the last pen found to my relief a freshly calved heifer with her healthy calf no more than half an hour old, stuck the wrong side of the pen gate. He looked a pitiful sight, still wet from being newly born. He was shivering from the cold because “mum” had been unable to clean him off, and because of where he had managed to struggle to he stood disorientated on his “wobbly” legs, trying to take his first steps in life.

The matter was soon resolved; the pen gate was opened and our “new addition” picked up and carried back to the warmth of the straw-bedded pen where his delighted mother was waiting to receive him back safe into her maternal care, where she duly licked him clean and encouraged him to suckle at her side.

Standing at the gate watching the cow and calf “mother up,” I began to realise why I had been permitted to oversleep. All the animals we own or care for belong to God. He knows them all individually and by name and this circumstance I was found to be in was ordered by a Great God, for had I woken at 2 o’clock as intended, this young calf given by God would not as yet have been born and I would have returned home to bed thinking all was well. But our Creator knew different: His all-seeing eye knew the hour when His provision of a calf to us as farmers would be delivered and need help from the herdsman, not at 2 o’clock, but at 4 o’clock instead.

So you see, through the tiredness, weakness and frailty of my mind and body, God overruled all the events that night to such an extent that humbly we can say: “Your Heavenly Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him.”

“Sovereign Ruler of the skies,  
Ever gracious, ever wise;  
All my times are in Thy hand,  
All events at Thy command.”

*S.D.H.*

### MODERN ISRAEL

We read much of Israel in the Holy Bible, but even today it is very interesting to note that many of the world events have an Israeli connection somewhere and the influence of this nation is global despite its size. Israel, the 100th smallest country, with less than 1/1000th of the world's population, can lay claim to the following:

- The cell phone was developed in Israel by Israelis working in the Israeli branch of Motorola, which has its largest development centre in Israel.
- Most of the Windows NT and XP operating systems were developed by Microsoft-Israel.
- The Pentium Chip technology was designed in Israel at Intel. Both the Pentium-4 microprocessor and the Centrino processor were entirely designed, developed and produced in Israel.
- The Pentium microprocessor in your computer was most likely to have been made in Israel.
- Voice mail technology was developed in Israel.
- Four young Israelis developed the technology for the AOL Instant Messenger.
- Israel has the fourth largest air force in the world.
- According to industry officials, Israel designed the airline industry's most impenetrable flight security. U.S. officials now look to Israel for advice on how to handle airborne security threats.
- Israel's \$100 billion economy is larger than all of its immediate neighbours combined.
- Israel has the highest percentage in the world of home computers per capita.
- Israel has the highest ratio of university degrees to the population in the world.
- Israel produces more scientific papers per capita than any other nation.
- In proportion to its population, Israel has the largest number of start-up companies in the world.

- With more than 3,000 high-tech companies and start-ups, Israel has the highest concentration of hi-tech companies in the world, apart from the Silicon Valley, U.S.
- Israel has the highest average living standards in the Middle East. The per capita income in 2000 was over \$17,500, exceeding that of the U.K.
- Twenty-four per cent of Israel's workforce holds university degrees, ranking third in the world, after the United States and Holland. Twelve per cent hold advanced degrees.
- Israel is the only liberal democracy in the Middle East.
- In 1984 and 1991, Israel airlifted a total of 22,000 Ethiopian Jews at risk in Ethiopia, to safety in Israel.
- An Israeli company developed a computerised system for ensuring proper administration of medications, removing human error from medical treatment.
- Israel is the only country in the world that entered the twenty-first century with a net gain in its number of trees, made more remarkable in an area considered mainly desert.

It is clear that God has given the Israeli nation much wisdom and ability to achieve these things. When you consider that they are frequently engaged in regular wars with persistent enemies that surround them and seek their destruction, it is all the more amazing. No other nation has its economy continuously under strain by having to spend more per capita on its own protection.

There is coming a day when God will do something for Israel that is even more remarkable than anything that this favoured nation has ever accomplished. At the moment, many Jews still refuse to believe that Jesus is the Son of God and that He is indeed the true Messiah that they are looking for. God has promised in the Holy Bible that this veil of unbelief will be removed, and that they will believe "that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2. 36). This faith is something that each one of us needs to pray for and know personally if we are ever to be with Him at last.

*J.P.S.*

**“I WILL LIFT UP MINE EYES UNTO THE HILLS FROM  
WHENCE COMETH MY HELP” (PSALM 121)**

**2. Moriah**

We are considering the various hills of Scripture, and how they are made a help to the Lord's people. We read in Genesis 22 of the land of Moriah where God commanded Abraham to take Isaac his son and “offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.” It is clear that the land of Moriah is the area where Jerusalem was later built.

Here we see the way the Lord tries His people. You will remember that the LORD gave Abraham a promise that “he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And He brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the LORD; and He counted it to him for righteousness” (Genesis 15. 4-6). Now came the time of testing, with the solemn word of God to take Isaac and offer him for a sacrifice. We find that Abraham obeyed, and rose up early in the morning and went by faith. “By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac ... accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.” (Hebrews 11. 17-19). In this trial, Abraham was delivered. More than that, he saw the day of Christ and was glad.

The Psalmist says: “The LORD trieth the righteous” (Psalm 11. 5). All the Lord's people have their faith tried. They may be “for a season, if need be, ... in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1. 6-7). Remembering the trial of Abraham's faith, and the deliverance that God gave him, the Lord's people are encouraged to endure patiently the trial of faith, until the appearing of Jesus Christ. The Lord has a gracious purpose in every trial, which will be for His people's



spiritual good, and especially that Christ might be revealed unto them.

Secondly, the LORD made provision for Abraham. When Abraham went up Mount Moriah, Isaac asked that poignant question: "Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" How could Abraham answer that question to his son, who in a little while, as far as he could see, was to have a knife plunged into his heart? But faith laughed at impossibilities, and cried: "It shall be done." "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering." Abraham could not see how, but by faith he knew He would provide. The LORD provided that ram when it was needed, where it was needed, and it was what was needed. Man cannot work like that. Man's work always fails in one way or another. It is either out of season, out of place or it is something that is unsuitable. Not so with our God. In fact, the ram was already there. So, in His eternal decrees, God has already provided all blessings for His people. "And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen." Jehovah-jireh also means "the LORD will provide."

The Lord's people are often tried with unbelief; many times Satan may say unto them that the Lord will not appear for them in their need. But when remembering by faith how the Lord appeared on Mount Moriah for Abraham, they are encouraged and enabled to believe that the Lord will provide. By faith they can say with John Newton:

"Begone unbelief, my Saviour is near,  
And for my relief will surely appear...  
Though dark be my way, since He is my guide,  
'Tis mine to obey, 'tis His to provide.  
Though cisterns be broken, and creatures all fail,  
The word He has spoken shall surely prevail."

The third aspect of help that the Lord's people obtain from Mount Moriah is the glorious truth of substitution. A

substitute is one that takes the place of another, and on Mount Moriah, God provided a ram as a substitute for (or to take the place of) Isaac on the altar.

In a far greater and more glorious way, the Lord Jesus was the Substitute for all His dear people. He took their sins, and suffered in their place, bearing the just and righteous wrath of God. When the Holy Spirit reveals this to the children of God, they may say: "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed" and "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." There is nothing so precious to the children of God than to know their interest in the redeeming work of Christ on their behalf.

We read again of mount Moriah when "Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem in mount Moriah, where the LORD appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite." When David sinned in numbering the people, the destroying angel of the LORD was sent through the land and slew 70,000 men. But at the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite, the angel was commanded to stay his hand. In humble acknowledgement of God's mercy, David was commanded to build an altar there and made a sacrifice. "When David saw that the LORD had answered him in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite, then he sacrificed there." We do not know whether it was exactly the same spot as where Abraham offered up the ram, but by faith both Abraham and David looked to exactly the same place, that is to Jesus Christ and the sacrifice He made for His people.

This was the place appointed by God for the temple to be built, and where the Old Testament sacrifices should be made. All these sacrifices point to the Lord Jesus and His sin-atoning death on behalf of His people, from which all help and blessings flow to them.

*Contributed*

### **MOTORCYCLES! (III)**

The third occasion I remember was the few weeks leading up to the final examinations for my degree. For many weeks I seemed to walk in much darkness of soul, and perhaps as is natural, studying took a lot of my time and attention. I had applied for a job fairly close to home and had been offered it at the interview. I had been over to the office to take some documents they required, and was just coming away when the motorbike engine seized up completely. I had to push the motorbike five miles home. I took the engine apart and found that the cylinder was badly damaged and would need reboring. So it was several days before the cylinder was returned, together with a new over-sized piston. I reassembled the engine and took the motorbike out for a run, only to find that the engine began to seize up again if the speed was much over 30 mph. My heart sank. I was only a few days away from the start of my exams, with the darkness of soul I felt within and now everything seeming to be going wrong. I hardly knew where I was.

Then the Lord spoke these words in such tender reproof and love: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." In a moment I could see where I had gone wrong. God will always be first in everything. I could only turn and weep before Him in confession of my sin, and plead for His gracious return in mercy to me. My captivity spiritually was turned and I felt encouraged to ask the Lord to grant me these "other things" too, for I hardly knew what to do. But it seemed put into my mind to try something which even now as I look back seems almost foolish – which was to mount the piston in my home lathe and skim the surface with fine abrasive paper. Well I did, and after cleaning up and reassembling the engine, I took the motorbike out again. It worked perfectly, and the engine seemed to go better than it had ever done before.

The sweet sense of the Lord's presence during my final exams I will never forget, and I could hardly have believed it

possible at the same time to be involved so much with natural study, and yet separated from it in the spirit. It was on the Wednesday of the week of my exams that Mr. Ramsbottom preached from: "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which He hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day" (John 6. 39); and how profitable I found it, to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness."

Well, the end of that week came and I had one more examination on the Monday, which I was more concerned about than any other. My mother, quite understandably, was concerned over the time I was spending on revision, and thought perhaps I should have a rest. I was concerned that there were many things which I did not think I knew well enough, and in the agitation of my mind I felt unable to concentrate on anything. I remember going aside to ask the Lord what I should do, and, if it were His will for me to revise, to quieten my mind and give me even that natural wisdom I needed. And He did, immediately; for I felt all the agitation taken away, and I was able to go through all the things I was concerned about. On the Monday following, I got through the exam with far less trouble than I had anticipated, and a week or two later, I was told that I had been awarded the degree which a little while before seemed too much even to hope for. "Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory, for Thy mercy, and for Thy truth's sake" (Psalm 115. 1).

*Contributed*

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### ***BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES***

*(Have your Bible alongside you.)*

#### **DANIEL (1)**

The most prominent of the characters of the Captivity was Daniel and with him three young friends. We are not told, but they were probably in their early teens. Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, chose out from the captives of Judah some to take positions of responsibility in Babylon. Among them were

Daniel and his three friends. This is recorded in the Book of Daniel. (Daniel 1: 4-5)

Effectively they were sent to college for three years. It was really the equivalent of going to university to study for a degree. The Chaldeans were renowned for their study and knowledge of science. These students were selected on their ability. We should not despise learning and if young friends have the ability to study, we should encourage them to do so (providing the subject is not God-dishonouring). The Lord has greatly used learning in the church and sanctified it to the glory of His name. We know the majority of the disciples were unlearned men, but the Lord raised up the Apostle Paul, who was a learned man having sat at the feet of Gamaliel. Our godly Puritan forefathers were very learned men, many of them being scholars from Cambridge and Oxford Universities and Doctors of Divinity. In our own churches such godly, able men as Gadsby, Warburton, Kershaw were raised up to preach; they did not have the advantage of a formal education but were mightily used of God in His church. But when it was needed, the Lord raised up J.C. Philpot, a Fellow of Worcester College, Oxford. He very ably wielded the sword of truth as the Lord sanctified his learning for His glory.

But what stands out with these four Hebrew young men was their piety. Their chief desire, though so young, was to remain faithful to their God. It is our desire that as our young men and women go to university, this may be their chief concern. The first enquiry should be: "Can I get to the house of God for divine worship?" Look here at Daniel: "But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself" (Daniel 1. 8). May you dear young friends be given that same purpose of heart. The Jews were forbidden under the law to eat certain things, so they asked Melzar, their overseer, for a special diet. This diet was tested for ten days,

and we see how the Lord honoured them. (Daniel 1. 15-16)

Let us notice also how the Lord fulfilled that scripture: "... for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed" (1 Samuel 2. 30). One of the things that has been a snare to some young friends at college or university, is the drink culture and its effect on their behaviour. My dear young friends, listen to Holy Scripture: "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Proverbs 20. 1).

The Lord not only preserved them, but also honoured them in giving them knowledge. (Daniel 1. 17-20) These men, by God's grace, were astute, intellectual and capable. Remarkably, Daniel continued in a position of influence right through the Babylonian captivity. "And Daniel continued even unto the first year of King Cyrus." (Daniel 1.21) Cyrus was the Persian king who facilitated the return of the Jews to the land of Israel and there is a remarkable prophecy in Isaiah that actually names him hundreds of years before. (Isaiah 44. 28 and 45. 4) The other very remarkable thing is that this heathen king is a type of our Lord Jesus Christ. He has opened the two leaved gates of heaven and He will make the crooked things straight (see Isaiah 45. 1-2).

*J.R. Rutt*

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### BIBLE QUESTIONS

*This month the questions are about WORSHIP. Younger children need only do five questions. Please give references for questions 6 to 10 and send your answers to the Editor (see page 122 for the address). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.*

1. Who alone should be worshipped? (Matthew 4. 10)
2. What did the children of Israel worship in the wilderness, for which God was very angry? (Exodus 32. 8)
3. Who came to worship the Lord Jesus when He was a baby? (Matthew 2. 2)
4. What punishment was threatened to three men who refused to worship a golden image? (Daniel 3. 6)

5. We read of a leper who came and worshipped Jesus. What was his request? (Matthew 8. 2)
6. How did Jesus describe the worship which is acceptable to God? (John 4)
7. How did Jesus describe the vain worship of many of the Jews? (Mark 7)
8. With what prayer did "a woman of Canaan" come and worship Jesus? (Matthew 15)
9. What had the Apostle Paul found at Athens when he said: "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you"? (Acts 17)
10. A man who had been born blind worshipped the Lord Jesus. What was the question Jesus had just asked him? (John 9)

#### ANSWERS TO MAY QUESTIONS

1. Pardon.
2. Seventy times seven.
3. Shedding of blood.
4. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered."
5. "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."
6. Five.
7. Humility, prayer, seeking God's face, turning from their wicked ways. (2 Chronicles 7. 14)
8. "Whosoever believeth in Him" (the Lord Jesus). (Acts 10. 43)
9. Because as a great sinner she had been forgiven much. (Luke 7. 47)
10. Pharaoh. (Exodus 10. 17)

*Contributed*

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#### THE OTHER THIEF

Oh, wond'rous stretch of mercy – when  
 The Saviour, from His cross of pain,  
 Reached forth His arms of love and might,  
 And opened Heaven; to let the light  
 Of God's eternal mercy fall  
 Upon that dying criminal.

Ah, hearts have ached with stress of joy;  
“If **he** was saved, then why not **I**?”

And faith has warriored like a prince  
In many a heart the ages since,  
For who need nurse despairing grief,  
Since Jesus saved the dying thief?

But there were **two**, my friends; were **two**;  
And **we** are separate – me and you,  
And it were well, and it were wise,  
To look our endless destinies  
Full in the face; which **sinned** the most?  
We are not told – but **one** was **lost**,

Oh, it is needful in these days,  
When men **will** follow their own ways,  
With flippant hope that bye and bye  
They shall be fitted for the sky, –  
To bring the **other** thief to view,  
And tell them boldly there were **two**.

The one in Paradise reclines,  
Parted for ever from his sins;  
The other in despairing pain,  
Sins and blasphemes and sins again;  
While tears and imprecations never  
Can put an end to God’s “for ever.”

We all must die, but God forbid  
That we should die as those two did;  
Somewhere – someway – sometime (God knows),  
Our hearts shall fail, **our** eyes shall close;  
And we (though now the thought we smother)  
Shall be with one thief or the other.

*Mrs. M.A. Chaplin*



# *The Friendly Companion*



*A Rod*



*A Staff*



*A Sling*

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.” (Psalm 23. 4)

---

*July 2005*

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**OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE**

Dear Children and Young People,

Some years ago there was a group of boys, I should think about eleven or twelve years of age, playing football in the street, as there were no open spaces nearby in the town where they lived. As they played, one of the boys, who was an excellent footballer, kicked the ball from a great distance towards the makeshift goal. The lad in goal was not ready and the ball passed between the posts and his arms, and on to smash a window in a house further down the street! All of the boys raced off to escape any punishment. At first, the lad who had kicked the ball ran with them, but as he ran his conscience began to speak. He had godly parents and they had taught him to be honest, whatever the cost. So, coming to a halt, he pondered what the best thing was to do. He had no more desire to be punished than the other boys, but his conscience would not be silent. So he decided that the wisest thing to do would be to go home and tell his father what had happened. With some trepidation, he went and told his father of the mishap. Immediately, his father said he must go and apologise to the owner of the house. So, in the company of his father, very nervously he walked up the steps to the door of the house, past the broken window and shattered glass, and knocked at the door. Very soon the door opened and the man whose window had been broken, was before their eyes. "I have come to apologise for kicking the ball through your window," said the young lad, "and do hope that you will forgive me." "Of course I will forgive you," said the man in a not unkindly tone, "but someone must pay for the window." At this point the lad's father intervened: "I will pay the full cost of replacing the window and fitting it."

Very relieved, the young lad made his way back home with his father, grateful to the man who had been willing to forgive him, and to his father who had been willing to pay for the price of his mistake.

The next time his friends wanted him to play football, he

said that he would if they played in another place where they were not in danger of breaking windows. One of his friends might have said: "But your father will pay." However, the young lad knew that would be abusing the love his father had shown in paying for his mistake.

All this, my young friends, is a lesson to us as sinners. We, like the young lad, have acted foolishly. All sin is folly, and it brings its consequences, one of which is that we have broken the holy Law of God, just as the window was broken by the football. If there is to be forgiveness, then, like the young lad, we must go back to God whose Law we have broken and confess our faults honestly and openly before Him. There is forgiveness with God, but Someone must pay the price. That dear Person is the Son of God, even the Lord Jesus Christ, who died for sinners on the cross, paying the penalty for sin for all those for whom He suffered. When the Holy Spirit shows us our sin, then we see the need of forgiveness, but it must be in God's way. He has said that only through the blood of Jesus Christ will sin be forgiven and in no other way. So, like the lad who was indebted to his father for paying the price of the broken window, how much more are forgiven sinners indebted to the Saviour, for the tremendous cost of putting sin away at Calvary. When the Holy Spirit shows a sinner this cost of forgiveness, like the young lad, it causes us to forsake the ways that brought such a debt against our name. This is what the Word of God calls *repentance*. In another place it is called *a godly sorrow* and it is always joined to forgiveness. May it be our chief concern to know real repentance and godly sorrow for our sins. These are the gifts that Jesus is exalted to give. May we each be seeking them for without them we cannot be saved.

With best wishes from your sincere friend and Editor.

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#### EDITOR'S POSTBAG

*First answers to the monthly questions have been received from KARINA BAUM and JACOB COTTINGTON.*

### OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

A shepherd always has with him his rod and staff, as shown on our front cover this month. The rod, a large club, generally studded with nails to make the head heavier, was used to defend the sheep against wild beasts; lions, bears and wolves in Bible days, and is used against jackals, hyenas and wild dogs today. David would almost certainly have killed the lion and the bear with his rod (1 Samuel 17. 34-36).

The staff, or crook, is used to help the sheep in difficulties, to extricate them from thorn bushes, and to help them up if they slip down steep places. Abraham would have used his staff to get the ram out of the thicket. It is literally true that "Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me," for they give the certainty of help both in danger and in difficulty.

The third important piece of the shepherd's equipment is his sling. There is a little loop at one end of it into which he puts the little finger of his right hand, and he holds the other end in the same hand. Then he places a stone in the wide part in the centre, and whirls the sling round and round, getting faster according to the distance he wants the stone to go, then he lets go the end in his hand which releases the stone, and it flies to its destination. The loop remains on the little finger, so the sling is not whirled away with the stone. Slingers can be very expert and can hit an object a long distance away. The shepherd uses his sling as a weapon of defence; also if he sees a sheep straying, he will sling a stone near to it (but not to touch it) to attract its attention so that he can call it back.

There is an interesting reference to "seven hundred chosen men lefthanded; every one could sling stones at an hair breadth, and not miss" (Judges 20. 16). Uzziah included in his preparation for his army "slings to cast stones" (2 Chronicles 26. 14), and there is also the well-known story of David killing Goliath with a sling and stone (1 Samuel 17. 49).

With the rod, staff and sling, the shepherd is fully equipped for any emergency, and so he can proceed confidently through the most difficult part of his journey. To get to the new

pasture, he must go through a mountain pass in Judæa known as 'the valley of the shadow of death'. It is four miles long, very narrow, with high cliffs rising up to a height of some 1,500 feet (460 metres). The pathway at its narrowest is only about eighteen inches to two feet wide (45cm – 60cm), and in one place it suddenly stops and continues two or three feet away (60cm – 1m) on the opposite side of a crevasse. The shepherd has to leap the gap and stand ready to help the sheep if they should slip in jumping over. There are thorn bushes and overhanging rocks and it is always dim, except at midday when the sun is directly overhead.

When David spoke of the valley of the shadow of death, he was not thinking of physical death, for death is not a dark valley to the Christian. It is the gateway to life and to the glorious light and presence of God, and it is something to which we can look forward with joy, when we shall leave behind the darkness and sorrow, pain and sin of this world to be with God in everlasting happiness. No, David was comparing it to the dark valleys through which we go so often in this life; valleys of sorrow and suffering, bereavement and pain, and we can learn many lessons from this shepherd experience.

*L.E.D. Gollmick*

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### WAS THERE NO DOOR?

A lady recently related an experience as she travelled home from Palestine. "We have," she says, "gotten over all the paths and tracks where David must have led his sheep.... We reached a high ridge overlooking the village of Bethlehem. There we struck a sheepfold, and went right in to inspect. It was not long before the owner appeared – a veteran with a long beard.

"'This is your sheepfold?' my friend asked. 'Aye,' was the reply. 'And this is where the sheep sleep?' pointing to a rough shelter thrown up against the rock in a corner. He nodded. 'But you've no gate to the fold; how do you close them in at night?' The old man looked at us as if we ought to have known

better. 'I am the door,' he said with emphasis; and gathering up his loose robe he sat down in a moment, squatting in the doorway, back against one post, feet against the other, his knees drawn up and clasped by his weather-beaten old hands. Gently he bowed his head, and closed his eyes, as doubtless he had closed them many a time to catch a few hours sleep under the starlight. 'I am the door,' he repeated: 'I keep watch here at night.'"

*Little Gleaner, January 1933*

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### "KEPT" (II)

The piece headed "Kept" in the May *Friendly Companion* revived memories of an incident in my early working days, now many years ago. I was probably about seventeen or eighteen when a new member of staff joined the shop where I worked. She was a very forceful, determined type of person and, as she put it, wanted to get to know us all socially. It was, therefore, arranged that everyone would meet on a certain evening at the local public house. I said I would not be going, but she was insistent that we should ALL be there, and with shame I confess it, I began to waver in my mind. But I was concerned about the grief which I knew this action would cause my widowed mother, who knew nothing about this. Perhaps, even then, she was praying for me.

However, a day or two before the proposed "pub" visit, whilst working alone in the stock-room, the Word came suddenly and powerfully: "Come out from among them, and be ye separate" (2 Corinthians 6. 17). Now I knew exactly what I had to do – or not do, and there was no longer any doubt or wavering in my mind. I do not remember much about the reaction of the others to my absence, but what I do remember very well is that our pastor, on the following Sunday during his sermon, quoted that same verse and also the following one containing the precious promise: "And I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." I think my feelings on that Sunday may be better imagined than described.

*Contributed*

*FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES***“LORD, HELP ME”**

As the Lord Jesus went about teaching the people, they brought to Him many who were sick or blind or lame. He was so kind and healed every one of them.

One day a woman from another country cried unto Him to heal her little girl. At first He did not answer a word and the disciples wanted Jesus to send her away. *“Then came she and worshipped Him, saying, **Lord, help me.**”* Jesus told her that He was sent first to the people of Israel. To help a stranger would be like giving children’s bread to dogs. Did the woman stop asking and go away? No! Although she was not from Israel, she knew that **only Jesus** could help her. She said that even dogs were allowed to eat the crumbs that fall off the table. Jesus was pleased with her answer and did as she asked. Her little girl was made well *“from that very hour.”*

The Lord Jesus still helps those who pray to Him. He may be silent for a while but will not turn away any who keep asking.

**QUESTIONS:**

1. What did the disciples want Jesus to do to the woman?
2. What did she say to Jesus? (3 words)
3. Who could help her? (2 words)

*Contributed*

*Send your answers to the Editor (see page 146 for the address). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word **ANSWERS** on the envelope.*

**ANSWERS TO JUNE QUESTIONS**

1. A soul (spirit).
2. The Lord Jesus.
3. His own life.



“... *Fear*  
*not ;*  
*I will*  
*help*  
*thee.”*

*Isaiah 41. 13.*

**BIBLE LESSONS****THE WISE MEN WORSHIP JESUS**

With the star going before them, the wise men were led right to the place *“where the young child was.”* Mary and Joseph were no longer in the stable where Jesus was born. By the time the wise men came, they had found a house to stay in. What a striking contrast between the house they were led to and the beautiful palace of Herod. What humble surroundings for a KING to be found in!

Most of the visitors that came to Mary and Joseph were poor like themselves. Never before had such important and rich visitors come.

As they entered the house, their eyes fastened on the Child Jesus. They had travelled so far and suffered so many hardships and disappointments. Yet now He was found of them. He will always be found of those that seek Him as the wise men did.

What do you think the wise men did next? They bowed down and worshipped Him. What love they felt to the Child Jesus! What joy filled their hearts! Oh the wonder of it all, that they should see the King of glory, while the eyes of many around Him were blinded. It is still an exceeding great wonder when He is found by those that seek Him.

What about the costly gifts they had prepared? With grateful hearts they opened their treasures and presented unto Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh: gifts of great value and special meaning. Gold and frankincense were used in the temple for the worship of God. But myrrh? What a strange gift. Myrrh was used when people had died. Here the wise men foretold of His death, just as Simeon had done.

Herod was, no doubt, eagerly waiting for their return. The wise men had promised to bring him word so he would know where to find the Child Jesus. However, God who gave the star to lead them, also gave a dream to warn them not to return to Herod. With joyful hearts they returned to their country another way.

After the wise men departed, the Lord showed Joseph in a dream that he must *"take the young Child and His mother, and flee into Egypt."* The journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem had seemed a long way, but the journey to Egypt was much longer. Why must they go so far? The Lord told Joseph that Herod would seek for the young Child to kill Him.

Under the cover of night, Joseph, Mary and the Child Jesus began the long journey down to Egypt. We wonder if Mary was riding upon an animal such as a donkey, while holding the Child Jesus. Long before the sun arose, they had disappeared from sight and were heading south.

After many days they reached the land of Egypt. How strange everything must have seemed, especially on the Sabbath day. In the land of Israel all their friends met for the worship of God. In the land of Egypt the people were worshipping idols. How lonely they must have been. So many strange things had happened since their Baby was born, and now they were strangers in another land.

*You can read about this in Matthew chapter 2 verses 11 to 15.*

#### QUESTIONS:

1. What were Joseph and Mary staying in when the wise men came?
2. What did the wise men do when they saw the Child Jesus?
3. What gifts did they present to Him?
4. Where was Joseph told to flee with the young Child and His mother?
5. When did they begin the long journey?

*G.L. TenBroeke*

*Please send your answers to the Editor (see address on page 146). Please mark the envelope: ANSWERS. Remember to give your name and address.*

#### ANSWERS TO JUNE QUESTIONS

1. A star.
2. Kill Him.
3. Search diligently for the young Child.
4. Satan.
5. Rejoiced (with exceeding great joy).

**“GO TO THE ANT”**

“Go to the ant, thou sluggard;” King Solomon advised in the Book of Proverbs chapter six, “consider her ways, and be wise.”

Humans have always looked at the little creatures – so efficient, so purposeful and yet so different from us – and puzzled over what they have to tell us. The Victorians were very impressed with the ants, and they were keen to learn from them and behave more like them. They particularly liked the fact that the ants worked so very hard, and also the fact that they helped one another.

Having told us to consider the ant, Solomon points out that the ant “having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.”

The question that continues to fascinate myrmecologists (ant experts) is how ants manage to achieve such complicated results – elaborate nests, efficient food supply, waste-disposal and so on – without having anyone in charge. Ant-based communication systems are already in use in the fast-growing world of telephone and digital networks. Amazingly, an ant can work out the quickest way from A to B more efficiently than a human expert with a computer. It bases its behaviour on hormone trails laid down by its nest-mates.

So now human communications networks are often based on “virtual hormone trails.” Myrmecologist, Professor Nigel Franks of the University of Bristol, keeps ant colonies in little plastic boxes, and he paints his ants different colours (using a brush the size of a human eyelash) so he can watch what each one does. “Army ant colonies are huge, so they have real traffic-flow problems, but they automatically form lanes. What’s really fascinating about this is that the ants that are unburdened, that are running out to the swarm-front to find new prey-items, can run more quickly because they’re not carrying anything, and they form two express lanes on either side of the main trail, whereas all the ants coming back with food take a central lane.”

But there is a more important lesson that Solomon was

hinting at as well as the wonderful, God given, natural instincts mentioned above. We would all agree that ants are very wise to gather and prepare their food during the summer months so that they can survive the winter. In this, ants teach us a very important lesson.

Moses prayed a very good prayer when he said: "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" (Psalm 90. 12). Moses knew that there would come a day when he would die. He wanted to know that his sins had been forgiven and to be found doing God's service while he was still alive.

This is rather like the ant preparing food in the summer for the winter months when work could no longer be done. It is too late for the ant to gather food when there are frosts. It would be too late for Moses to begin to prepare for eternity when death had come. So Moses wanted to be ready. Are you wise, like the ant? Or are you like the sluggard who thinks that the things of eternity are unimportant. None of us knows when our end will be, but do you want to be ready and prepared for when that day comes? There is a verse of a hymn that is a good prayer for those who feel to need that preparation:

"Prepare me, gracious God,  
To stand before Thy face;  
Thy Spirit must the work perform,  
For it is all of grace."

When you next see the busy ant during the summer, I hope that you may be able to feel that you are preparing and being prepared to spend eternity with God in heaven.

*J.P.S.*

---

Question: How does God execute His decrees?

Answer: God executes His decrees in the works of creation, providence and grace.

Numbers 23. 19-23; Job 37. 13; Psalm 107. 25-30;  
Daniel 4. 35; Revelation 4. 11.

**RAIN: OR NO RAIN**

In the little parish of Yellowdale, farmers had long been without a minister. One day, Mr. Seeley visited the village, and was asked to stay over Sunday, and preach to them. The people were pleased with his sermons, and some were anxious to have him stop. A meeting was called to know the mind of the parish.

"I don't see any use in having a minister," said Sharp, a rich old farmer: "a parson can't teach me anything. If we've any money to spare, we'd better lay it out on something that will bring a fairer return."

The Sabbath-loving part of the people argued strongly against him. "Well," said Sharp, not choosing to show himself convinced: "I've heard tell of ministers that could pray for rain and bring it. If we could hit on one of that sort, I'd go for hiring him." Mr. Sharp being a man of some consequence, the younger and less knowing of his neighbours were quite taken with the idea. "That would be a minister worth having," they said.

After much talk, it was agreed to have Mr. Seeley upon this condition – that he would give them rain or fair weather when they wanted it, for their farms often suffered both from severe drought and heavy rains. Mr. Seeley was therefore waited upon by a committee of the parish, who soon came back, bringing the minister with them.

"I will accept your terms upon one condition," he said: "that you must agree upon what sort of weather you want."

This appeared reasonable, and matters were arranged for a year's stay at Yellowdale. Weeks passed on, bringing mid-summer heat. For three weeks it had not rained, and the young corn was beginning to curl with drought. Now for the minister's promise.

"Come," said Sharp, with one or two others whose hilly farms were suffering, "we need rain; you remember your promise?" "Certainly," answered Mr. Seeley. "Call a meeting." So a meeting was called. "Now, my friends," said the pastor,

“what is it you want?” “Rain! Rain!!” shouted half a dozen voices. “Very well then, when will you have it?” “This very night – all night long,” said Sharp, to which several others assented.

“No, no, not tonight,” cried Mr. Smith. “I’ve six or seven tons of well-made hay out; I would not have it wet for anything.” “So have I,” said Mr. Peck. “No rain tonight.” “Will you have it tomorrow?” asked Mr. Seeley. But it would take all tomorrow to get it in; so objections came up for the next two or three days. “In four days then,” said Mr. Seeley. “Yes,” said Mr. Sharp, “all the hay will be in, and no more need be cut till –.” “Stop, stop!” cried Mrs. Sharp, pulling her husband smartly by the sleeve; “that day we have to go to Snow Hill, it mustn’t rain then.”

In short, the meeting resulted in just no conclusion at all; for it was found quite impossible to agree. “Until you make up your minds,” said the pastor, on leaving, “we must all trust in the Lord.”

Both Mr. Smith and Mr. Peck got their hay in; but on the day the Sharps were to go to Snow Hill it rained in good earnest. Sharp lost his visit, but his crops gained. And so it happened once or twice again. The year rolled by, and the people could never agree what kind of weather they wanted. Mr. Seeley, of course, had no occasion to fulfil his part of the contract, and they began to open their eyes to the fact that it would be a strange world if its inhabitants were to govern it. They saw that nature’s laws could be safely trusted in the Hands of nature’s God. At the close of the year the minister spoke of leaving, but this the people would not listen to. “But I cannot stay under the old contract,” said he. “Nor do we want you to,” said Sharp, much humbled; “only stay and teach us and our children to know God, and obey the gospel.” “And all things above our proper sphere,” added Mr. Seeley, “we will leave with God, for He doeth all things well.”

*Gospel Magazine, 1862.*

**WARNINGS TO YOUNG PEOPLE: MAKING FRIENDS**

Never make an intimate friend of any one who is not a friend of God.

Understand me – I do not speak of *acquaintances*. I do not mean that you ought to have nothing to do with any but true Christians. To take such a line is neither possible nor desirable in this world. Christianity requires no man to be discourteous.

But I do advise you to be very careful in your choice of *friends*. Do not open all your heart to a man merely because he is clever, agreeable, good-natured, high-spirited, and kind. These things are all very well in their way, but they are not everything. Never be satisfied with the friendship of any one who will not be useful to your soul.

Believe me, the importance of this advice cannot be overrated. There is no telling the harm that is done by associating with godless companions and friends. The devil has few better helps in ruining a man's soul. Grant him this help, and he cares little for all the armour with which you may be armed against him. You may resist many open temptations, refuse many plain snares; but once take up a bad companion, and he is content. That awful chapter, which describes Amnon's wicked conduct about Tamar, almost begins with these words: "But Amnon had a friend ... a very subtil man" (2 Samuel 13. 3).

You must recollect, we are all creatures of imitation: precept may teach us, but it is example that draws us. There is that in us all that we are always disposed to catch the ways of those with whom we live; and the more we like them, the stronger does the disposition grow. Without our being aware of it, they influence our tastes and opinions; we gradually give up what they dislike, and take up what they like, in order to become more close friends with them. And worst of all, we catch their ways in things that are wrong, far quicker than in things that are right. Health, unhappily, is not contagious, but disease is. It is far more easy to catch a chill than to impart a glow; and to make each other's religion dwindle away than grow and prosper.



Young people, I ask you to lay these things to heart. Before you let any one become your constant companion, before you get into the habit of telling him everything, and going to him in all your troubles and all your pleasures – before you do this, just think of what I have been saying: ask yourself: “Will this be a useful friendship to me or not?”

“Evil communications” do indeed “corrupt good manners” (1 Corinthians 15. 33). I wish that text were written in hearts as often as it is quoted. Good friends are among our greatest blessings; they may keep us back from much evil, quicken us in our course, speak a word in season, draw us upward, and draw us on. But a bad friend is a positive evil, a weight continually dragging us down and chaining us to earth. Keep company with an ungodly man, and it is more than probable you will in the end become like him. That is the general consequence of all such friendships. The good go down to the bad, and the bad do not come up to the good. Even a stone will give way before a continual dropping. The world’s proverb is only too correct: “Clothes and company tell true tales about character.” Show me who a man lives with,” say the Spaniards, “and I will show you what he is.”

I dwell the more upon this point because it has more to do with your future life than at first sight appears. If you marry, it is more than probable you will choose a wife among the connections of your friends. If Jehoshaphat’s son Jehoram had not formed a friendship with Ahab’s family, he would most likely not have married Ahab’s daughter. And who can estimate the importance of a right choice in marriage? It is a step which, according to the old saying, “either makes a man or mars him.” Your wife must either help your soul or harm it: there is no medium. She will either fan the flame in your heart, or throw cold water upon it, and make it burn low. She will either be wings or fetters, a rein or a spur to your Christianity, according to her character. He that findeth a good wife doth indeed “find a good thing;” but if you have the least

wish to find one, be very careful how you choose your friends.

Do you ask me what kind of friends you shall choose? Choose friends who will benefit your soul – friends whom you can really respect – friends whom you would like to have near you on your death-bed – friends who love the Bible, and are not afraid to speak to you about it – friends such as you will not be ashamed of owning at the coming of Christ, and the day of judgment. Follow the example that David sets you: he says: “I am a companion of all them that fear Thee, and of them that keep Thy precepts” (Psalm 119. 63). Remember the words of Solomon: “He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed” (Proverbs 13. 20). But depend on it, bad company in the life that now is, is a sure way to procure worse company in the life to come.

*J.C. Ryle*

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**“LET CHRIST, WHEN HE COMETH, FIND ME SO DOING.”**

Mr. J. Carter, one of the Puritan ministers, once stopped unexpectedly behind a Christian of his acquaintance, who was busily occupied in his business as a tanner, and gave him a pleasant tap on the shoulder. The godly man looked behind him, started and said: “Sir, I am ashamed that you should find me thus employed.” Mr. Carter replied: “Let Christ, when He cometh, find me so doing.” “What!” said the godly man, “doing thus?” “Yes,” said Mr. Carter, “faithfully performing the duties of my calling.”

*Selected*

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A west countryman said of this Book: “If any man shall maister the Book of Proverbs, no man shall maister he.” Take, for instance, the weighty counsels of the first five verses. How many lives would have been saved from bitter anguish and disappointment if only they had been ruled by them.

**BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES***(Have your Bible alongside you.)***DANIEL (II)**

Daniel was a right-hand man to successive rulers in Babylon. But with this high position he had many trials. What does the Word of God teach us? "Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all" (Psalm 34. 19). We see this exemplified in the life of Daniel. The first great trial which in the providence of God brought Daniel into a pre-eminent position in Babylon, was because none of the wise men, the soothsayers or magicians, could tell King Nebuchadnezzar what his dream was and interpret it; therefore he commanded that all the wise men should be killed. This reveals to us what a despotic, unreasonable man King Nebuchadnezzar was. But we see in Daniel 2. 13-23, what a man of faith Daniel was.

We also see Daniel's humility and grace when he comes before the king (Daniel 2. 30). This vision and the interpretation are very relevant to us today, as they take us right to the end of time. (Perhaps in a future article we could look at it.) But the result of Daniel's God-given wisdom was to bring him and his three friends into great favour with the king (Daniel 2. 46-49).

When we reach high positions and have good success, it brings with it particular temptations and the Lord balances the success He gives to His children with trials, otherwise they would soon be carried away and become worldly and forget God. In the Book of Job, godly Elihu speaks to Job concerning his great trials: "Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of Him which is perfect in knowledge?" (Job 37. 16)

***Daniel's Three Friends***

In the third chapter of Daniel we see how God was pleased to try Daniel's three friends. Nebuchadnezzar made a great golden image and commanded all to bow down and worship it. You can read the command in Daniel 3. 4-6. Of course,

Daniel and his three friends believed the Holy Law of God: "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God..." (Exodus 20. 3-5).

But now was the time to try their faith. "There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up. Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. Then they brought these men before the king" (Daniel 3. 12-13). Now we see the constancy and faith of these three Hebrew children as the king threatened them. We think also of our godly forefathers who were burnt at the stake rather than deny their Lord. "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up" (Daniel 3. 16-18). May we be given that same faith, which endures through fire and flame.

As we look at the following scene let us think of God's promise to His people: "But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and He that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the LORD

thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour” (Isaiah 43. 1-3).

“And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake... Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? ... Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God. Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake... ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, came forth of the midst of the fire... nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them” (Daniel 3. 23-27).

Is there anything too hard for the Lord? No friends, nothing is too hard for the Lord. “Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth” (Revelation 19. 6). The remarkable thing is that this heathen king recognised the fourth Person: “The Son of God.” In the most impossible circumstances the Lord wonderfully delivered them. My dear young friends, we love, worship and adore the same God. *J.R. Rutt*

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#### DR. ISAAC WATTS

Dr. Watts was a born poet. As a child he seemed to *think* in verse. His mother playfully offered him a farthing (a quarter of an old penny) for some verses. He immediately wrote:

“I write not for a farthing, but to try  
How I your farthing writers can outvie.”

He commenced to learn Latin at the age of four, Greek at nine, Hebrew at thirteen! He was about fourteen years of age when God convinced him of sin, and a year later he was blessed with a hope in the mercy of God through Christ’s atonement. His ministry began in 1698 and in 1699 he became minister over an independent congregation meeting in Mark Lane, London. He was hardly five feet two inches tall (157 cms), but a great

scholar. His hymns are in universal use; among the best known being: "When I survey the wondrous cross;" "Behold the glories of the Lamb;" "Blood has a voice to pierce the skies;" "Come Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove;" and, perhaps the most familiar of all: "O God, our Help in ages past." It was when gazing over the "narrow stream" – Southampton Water – in his native town, that he composed the hymn 1022 in Gadsby's Selection: "There is a land of pure delight, where saints immortal reign."

He suffered much ill-health and towards the end of life was often deeply depressed. He died at the age of 74, and was buried in Bunhill Fields where so many godly nonconformists were laid to rest. Shortly before his end, in reply to a question, he said he was "waiting God's leave to die: I trust that all my sins are pardoned through the blood of Christ. I have no fear of dying; it would be my greatest comfort to lie down and sleep, and wake no more." There is a monument to his memory in Westminster Abbey; also one at Southampton.

*J.K.P.*

---

### PSALM 119

#### *(Instruction from Scripture.)*

##### **Verse 9**

How shall the young secure their hearts,  
And guard their lives from sin?  
Thy Word the choicest rules imparts  
To keep the conscience clean.

##### **Verse 130**

When once it enters to the mind,  
It spreads such light abroad,  
The meanest souls instruction find,  
And raise their thoughts to God.

##### **Verse 105**

'Tis like the sun, a heavenly light,  
That guides us all the day;

And through the dangers of the night,  
A lamp to lead our way.

**Verses 99, 100**

The men that keep Thy Law with care,  
And meditate Thy Word,  
Grow wiser than their teachers are,  
And better know the Lord.

**Verses 104, 113**

Thy precepts make me truly wise;  
I hate the sinner's road;  
I hate my own vain thoughts that rise,  
But love Thy Law, my God.

**Verses 89-91**

The starry heavens Thy rule obey,  
The earth maintains her place;  
And these Thy servants night and day  
Thy skill and power express  
  
But still Thy Law and gospel, Lord,  
Have lessons more divine;  
Not earth stands firmer than Thy Word,  
Nor stars so nobly shine.

**Verses 160, 140, 9, 116**

Thy Word is everlasting truth;  
How pure is every page!  
That holy Book shall guide our youth,  
And well support our age.

*I. Watts*

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**BIBLE QUESTIONS**

*This month the questions are about PRAYER. Younger children need only do five questions, and the last two are for older children. Please give references for questions 6 to 10 and send your answers to the Editor (see page 146 for the address). Please give your name and address and write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.*

1. What is required in those that come to God in prayer? (Hebrews 11. 6)
2. For whom did the Lord Jesus pray and for whom did He *not* pray? (John 17. 9)
3. How and what did the publican pray? (Luke 18. 13)
4. Who said: "For this child I prayed"? (1 Samuel 1. 27)
5. "When the LORD shall build up Zion, He will appear in His glory." What follows? (Psalm 102. 16)
6. "For this shall every one that is godly pray unto Thee." What will they pray for? (Psalm 32)
7. Whose earnest prayer does the Apostle James commend as an example? (James 5)
8. "For this cause Hezekiah the king and the prophet Isaiah... prayed and cried to heaven." What was the "cause"? (2 Chronicles 32)
9. Find and write out a text which encourages us to earnest prayer.
10. Which prophet said: "God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you"?

### ANSWERS TO JUNE QUESTIONS

1. The Lord thy God.
2. A molten or golden calf.
3. The wise men.
4. To be cast into the midst of a burning, fiery furnace.
5. "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean."
6. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." (John 4. 24)
7. They honoured God with their lips, but their hearts were far from Him. They taught for doctrines the commandments of men. (Mark 7. 6-7)
8. "Lord, help me." (Matthew 15. 25)
9. An altar with this inscription: "TO THE UNKNOWN GOD." (Acts 17. 23)
10. "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" (John 9. 35-38)

*Contributed*



# *The Friendly Companion*



*A Sundial in the Grounds of Worcester Cathedral*

“My days are like a shadow that declineth.”  
(Psalm 102. 11)

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*August 2005*

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*(Front Cover picture by kind permission of Mr. C. Penny)*

### OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

Ever since Cain killed his brother Abel, and asked the question: "Am I my brother's keeper?" there have been those on the earth who have very little regard for the lives of others. This was seen in a terrible way on July 7th when London was devastated by the terrorist attacks which left so many wounded and dead. Just one day after all the artificial euphoria about the Olympic Games the mood changed from jubilation to grief. How sad we feel for those who lost loved ones so tragically that day.

It should not be forgotten that those who planted the bombs are very hostile to Christianity and were they ever to have the power in our country there would be severe persecution of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

But Jesus said to those who truly believed in Him, that when they saw these things beginning to come to pass, "look up." Those to whom God has given faith can see what others cannot see. In Psalm 11. 3 David says, "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" In verse 4 we read: "The LORD is in His holy temple. The LORD'S throne is in heaven: His eyes behold. His eyelids try, the children of men."

People and nations are devastated when such things happen, but God is still is on His throne, undeterred by the evil of men here below. He is speaking to us with a warning voice to remind us that we should be seeking those things which are above. One man said:

"He builds too low, who builds below the sky."

How true it is that death often overtakes men without warning. May we be seeking the LORD while He may be found, and calling upon Him while He is near.

Finally what a mercy it is that the LORD watches over His people. We know of one God-fearing person who was taking his wife to catch the tube train to Euston. For some unseen reason he felt he couldn't drop her at the tube station so drove her direct to Euston. It was at that very time, and on the very

line on which his wife would have been travelling that a bomb exploded. At such times all we can do is marvel at God's care and His sovereign control even of thoughts and intentions.

Hymn 64 (Gadsby's) says it all! Read it for yourself.

With best wishes from your sincere friend and Editor

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### **OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE**

I wonder how many of you have, in your garden, what is seen on our front cover this month? It is, of course, a sundial. The only occasion in which we read of a sundial in Scripture is when good King Hezekiah was healed of his fatal illness, and as a sign that he would get better, God caused the shadow of the sun to go backwards by ten degrees on the sun-dial of Ahaz. This was, of course, a mighty miracle that only God could perform. In the Book of Joshua we read of a day when the sun and the moon stayed in one place in their respective orbits for about a whole day, when God listened to Joshua's voice so that Israel could finish the battle against their enemies. There never has been such a day since, in the history of the world. All these things remind us that He who created the heavens and the earth has absolute control over them, and although He may ordain them to continue in a certain pattern year after year, He can, for His own honour and glory, at any time interrupt the principles on which they generally move.

All this reminds us that there is coming a day when, at God's command, the moon, the stars and the sun will all vanish, when time shall be no more. But even at that tremendous day, there will be something which will not pass away. That is the Word of God of which the psalmist speaks: "For ever, O LORD, Thy Word is settled in heaven". How blessed is that person, young or old, who has written in their hearts God's Word, which is also written in heaven! Job could say because of that: "My witness is in heaven, and my record is on high." Sometimes Job could not see God's Word in his own heart, but he knew that even then what had been taught him by God was safely recorded in heaven.

**“WAS IT WORTH IT?”**

In the early years of the Trinitarian Bible Society, a project was launched to print the Hebrew Bible. It had been calculated that £64 would have been needed to get the project off the ground. As meetings were held around the country, the speakers were asked to mention this worthy project.

One such meeting was to be held in the Midlands. Notices were sent round to all who had showed an interest in the work of the Society. When the evening and the time to start the meeting arrived, there was just one young girl in the large hall, a maid, who had been sent by her mistress to hear what was said, as she was not able to attend herself.

The chairman of the meeting said it would be best to call it all off or have a shortened meeting, but the speaker said that it must not be called off, and that he would speak the full length as if the hall were packed out with people!

So the meeting started, and the young girl felt most conspicuous amongst the empty chairs all around her. However, she remembered that she must give a report to her mistress, so she faithfully made notes of all that was said, especially of the need for the Hebrew Bible translation.

At the end of the meeting she went home, leaving the chairman and speaker to debate whether it had all been worth it!

When the young girl got home and told her mistress of the strange evening she had spent, her mistress immediately resolved that she must meet the full cost of the Hebrew Bible project that was mentioned. Accordingly, next day, a cheque for £64 was sent to the Headquarters, proving that it was indeed worthwhile to have held the meeting. The incalculable good that has come from the Hebrew translation of the Bible is a wonderful example of the tiny mustard seed the Saviour spoke of, which when it is grown is larger than all the other shrubs around it. How true it is that God is not a respecter of persons and neither is He of numbers!

*Adapted*

*FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES***A TRUE TOKEN**

The Lord promised to give the land of Canaan to the people of Israel. As they came near to the land, two spies were sent to view the city of Jericho. They went in at the city gate and came to a house built on the wall, where Rahab lived. She had heard of all the wonderful things the LORD had done for Israel.

The King of Jericho tried to find the spies, but Rahab hid them on the roof of her house. She said: *"I know that the LORD hath given you the land."* Rahab asked the spies to give her a **"true token"** and to save her life and all her family when the city was destroyed. At night she let them escape down the wall by a red cord. Then Rahab tied the red cord in the window. It was a sign, or token, that the spies had promised to save her life.

Like Rahab, the Lord's people often ask for a true token. They want to know their sins are forgiven through the blood of Jesus. They pray to be saved from eternal death.

**QUESTIONS:**

1. Who hid the spies on the roof of her house?
2. What did she ask the spies to give her?
3. What did she tie in the window as a sign of the promise?

*Contributed*

*Send your answers to the Editor (see page 170 for the address). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.*

**ANSWERS TO JULY QUESTIONS**

1. Send her away.
2. "Lord, help me."
3. Only Jesus.

*“Shew  
me a  
token  
for  
good.”*

*Psalm 86. 17.*

## BIBLE LESSONS

**JEALOUSY > ANGER > MURDER**

Terrible things were happening in the land of Israel. Herod waited for the wise men to bring him word, but finally realised they were not going to return. He became very angry, thinking the wise men had mocked him. You will remember that Herod had deceived the wise men, making them think he wanted to worship the Child Jesus; but he could not deceive God.

In a great fury, he commanded his soldiers to go through Bethlehem and all the towns and villages around. They were to kill every child *“from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men.”* The soldiers forced their way into every house, killing every baby with the sword. Long before, the prophet Jeremiah foretold the awful day: *“In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning. Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.”*

Herod was happy when his officers returned, saying his decree had been fulfilled. He felt sure that the Child who was born “King of the Jews” was now dead. How mistaken he was! The Child Jesus was far away out of Herod’s reach. Shortly after this, Herod himself died from a dreadful disease. How wicked he had been all through his life, but especially at his end, in killing all the little children.

The Lord appeared to Joseph in another dream, telling him Herod was dead, and it was safe to return to the land of Israel. This, too, had been foretold by the prophet Hosea, who wrote that God *“... called My Son out of Egypt.”* Everything the prophets foretold about the Lord Jesus in the Old Testament was fulfilled exactly as it was written, though no one understood it at the time.

How happy they were to return to the land of Israel. This was an easy command to obey. They could go to their own country and people.

When they reached the land of Israel, they heard that



Herod's son was reigning. Joseph was afraid to go any farther. Once again, the Lord warned him in a dream to go into Galilee to the city of Nazareth. This was the city they were living in before the Lord Jesus was born. Yet, even this was prophesied before: *"He shall be called a Nazarene."* Nazareth was a city much despised by the rest of Israel, probably because mostly poor and uneducated people lived there. The Bible tells us: He *"made Himself of no reputation, ... He humbled Himself."*

The Child Jesus was different from all other children. Not in outward appearance, for He grew taller and stronger every year, just as you have. However, the Bible tells us in what way the Lord Jesus was different. *"And the Child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him."*

*You can read about this in Matthew chapter 2 verses 15 to 23 and Luke 2 verse 40.*

#### QUESTIONS:

1. Whom could Herod not deceive?
2. How old were the children he commanded to be killed?
3. Which prophet had foretold of this day?
4. What was prophesied before that Jesus should be called?
5. What was the Child Jesus filled with?

*G.L.TenBroeke*

*Please send your answers to the Editor (see address on Page 170). Please mark the envelope: ANSWERS. Remember to give your name and address.*

#### ANSWERS TO JULY QUESTIONS

1. A house.
2. Bowed down and worshipped Him.
3. Gold, frankincense, and myrrh (or costly gifts).
4. Egypt.
5. At night.

### DID THE WISE MEN BREAK THEIR WORD?

*One of our readers has questioned whether it should be stated, as in the June issue of the Friendly Companion, that the Wise Men promised to return to Herod, as their not doing implied that they broke their word to him.*

When the Wise Men mistakenly went to Herod, expecting him to know where Christ should be born, it seems they took him to be sincere, and thus it would appear to have been their intention to return to him with tidings, although the Scripture does not actually use the word *promise*. That he expected them to do so was terribly confirmed when he so angrily reacted to their failure to do so. If they did promise, then as with all promises, it would have been qualified by "if God permit." God, foreseeing Herod's brutal revenge, overruled their intentions by a dream which they were bound to obey.

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### MORE ABOUT ANTS

*Following the recent article on the wisdom God has given to ants, the following true incident is instructive:*

A cook was much annoyed to find her pastry-shelves attacked by ants. By careful watching, it was discovered that they came out twice a day in search of food, at about 7 a.m. and 4 p.m. How were the pies to be protected against these invaders?

After many things had been tried without success, it was suggested that a circle of molasses, 2.5 cm in diameter, be made around the pies. The next morning, therefore, one of the boys, who had a personal interest in the matter, got up early and prepared his attack. By 6.45 a.m. everything was ready and he took his point of observation. He had not long to wait, for in five minutes he noticed that off in the left-hand corner of the pantry was a line of ants slowly making their way in the direction of the pies. They seemed like a vast army coming forth to attack the enemy. In front was a leader, who was larger than any of the others and who always kept a little ahead of his troops. They were of the sort known as the

medium-sized red ant, which is regarded as the most intelligent of its kind, whose scientific name is *Formica rubra*.

Slowly they marched along in double file, until the leader came within 17 cm of the circle of molasses. Then, evidently, a signal to halt was given, for every ant stood still while the leader went on to investigate the unforeseen obstacle. Soon he returned and instead of taking his place again at the head of the army, he went along the line, summoning here and there one from the ranks.

About 40 ants out of, say, 500 stepped out and joined the leader. The general and his aids held a seeming council, and then proceeded to examine the circle of molasses. Certain portions of it seemed to be assigned to the different ants and each selected unerringly the point in the section under his charge where the stream of molasses was narrowest. Then the leader made his tour of investigation. He went around the entire circle and decided upon one particular spot as the narrowest; his aids joined him there and then, one being left to guard this narrow point, the others returned to those who were still in line. The order to march was given and the ants all made their way to a nail-hole in the wall at which the plastering was loose. Here they broke rank and set about carrying pieces of plaster to the place in the molasses which had been agreed upon as the narrowest. To and fro they went, from the nail-hole to the molasses, until, at 11.30 a.m. they had thrown a bridge across. They then formed themselves in line again and marched over and by 11.45 a.m. every ant was eating pie.

*Selected*

---

### A SURPRISING PUNISHMENT

A poor minister lived in Wales long ago. He was a faithful servant of the Lord. He was the pastor of a very small congregation. The people of this congregation were very poor, and could not afford to pay their pastor very well. But the

minister knew how to fix clocks and watches, and the money he earned by doing this helped support his wife and ten children.

Apparently, it was against the law of that city for a minister to do other work besides preach. We know that Satan will try anything to stop the preaching of God's Word, so he stirred up a rich man who wanted nothing to do with God or the preaching of His Word.

This man went to the judge and complained about the faithful minister. The minister was ordered to appear in court. No doubt, he had prayed continuously about this problem ever since he was told about it, and, no doubt, his entire congregation and family were praying for him as well.

"How do you dare to disgrace the office of a minister by doing such a common thing as fixing clocks and watches?" demanded the judge.

"I do it to support my wife and ten children, your honour," answered the minister.

"That does not satisfy me," replied the judge. "I will force you to stop fixing watches and clocks, I promise you!"

"Lord," prayed the minister silently, "what now? Help me!"

The judge called in his secretary, and to the great astonishment of everyone in the room, ordered him to write down that this minister was to receive a certain sum of money each year, enough for the minister and his family to live comfortably!

You can be sure this minister, his family, and his congregation thanked the Lord for His goodness! The Lord can turn evil into good.

It is also a lesson for us, children, for we need grace to trust the Lord for everything.

"But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen" (Philippians 4. 19-20).

*Selected*

**TRUE STORIES FOR YOUNG PROTESTANTS (1)**  
**The Poor Priest Turned Printer**

It was in the year 1428 or thereabouts, that a man named Lawrence Coster was seen walking on the outside of the walls of the old city of Haarlem, in Holland. His pace was slow, and it was evident that his mind was engaged in deep thought. As he walked, he came to a grove, and there he cut with his knife a piece of bark from a tree. He paced up and down beneath the shade of the groves, and amused himself with carving the bark. Now and then he paused, and then again went on with his work. As he turned to go home he found he had cut the shape of a number of raised letters on the face of the bark. That evening he sat down in his house, and soon went on carving more letters on other pieces of wood. When he had done several in this way, he strung them together on a piece of string. Some ink was now made thick, and rubbing the faces of the letters with it, he pressed a sheet of paper against them. He gazed on what he had done, with surprise; and well he might. He had caught the first idea of printing. He had made the earliest attempt, in Europe at least, of impressing on paper the thoughts of the mind. There was hope for the world in those pieces of bark hung together on a string.

A few years passed away and another man, of the name of Gottenberg, was busy in a small workshop in the German city of Mentz, cutting letters. This time, however, they were not made of wood or of bark, but of metal. Nor were several carved on one piece of wood, each was a separate type.\* Something of a machine, too, called a press, had been formed; and with these metal types he soon set about printing books. The volume which was printed was a Latin Bible. It was not finished in a few weeks as it would be now, but nearly eight years passed before it came from the workmen's hands. Every one who saw it was astonished; but little did they foresee that this infant effort at the new art was the earnest of the richest blessings to all mankind. It was well the first volume printed was the best Book – that it was God's Book. It was the pledge

of the great things to be done by the discovery of the art of printing, in giving the Holy Scriptures to every nation on the earth.

Latin was the language of the priests and learned men; of what use, then, could the Bible be to the common people, if printed in that tongue? We shall now see that the people were to receive it from the hands of Tyndale, a poor priest of a college at Oxford. As he sat one day with some fellow priests, he spoke of the value of the Word of God, when they mockingly said: "We are better without God's Law than the pope's law;" to which Tyndale replied: "If God spare me, before many years I will cause a boy that driveth a plough to know more of the Scriptures than you do."

The young priest saw that the people were living and dying without Bible knowledge, deceived by the vain doctrines of the church of Rome; and he quietly resolved to get the New Testament printed in England, for the use of all. He had heard of the learning and riches of the Bishop of London, and he thought he would surely aid him in the good design; but he soon found that there was "no room in my lord of London's palace to translate the Word of God, nor any safe place to do it in all England."

\* *Type* is from a Greek word, and means to strike, to stamp, or impress.

*(To be continued)*

*Selected*

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**"I WILL LIFT UP MINE EYES UNTO THE HILLS FROM  
WHENCE COMETH MY HELP" (PSALM 121)**

**3. Sinai**

Nobody is certain where Mount Sinai is to be found. Many people think that Mount Sinai is located in the triangular piece of land at the north end of the Red Sea, called the Sinai Peninsular. It is doubtful that this is the case, for two reasons: firstly, the children of Israel crossed the Red Sea before reaching Mount Sinai. Most maps at the back of Bibles show

them crossing a small lake to the north of the Red Sea, but we feel this is not consistent with the record in Exodus 14. Secondly, the Apostle Paul refers to Mount Sinai being in Arabia (Galatians 4. 25), which would imply that it is on the eastern side of the Red Sea.

It was on Mount Sinai that God gave His holy law to Moses and, through him, to the children of Israel. Mount Sinai was a mount that might not be touched and the children of Israel trembled to hear the voice of God: “which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake)” (Hebrews 12. 19-21).

You may think it strange therefore that Mount Sinai could be a help to the Lord's people, yet even here we may see that help is indeed given to them.

We first read of Mount Sinai when the LORD spoke to Moses from the burning bush in the backside of the desert. Moses trembled, but the LORD made known that He had regard to the bondage of the children of Israel. He said: “I have seen, I have seen the affliction of My people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them.” He gave Moses a commission and a gracious promise: “And now come, I will send thee into Egypt” (Acts 7. 34). “And He said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain” (Exodus 3. 12). How many of the Lord's people, feeling their inability, as Moses did, have been helped and strengthened by this promise! True to His word, Moses did indeed serve God at Mount Sinai.

God made known His holy law on Mount Sinai. It was a solemn time, yet we may say that God meant it for good. The

Psalmist declares that: "The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes" (Psalm 19. 7-8). Paul also asserts that the law is good. Why is this?

Firstly, when applied by the Holy Spirit to the soul, the law reveals our shortcomings, and that we are by nature dead in trespasses and in sins. Paul says: "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual" (Romans 7. 12-14). The spiritual application of the law to the soul is an essential step in the experience of the children of God, so that they may be brought to know that they have no hope in themselves, and to look alone to the Lord for mercy and salvation. Hart's words are still true:

"What comfort can a Saviour bring  
To those who never felt their woe?  
A sinner is a sacred thing;  
The Holy Ghost has made him so.  
New life from Him we must receive  
Before for sin we rightly grieve."

But secondly, mercy is revealed, even in the ten commandments. The second commandment contains these words: "I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me; And *shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep My commandments*" (Exodus 20. 5-6).

Not only did God give the ten commandments (often known as the moral law) to Moses, but He gave many statutes for their good individually and as a nation. He also gave commandment



concerning the tabernacle, the priesthood, the sacrifices and ordinances, known as the ceremonial law. Paul says that: "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Galatians 3. 24). We feel that this does not only refer to the spiritual application of the ten commandments, but also to the civil and ceremonial law. The Epistle to the Hebrews is particularly concerned with this, showing that: "The law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect" (Hebrews 10. 1), and then shows the perfection and glories of the work of Christ in redemption. So the law points to Christ and His work, and the Holy Spirit takes of the things of Jesus, including those types and shadows in the Old Testament dispensation, and shows them unto His people.

There is much gospel teaching in the Levitical law given at Sinai. The Lord Jesus Himself, as He drew near to the two who walked to Emmaus: "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24. 27). What a wonderful sermon that must have been! We feel sure that when the Lord began at Moses, amongst other things He showed the spiritual application of the ceremonial law. No wonder "they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the scriptures?"

So Sinai reveals not only the holy law of God, but mercy, and the foretelling of the way in which sins are atoned for and mercy is given, through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus for His people. He is "a just God, and a Saviour." May the Lord be pleased to reveal more of the spiritual truth and blessings of Mount Sinai, to the help and comfort of His people.

*Contributed*

---

A lost soul is one that lives and dies without Christ.

### **PAPYRUS**

In the early days of history, paper as we know it, was not known. To transmit a message, one had to either engrave on a stone using a chisel; or sometimes marks and pictures were drawn on pottery, and occasionally wax was also used.

However, one of the most important inventions for preserving writing was that of papyrus. This was the forerunner of the paper we are so used to. Papyrus was an Egyptian invention, and was made from the abundant papyrus plants that grew by the River Nile.

To make papyrus, the following method was used:

Firstly, a bundle of papyrus reeds had to be cut from the river bank. Then the stems had to be peeled, after which the inside pith was cut into strips and laid side by side, slightly overlapping. Over this layer, a second layer was placed at right angles to the first. Then a mallet was used to beat the strips into a flat surface. This surface was then smoothed with a scraper to form a sheet of papyrus ready to be inscribed on. To fasten two sheets together, the sheets would be slightly overlapped and then the join would be beaten until it was bonded.

It was on such a surface that the earliest manuscripts of the Old Testament were written. So papyrus formed a very important part in the preservation of God's inerrant Word.

How much more important it is for us to have the Word of God written upon the tables of our heart by the Holy Spirit. This is something which will last much longer than papyrus for it is an eternal mark which can never be erased.

---

### **SMART SMELT**

It was past midnight on the Santa Monica beach, and the grunion (a unique species of smelt) were running.

The time of the grunion runs is predicted to the very hour and minute, but no one knows where. They may appear on beaches anywhere in lower California from Monterey to San Diego. We had lost sleep on several other nights hoping to see

them but were disappointed. Our first success was all the more exciting.

Grunion is the fish that “dances in the moonlight.” It actually does just that when the male and female dash ashore at the peak of the highest tides, lay and fertilize the eggs before the next wave washes them back to sea. This marvellous sight is predicted to the hour and almost the second by the Division of Fish and Game experts.

The grunion’s instinct for timing is a wonder of nature. It must spawn on three or four nights of the highest tides following the first full moon after the first of March. Then it waits for the third or fourth breaker after the crest of the tide. The reason is that incoming tides erode sand from the beach so eggs laid too soon would be washed away. Outgoing tides deposit sand which covers the eggs to a greater depth. Also the spawning must be on a high tide which is followed by a series of lower or descending tides. This protects the eggs until the next series of highest tides when they are mature and ready to be uncovered. The female buries herself up to her pectoral fins and deposits her eggs. By a remarkable alchemy of nature, her eggs ripen at the exact time of the high tides. The male lies close or digs near her and gives milt to fertilize the eggs.

After about ten days the next high tides wash the eggs free. They are now mature, and when agitated by the surf, hatch immediately and swim out to deep water. The ability of the eggs to hatch in two or three minutes is another marvel.

The complex factors in the grunion’s spawning are amazing. The eggs are laid out of the water at precise moments in relation to time and tides. All other times and tides would be disastrous. No such wisdom could have developed by the trial and error theory of evolution. The species would have perished in its mistakes.

The Bible explains the wisdom of God’s creatures by simply stating “they are made wise” (Hebrew of Proverbs 30. 24b).

Birds, animals, and fish follow the instinct God gave them and they survive. God has given a clearer revelation – the Bible – for man's spiritual survival, but most men try their own schemes and perish. God uses the faithfulness of creatures to their natural wisdom to condemn man for his unfaithfulness to divine revelation: "Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but My people know not the judgment of the LORD" (Jeremiah 8. 7).

The Lord *make* us to know Him, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent.

*Cheering Words*

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**BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES**

*(Have your Bible alongside you.)*

**DANIEL (III)**

We have recorded in the fifth chapter of Daniel a remarkable and solemn thing, which again brought godly Daniel to pre-eminence. Belshazzar, Nebuchadnezzar's son, was now king in Babylon. He made a great feast for thousands, obviously leading dignitaries from his empire. In this feast he did something that was an affront to the Holy God of heaven. "Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein. Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them. They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone" (Daniel 5. 2-4).

In the Book of Proverbs we read: "By Me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By Me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth" (Proverbs 8. 15-16). Also the well-known hymn:

“His providence unfolds the Book,  
And makes His counsels shine;  
Each opening leaf, and every stroke,  
Fulfil some deep design.

Here He exalts neglected worms  
To sceptres and a crown;  
And there the following page He turns,  
And treads the monarch down.”

Now we see the solemn awful Hand of divine judgment against this king (Daniel 5. 5-6). What awful terrors now filled the heart of this ungodly man: a disembodied hand appeared writing on the wall. None of his wise men could interpret the words. Then the queen came to him: “There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; ... now let Daniel be called, and he will shew the interpretation. Then was Daniel brought before the king ...” (Daniel 5. 11-13).

How solemnly, faithfully, without fear or favour, does Daniel deliver the message from the God of heaven, before this great assembly: “Then Daniel answered and said before the king ... yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation. O thou king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory and honour ... But when his heart was lifted up and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him ... And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; But hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven ... Then was the part of the hand sent from Him; and this writing was written. And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; Thy kingdom is

divided, and given to the Medes and Persians. Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom. In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old." (Daniel 5. 17-31).

My dear young friends, have we been weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, (the house of God)? Has the solemn law of God been brought by the Holy Ghost with power into our hearts, convicting us of sin, of righteousness, of judgment to come; showing us that we have sinned and come short of the glory of God; showing us that God is holy and righteous altogether and that we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ?

Has the Holy Ghost brought us to see, to feel, to know that one thing is needful? Has he brought us to cry: "Give me Christ, or else I die"? Has He brought us to see a loveliness in the word: "But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin"? (1 John 1. 7). My dear young friends, if we know nothing feelingly of ourselves as poor lost sinners and of Jesus Christ, the only Saviour of sinners, then written over our religion is this solemn word: "TEKEL: Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting" (Daniel 5. 27). How solemn to stand before the judgment seat of Jesus Christ, the King of kings, the Lord of lords, and this word is stamped on our religion "TEKEL."

*J. R. Rutt*

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### BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month's questions are all about the *FEAR OF GOD* and its opposite. Younger children need only do five questions, and the last two are for older children. Please give references for questions 6 to 10 and send your answers to the Editor (see page

170 for the address). Please give your name and address and write the word *ANSWERS* on the envelope.

1. What is the fear of the LORD the beginning of? (Proverbs 1. 7; 9. 10).
2. Why was Abraham afraid when he went to live in Gerar? (Genesis 20. 11).
3. What will a man hate and depart from by the fear of the LORD? (Proverbs 8. 13; 16. 6).
4. What did the transgression of the wicked show to David? (Psalm 36. 1).
5. What does the fear of man bring? (Proverbs 29. 25).
6. What is being "in the fear of the LORD all the day long" an answer to? (Proverbs 23).
7. What will happen to the wicked and his fear? (Proverbs 10).
8. What does the Apostle Paul constrain believers to do "in the fear of God"? (Ephesians 5).
9. Find and write out the only text in the New Testament which mentions "the fear of the Lord."
10. Who said: "But so did not I because of the fear of God"?

### ANSWERS TO JULY QUESTIONS

1. Faith, or "He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."
2. Jesus prayed for those His Father had given Him, not for the world.
3. He smote upon his breast, saying: "God be merciful to me, a sinner."
4. Hannah.
5. "He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer."
6. The forgiveness of sin (Psalm 32. 5-6).
7. Elijah (Elias) (James 5. 17-18).
8. The threatening and reviling of Sennacherib against Jerusalem and against God (2 Chronicles 32. 16-20).
9. Luke 18. 1; Romans 12. 12; Ephesians 6. 18; 1 Thessalonians 5. 17; Colossians 4. 2.
10. Samuel (1 Samuel 12. 23).

*Contributed*

**IT IS GOD'S WEATHER**

When the rain is pouring down,  
And all our plans need changing,  
Do we ever stop to think  
‘Midst all our re-arranging?  
‘Tis God on high who sends the rain,  
We must not, dare not, then, complain.

When the nation's very low,  
And leaders are quite helpless;  
Strikes abound, and all seems lost,  
And evil seems relentless,  
Recall that those who rule the land  
Are in their place by God's command.

When some earthquake causes death,  
Or floods cause desolation,  
Let us not blame angry fate  
For every deprivation.  
Our God on high is Sovereign still,  
And does all things just as He will.

When believers are hard-pressed,  
With troubles all around them;  
All seems ill each way they go,  
Afflictions sore have bound them:  
See how they praise the Father's love  
Who sends these trials from above.

He is Sovereign over all,  
No mishap can o'ertake them;  
He directs the raging storm,  
His purpose is to make them  
Conformed to Christ, His glorious Son,  
These trials are His work begun.

*G.S.*



# *The Friendly Companion*



“... if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north,  
in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be.”  
(Ecclesiastes 11. 3.)

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*September 2005*

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### OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

I wonder, without looking in the Bible, if you could say how many books there are with just one chapter? There are five of them. See if you can name them.

One of them is called *The Epistle of Paul to Philemon*. This is a most interesting and instructive letter. It has to do with being truly sorry and meaning it!

Philemon was a gracious man who, as was customary in those days, had a slave. His name was Onesimus. Philemon would have sought to bring his family and household up to honour God in their ways, and no doubt Onesimus would have been used to hearing the Scriptures read and the name of the Lord Jesus mentioned in reverence and love.

For some reason Onesimus ran away to Rome. He evidently took some of his master's money, which meant that he was a thief ! It would appear that he wanted to get away from the Christian influence in the house of his master.

What Onesimus did not know was that whilst he might be able to escape from Philemon, he could not escape from God. Whilst in Rome, perhaps at first through curiosity, Onesimus came into contact with Paul, who was being held in captivity for Christ's sake. It must have been there that the Lord met with him and he was brought to repent of his wickedness and to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for forgiveness. Now a forgiven sinner is known by his behaviour. One good man said: "Show me a repenting sinner and you will see a forgiven sinner." So now Onesimus had to do what is often very hard to do: to say "sorry" to his master! This letter is the one that Paul wrote to Philemon, which Onesimus had to carry back to his master. Really, Paul was helping Onesimus to say "sorry." Also, Paul was encouraging Philemon to forgive Onesimus. That can sometimes be as hard as saying "sorry" and really meaning it! Onesimus must have been very anxious as to how he would be received. Masters were known to beat their disobedient slaves severely for running away and sometimes a

very hard master would kill rebellious slaves.

However, although we are not actually told what Philemon said when he saw Onesimus, if he followed Paul's advice, like the father of the prodigal son, he would have forgiven him freely, especially as now Onesimus was a true child of God and a spiritual brother to Philemon. They had a new relationship altogether now. Perhaps both of them would have remembered what Paul wrote to another church. Do you know which one? "Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with our spirit.

From your sincere friend and Editor.

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### OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

"How are the mighty fallen" could well be said of the noble tree now lying fallen on the ground with all its roots exposed. A recent gale which many other trees around survived, this one succumbed to, its roots evidently not strong enough to hold it against the force of the wind. It had, no doubt, endured many storms up till then, but not this one.

What lessons does this tree teach us?

Firstly, how important are the roots in a tree. They not only nourish the tree, but also are its stability. I wonder where are the roots of our life? Paul speaks about being rooted and grounded in love. If we are rooted (nourished by) and grounded (secured by) the love of God in Christ Jesus, then we will stand every storm and live at last. One of the fruits of this love will be love to God and His people. Sadly the storms of sin, temptation and difficulty have uprooted many who at one time seemed to be right, but not being rooted and grounded in the love of God, their profession of Christ's name fell. Judas is the saddest example of this.

Secondly, the writer of Ecclesiastes (do you know who this was?) tells us that as the tree falleth, so it shall lie. Whatever

direction it falls towards, there it stays. So it is with man when he dies. If we die leaning towards the Lord Jesus Christ in all His ability to save to the uttermost, then we will die well and will be eternally safe, but if we die leaning in some other direction, whatever that direction might be, it will be to our eternal ruin. Read for yourself the last chapter in the Bible, particularly verse 11. If we are rooted and grounded in the Lord Jesus Christ, then although our bodies must be uprooted as this tree is, yet our souls will endure the last storm of death and retain their root and ground in Him.

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### **“IS THIS THE PLACE TO PREPARE TO DIE?”**

It was at one time the custom of many villages in England to have an annual party or “wake” at which, sadly, much disorder and riot resulted because of drunkenness. Usually Sunday, which should be kept as the Lord’s Day, was the day when these parties reached their climax. A godly man who lived in one village was stirred up, even as Paul was on Mars Hill, to speak out against the ungodliness of these gatherings.

Accordingly, he took a number of tracts into the yard of a public house where many were drinking. He handed a tract entitled: “Are you prepared to die?” to the first man to whom he came. The man took it, and reading the title out aloud added: “No, sir, I am not.” Seeing an opportunity to speak a word in season the godly man added: “Is this the place to prepare to die?” To which the drinker replied: “No, sir, I think not;” at which the drinker turned on his heel and left the yard and went home. Within half an hour the public house was empty of revellers.

It would be a mercy if these two questions followed us about daily as we live out our lives on earth. “Are we prepared to die?” If this is a real exercise with us we will avoid those places and pursuits which can never prepare us for our end but rather be a solemn hindrance and even ruin to our soul.

**FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES****SAMUEL CALLED BY NAME**

When you were born, you were given a special name. You are called by your name when someone wants to speak with you. Your name is one of the first words you learn to read and write.

One mother named her little boy Samuel because she had *“asked him of the LORD.”* She vowed that if she was given a son, she would *“give him unto the LORD.”* While Samuel was young, she brought him to live at the house of the LORD with Eli, the priest. *“Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD,”* but one night the LORD called him by name. Samuel ran to Eli, thinking he was needed. Three times his name was called, and each time he went to Eli. Then Eli knew the LORD had called the child and told him what to say. The LORD called his name a fourth time: *“Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for Thy servant beareth.”*

The Lord knows each one of His people by name. He causes them to hear His voice. He speaks to them through His Word (the Bible) and by His servants (His ministers).

*Contributed*

**QUESTIONS:**

1. Which little boy was *“asked of the LORD”*?
2. Where was he brought to live?
3. Who called him by name one night?

*Send your answers to the Editor (see page 194 for the address). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.*

**ANSWERS TO AUGUST QUESTIONS**

1. Rahab.
2. A true token.
3. A red cord.

*“... I have  
called thee  
by thy  
name;  
thou  
art Mine.”  
Isaiah 43. 1.*

## BIBLE LESSONS

## JESUS AS A BOY

The greater part of Jesus' life was lived quietly among His family and relatives. The Bible tells us very little about Him from the time He was about three years old until He was thirty. Because He was without sin, we know that He was never naughty. He never quarrelled with others. He never said anything mean to hurt others. He was never disrespectful to His parents. The Bible tells us that He "*was subject unto them.*" What an example He set for us! Even during the difficult teenage years, when we want more independence and rebel against parental restraint, He was still subject unto them. In everything He obeyed the laws of God perfectly.

Because Nazareth was so far from Jerusalem (seventy miles), His family could not go to the temple every week to worship. Instead, they would meet in a little building in Nazareth called a synagogue. The Jewish boys of that day had to memorize a large part of the Old Testament. Yet, the Lord Jesus is "**THE WORD.**" The Bible tells us: "*The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.*" It was also written of Him: "...Yea, Thy law (Word) is within my heart."

Every year His parents went up to Jerusalem to keep "*the feast of the Passover.*" You may remember this was the night the angel of death passed over the children of Israel in the land of Egypt. When Jesus was twelve years old, His parents took Him with them. They travelled in company with many relatives and friends.

Once they arrived, they were met with the sight of paschal lambs being slain, the blood caught in a basin and the sacrifice presented before the Lord. How this must have stirred the heart of the Child Jesus! He knew it represented His own death.

When the days of the Passover were ended, His parents supposed that Jesus was with their company and started for home. However, when they sought Him after a day's travel, they discovered His absence. Where could He be? With



sorrowing hearts they returned to Jerusalem and searched the city for Him. After three days they finally found Him in the Temple. Was He afraid or upset? No! He was sitting among the doctors (teachers of the law), listening and asking them questions. Even the learned doctors *“were astonished at His understanding and answers.”*

Mary began to reprove Him, saying: *“Son, why hast Thou thus dealt with us?”* Mary was full of mixed emotions, knowing the good behaviour of her Son and yet unable to understand what He was doing. Jesus answered: *“How is it that ye sought Me? wist ye not that I must be about My Father’s business?”* The business of His Father was the salvation of His people. The great work of SALVATION, no doubt, was in the mind of Jesus as He saw the lambs being killed and their blood pouring forth.

Mary and Joseph did not understand what He was saying. How this shows that Mary had to be taught about salvation from the Lord Jesus. She was as ignorant as any other sinner, nor did she have authority to command Him in such matters.

*You can read about this in Luke chapter 2 verses 40 to 52.*

#### QUESTIONS:

1. For what feast did His parents go to Jerusalem?
2. What did the death of the paschal lamb represent?
3. Where was Jesus found in Jerusalem?
4. What were the doctors astonished at? (4 words)
5. What was the business of His Father?

*G.L. TenBroeke*

*Please send your answers to the Editor (see address on page 194). Please mark the envelope: ANSWERS. Remember to give your name and address.*

#### ANSWERS TO AUGUST QUESTIONS

1. God.
2. Two years old and under.
3. Jeremiah.
4. A Nazarene.
5. Wisdom

**TRUE STORIES FOR YOUNG PROTESTANTS (II)****The Poor Priest Turned Printer**

At this time there lived in London a wealthy merchant, named Monmouth, who had been taught the truth through reading the books of the Reformers in Germany. He was a kind friend to Tyndale, and gave him a room in his house, where the good priest used to sit, night and day, busy with his pen and Latin Bible. But these were times of danger to those who truly feared God; Tyndale, therefore, well supplied with money by his liberal patron, set sail over the North Sea, and went to the great city of Hamburg. Then removing to Cologne, he went on in translating and printing the New Testament until ten sheets were done.

In this state of things, an agent of the pope found out what he was doing. He heard that a learned Englishman was in the city, and that some printers had been heard to say that soon all England would become Protestant. This papist thought he would find out what all this boasting meant. So with great cunning he made friends with the printers, and invited them to his house. Here he gave them much wine, and in the midst of their mirth they made known the secret, that some hundreds of copies of the New Testament in English were in the press, which were to be secretly carried over the seas by the merchants. He then had the printer's house surrounded by officers, and the press seized; but not before Tyndale, warned of the danger, ran to the rescue of his printed sheets, which he threw into a boat, and pushed his way from the shore. Sailing up the river Rhine he soon came to a safer place of labour.

After great pains and cost and toil, the last sheet of the New Testament was ready. Fifteen hundred copies were printed – a large edition in those days; and now the Bread of life seemed prepared for the people of his own dear native land. English merchants took charge of the Books, and carried them to England with articles of commerce. The precious volume was packed in bales, and sent to London, Norwich and Oxford. There they were readily bought by the rich and poor – though

the latter had much difficulty in getting enough money to secure the holy Word. Soon they were found spread over the land, and many souls rejoiced in the Gospels and Epistles, which for the first time were held in their hands, and now cherished in their hearts.

Cardinal Wolsey was at this time the chief person in all matters of Church and State. When he was told that the printed Books were coming fast to England, he was filled with alarm and anger. He soon sent out orders to make a diligent search, among the merchants of London and the students of Oxford for the forbidden work. Among the latter, some of those who were found to have it, were thrust into a dungeon, where four of them soon died. Others were made to carry faggots of wood, and with them to kindle a fire, into which their own hands had to cast the Books. Several baskets full of Tyndale's Testaments were collected in London, for even a more public display of Romish wrath. The Cardinal one day took his place in front of St. Paul's, attended by thirty six abbots, learned priors, and bishops, with a host of priests and officers around him, and the baskets and their contents were brought, and the whole consumed by the flames before their eyes.

But the hope of burning the Word of God out of the land was all in vain. The printer priest kept working off more copies, and merchants took them across the seas hidden in the corn which was carried to England, at a time when great scarcity was felt. Thus bread to feed the body and the Bread of life for the soul came in the same ships, and were rapidly sent through the land.

*(To be concluded.)*

*Selected*

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#### EDITOR'S POSTBAG

To the young mother who wrote anonymously about women's dress: an excellent article on this subject appeared in the Gospel Standard for last month (August 2005), which I wholly endorse and would refer you to.

### ON LEAVING HOME

My dear father walked with me the first six miles of the way. His counsels and tears and heavenly conversation on that parting journey are as fresh in my heart as if it had been but yesterday; and tears are on my cheeks as freely now as then, whenever memory steals me away to the scene. For the last half mile or so we walked on together in almost unbroken silence, my father, as was often his custom, carrying his hat in his hand. His lips kept moving in silent prayers for me, and his tears fell fast when our eyes met each other in looks for which all speech was vain! We halted on reaching the appointed parting place; he grasped my hand firmly for a minute of silence and then solemnly and affectionately said: "God bless you, my son! Your father's God prosper you and keep you from all evil!"

Unable to say more, his lips kept moving in silent prayer; in tears we embraced, and parted. I ran off as fast as I could; and, when about to turn a corner in the road where he would lose sight of me, I looked back and saw him still standing with head uncovered where I had left him, gazing after me. Waving my hat in farewell, I was round the corner and out of sight in an instant. But my heart was too full and sore to carry me further, so I darted into the side of the road and wept for a time.

Then, rising up cautiously, I climbed the dyke to see if he yet stood where I had left him; and just at that moment I caught a glimpse of him climbing the dyke and looking out for me! He did not see me, and after he had gazed eagerly in my direction for a while, he got down, set his face towards home, and began to return, his head still uncovered, and his heart, I felt sure, still rising in prayers for me.

I watched through blinding tears till his form faded from my gaze; and then, hastening on my way, vowed deeply and oft, by the help of God, to live and act so as never to grieve or dishonour such a father and mother as He had given me. The appearance of my father when we parted, his advice, prayers, and tears, the road, the dyke, the climbing up on it, and then

walking away, head uncovered, have often, often, all through life, risen vividly before my mind, and do so now while I am writing, as if it had been but an hour ago.

In my earlier years particularly, when exposed to many temptations, his parting form rose before me as that of a guardian angel. It is no Pharisaism, but with deep gratitude, which makes me here testify that the memory of that scene not only helped, by God's grace, to keep me pure from the prevailing sins, but also stimulated me in all my studies, that I might not fall short of his hopes, and in all my Christian duties, that I might faithfully follow his shining example.

*(From the autobiography of John G. Paton)*

*"My son, bear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: for they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck" (Proverbs 1. 8-9).*

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### SIR CHRISTOPHER WREN AND SWEARING

When Sir Christopher Wren was building St. Paul's Cathedral, he caused the following notice to be affixed to several parts of the structure: "Whereas, among labourers and others, that ungodly custom of swearing is so frequently heard, to the dishonour of God and contempt of His authority; and to the end that such impiety may be utterly banished from these works, which are intended for the service of God and the honour of religion, it is ordered that profane swearing shall be a sufficient crime to dismiss any labourer that comes to the call; and the clerk of the works, upon a sufficient proof, shall dismiss him accordingly; and that if any master, working by task, shall not, upon admonition, reform the profanation among his apprentices, servants, and labourers, it shall be construed his fault, and he shall be liable to be censured by the Commissioners."

*The Protestant Echo 1900*

### LANDING SAFELY

*"...and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive"* (Acts 27. 15b).

In this portion of Scripture, we meet the Apostle Paul as prisoner and as shipmaster at the same time. As a prisoner he had objected to setting sail on the sea journey. He said: "I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage." He could not have given a clearer warning. However, the master of the ship and most of the sailors were convinced it would not come to that. The weather was beautiful. The south wind blew softly. It promised to be a successful voyage.

Some probably even looked mockingly at Paul, the serious preacher, for what did he know about sailing? This happens also today. We so easily think: "The minister means well, but I am still young. Life still lies before me. The ship of my life is making good headway. Every day for me is joyful and wonderful." And so it seems, until the wind begins to blow and storms arise. Then the truth of what Moses once said will become evident: "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away" (Psalm 90. 10).

Then it is: "Many callings have sounded in my life, but I have never paid attention. And what must I do now? If only I could start life over again. But that is not possible, for the way back is closed. There seems to be only one possibility, and that is to work hard, and maybe I can have a safe landing."

That is also what the sailors did. They worked as they never had before. But the more they laboured, the more impossible it became. The matter seemed hopeless. And so it was. After several days the master of the ship gave up hope. This capable seaman did not know what to do. Indeed, the most intellectual must come to an end with their ability. "For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise" (1 Corinthians 1. 19).

The ship was given over to the waves. Rudderless, the ship

bobbed upon the sea; death was before their eyes. However, not yet! The prisoner-preacher was still on the ship. He, in the name of the Lord, might now serve as the master of the ship. What a privilege it is, when we are in the greatest danger that a preacher may be upon our path. He may direct the Word of God to desperate travellers at sea, saying: "For there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship." He proclaimed the preservation of life, but the loss of all that gave them security. All that served for security and safety must be thrown overboard, such as the tackling and the compass. Also the ropes to the lifeboats had to be cut loose. Nothing was left.

"And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land." Is this not a striking image of the way the Lord deals with a sinner? "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal" (John 12. 25). The way of safety means perishing on man's side. It is a giving up of all the means of deliverance and an acknowledging that there is nothing with which we can exist before God. On the other hand, it is a learning to "let her drive" upon the waters of God's grace.

"And a Man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land" (Isaiah 32. 2). Christ, for His church, was submerged in the waves of God's wrath. Blessed is the man who may be saved in that way. "And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land" (Acts 27. 44b). "And so." That means to say, through Him, through Him alone, for the sake of His eternal good pleasure.

To Jehovah then they cry  
In their trouble, and He saves  
Drives the darkness from the sky,  
Calms the storm, and stills the waves,  
Makes their sad forebodings cease,  
To their haven guides in peace.

Psalter 295. 3. (Psalm 107. 28-30).

*G. Clements. "Daniel"*

**BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES***(Have your Bible alongside you.)***DANIEL (IV)**

In Daniel chapter 6 we come to another remarkable trial and deliverance in the life of godly Daniel. King Darius set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty princes, and over these, three presidents. We read: "Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm" (Daniel 6. 3).

Then we read of the spirit of jealousy against Daniel: "Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him. Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God" (Daniel 6. 4-5). What a godly witness, in the midst of a heathen people. It reminds us of the words of our Lord Jesus: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5. 16).

So these princes made a decree that (pandering to the king's pride) any man who petitioned (that means prayed unto) any God or man for thirty days, except to the king, should be cast into a den of lions. Now let us see the reaction of godly Daniel: "Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime" (Daniel 6. 10). We see the single eye of faith in Daniel's behaviour: nothing must interrupt his union and communion with his God, even if it meant suffering and loss. We see a wonderful consistency here if we go back to the beginning: he "purposed in his heart." My dear young friends, may God, by His Spirit, give us this single eye of faith and it will affect the way we live. We shall be able to swim against the



current and not be tossed about, but like Ruth, be steadfastly minded.

Please read from Scripture the outcome of these things: Daniel 6. 13-23. Daniel glorified God in his body.

We go on to read: "Then King Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for He is the living God ... who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions. So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian" (Daniel 6. 25-28).

*J.R. Rutt*

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### ON TEMPTATIONS

I am tempted to think that I am now an established Christian, that I have overcome this or that lust so long, that I have got into the habit of the opposite grace, so that there is no fear. I may venture very near the temptation – nearer than other men. This is a lie of Satan. I might as well speak of gunpowder getting by habit a power of resisting fire so as not to catch the spark. As long as powder is wet, it resists the spark: but when it becomes dry it is ready to explode at the first touch. As long as the Spirit dwells in my heart He deadens me to sin, so that, if lawfully called through temptation, I may reckon upon God carrying me through. But when the Spirit leaves me, I am like dry gunpowder. Oh for a sense of this!

I am tempted to think that there are some sins for which I have no natural taste, such as strong drink, profane language, etc., so that I need not fear temptation to such sins. This is a lie – a proud, presumptuous lie. The seeds of all sins are in my heart, and perhaps all the more dangerously that I do not see them.

*Robert Murray McChesney*

*(Written shortly before his death, March, 1843, aged 30.)*

**TRAPS** *(See Bible Questions)*

Traps are used for catching things, usually animals, birds and fish. Perhaps you may be surprised at how many different kinds of traps are mentioned in the Bible. Here are a few.

**Snares** are loops of wire which are put where an animal runs, for example, at the entrance of a rabbit burrow. One end of the wire is securely fixed to the ground. The animal runs through the loop, which then tightens around its neck and strangles it. In the Bible the word “snare” often refers to other traps as well. For example, the “snare of the fowler” refers to nets used to catch birds.

**Gins or Gin-traps** are placed where an animal runs, but are hidden from view. When an animal steps on the trap, two jaws



**A Gin and a Snare**

snap shut and trap the animal's leg. They are illegal in many countries now as they cause so much suffering to the animal.

**Nets** are still used for catching fish, and sometimes birds and other animals. In former times nets were also used to trap men in warfare, to prevent soldiers using their weapons.

**Angling**, or using baited hooks to catch fish, is mentioned twice in the Bible.

**Pits** or holes dug in the ground and covered over with flimsy materials such as thin branches, grass or leaves have been used for centuries. An animal which walked on the thin covering would fall into the hole and be unable to get out. Indeed, pits were often used to catch men too. *Contributed*

**BIBLE QUESTIONS**

*This month the questions are about TRAPS used to catch things. Younger children need only do five questions and the last two are for older children. Please give references for questions 7 to 10 and send your answers to the Editor (see page 194 for the address). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.*

1. What were the children of Israel commanded to burn, lest they should be a snare (or trap) to them? (Deuteronomy 7. 25)
2. What is caught in "the snare of the fowlers"? (Psalm 124. 7)
3. Who do the Apostle Paul say "fall into temptation and a snare"? (1 Timothy 6. 9)
4. What kind of person spreads a net to trip up his neighbour? (Proverbs 29. 5)
5. With whom should we not be friendly, lest they become a snare? (Proverbs 22. 24, 25)
6. What traps does the Bible mention which are used to catch fish? (Isaiah 19. 8 & Habakkuk 1. 15)
7. What kinds of trap did David say the proud had laid for him? (Psalm 140)
8. What will happen to the man who digs a pit? (Ecclesiastes 10 & Psalm 7)
9. Joshua 23. 12, 13 refers to a trap. Find the verse in Nehemiah 13 that mentions how Solomon fell into this trap.
10. Find two verses, each of which speaks of escaping two successive dangers, and then being entrapped by a third. (Isaiah 24 & Jeremiah 48)

**ANSWERS TO AUGUST QUESTIONS**

1. Wisdom and knowledge.
2. Because he thought the fear of God was not in the place.
3. Evil.
4. That there was no fear of God before his eyes.
5. A snare.
6. Envyng sinners. (Proverbs 23. 17)
7. "The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him." (Proverbs 10. 24)
8. "Submit yourselves one to another." (Ephesians 5. 21)

9. "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied." (Acts 9. 31)

10. Nehemiah. (Nehemiah 5. 15)

*Contributed*

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### THE CREATION

'Twas God, who, by His power alone,  
Made all this beauteous earth;  
And out of chaos, dark, unknown,  
Its wonders sprang to birth.  
He said: "Let there be light," and lo!  
A bright and dazzling ray  
Lit up the shapeless, vast expanse  
And formed a cloudless day.

And He who made it, saw 'twas good,  
The darkness and the light;  
The cheerful glow He called the day,  
But named the darkness night.  
Thus was creation's work begun,  
Though shapeless still it lay,  
When evening and the morning formed  
Time's first created day.

Upon the second day was made  
The firmament so high,  
That vast, o'erspreading canopy,  
Which children call the sky.  
On the third day the land appeared,  
The earth, its name should be;  
The gathering of the waters, too,  
Their Maker called the sea.

And by the word of God came forth  
Each fruitful herb and tree,  
While grass, and countless seedling shrubs,  
Flourished abundantly.  
And now, the fourth day dawns in peace  
Upon the new-made sphere,  
When lo! the shining sun and moon,  
With myriad stars, appear.

Then did the mighty waters teem  
With fishes, great and small,  
While birds, and every feathered fowl,  
Answered creation's call.  
And God, who saw that it was good,  
Blessed all that He had made;  
With this the fifth day's labour closed,  
Evening and morn obeyed.

The sixth day came, and earth brought forth  
Cattle and creeping things,  
And beasts, of every varied kind,  
Did into being spring.  
Then, last of all, the Lord made man  
As governor of them all,  
And every beast and bird that lived  
Came at its master's call.

For in God's image made He man,  
And formed him from the ground,  
While, in his soul, a spark divine  
Of heavenly light was found.  
And then, because it was not good  
That man should live alone,  
The Lord gave woman, who was formed  
Of his own flesh and bone.

And thus, the Sacred Record tells,  
The six days' work was done,  
And on the seventh hallowed morn  
Arose the Sabbath sun.  
For God surveyed His perfect work,  
And rested from the whole,  
And sanctified the seventh day  
For every living soul.

Children, shall we, who own His care,  
Who does so well to us,  
Shall we, who in His mercies share,  
Refuse His will to do?  
No let us pray for grace to keep  
That day forever pure;  
So, by obedience to His law,  
We may find a great reward.

*Selected.*

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Question: What is the work of creation?

Answer: The work of creation is God's, making all things out of nothing by the word of His power, and all very good.

Genesis 1; John 1. 1-3; Colossians 1. 16; Hebrews 11. 3.

Question: How did God create man?

Answer: God created man, male and female; in the image of God created He them, with dominion over the creatures.

Genesis 1. 26-31 & 2. 7, 18-23; Psalm 8. 3-8 & 119. 73.

Matthew 19. 4-6; Mark 10. 6-9.

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#### LIST OF NAMES

*The following young people have answered questions during the months January to June 2005. The total number is 335, which is most encouraging, and for which we would thank God.*

Maia Aldridge, Anthony and Fiona Ashby; Daniel and Naomi Aston; Emma, George and Thomas Aston; Matthew Aston.

Alasdair and Alexander Bailey; Kathryn and Sarah Ball; Joseph and Samuel Banfield; Benjamin, Rachel and William Bos; Joseph and Samuel Boulton; Abigail, Daniel, Joanna and Nathan Broome; Eleanor and Fiona Burgess; Lois and Lucy Burgess; Jonathan Burton; Sophie Buss.

James Chewter; Christopher, Natalie and Nathan Christie; Harriet, Jacob, Martha and Oliver Collins; Karen, Matthew and Sarah Cooper; Lucy, Ruth and Samuel Cooper; Alice, Charlotte and William Cottingham; Gillian and Victoria Cottingham; Michael Cottingham; Lucy and Miriam Cottingham; Philip Cottingham; Emma and Jessica Cottingham; Jacob Cottingham; Joanna, Philip and Samuel Cottingham; Abigail, Hannah, James and Sarah Crowter; Annabel and Kate Crowter; Jonathan and Victoria Crowter.

Christine, Esther and Louise Dadswell; Henry, Joanna, Jonathan, Maarten, Marlene, Nicholas and Peter De Vogel.

Adam and Bethan Field; Esther, Naomi and Rebekah Field; Benjamin and Oliver Funnell; Joseph and Timothy Funnell.

Oliver and William Green; Edward, Stephen and Thomas Green.

Jacqueline, James and Richard Hallier; Edward Hanks; James Hanks; Eleanor and Jonathan Hare; Benjamin, Charlotte, Emily and Thomas Hart; Joseph, Joshua, Luke and Nathanael Hayden; Benjamin and Suzanna Hayden; Andrew, Marcus and Susanna Hickman; Bethan and Rosalind Hickman; Joanna and Thomas Hickman; Peter Hills; Martijn and Willem-Jan Holmwood; Esther Hope; Jeremy Hyde.

Abigail Izzard.

James, Jonathan, Rebecca, Susanna and William Kerley; Emma, Helen, Joanna, Joshua and Marianne Kerley; John and Thomas Kerley; Elizabeth and Harriet Kinderman; Edward, Matthew, Naomi, Richard, Samuel and Timothy Kingham; Elizabeth, Jennifer and Stephen Kingham.

Christopher, Edward and Thomas Large; Edward and Joshua Lockey; Megan Lucas; Chloe and James de Lullington.

Murdo Macleod; Abigail, Martha, Philip and Samuel Main; Deborah and Pauline Main; Hannah McNaughten; Claudia and Florence Mercer; James and Julia Mercer; Andrew, Edward, Elizabeth, Rebecca, Samuel and William Munns.

Emily Northern.

Anna Jonathan and Rebekah Pack; Thomas Pack; Helen, Matthew, Priscilla, Rebecca, Robert, Samuel and Sarah Parish; Anna, Chloe and Phebe Parsons; Ruth and Sarah Payne; Elisabeth, John, Mary and Philip Pickles; Heidi and James Playfoot; Jane, Naomi and Robert Pocock; Lynda and Marianne Pont; Esther, Lukas and Martine Pont; Nathan Pont.

Bethany and Katie Ramsbottom; Joshua, Oliver and William Rayner; Matthew Rayner; James Rice; Freddie and Harry Rokison.

Chloe Sadler; Jessica and Rosanna Salkeld; Charles, Edward, Emily and Rosaleen Saunders; Ethan Saunders; Jasmine, Joseph, and Timothy Saunders; Alexander, Emily and Philippa Sayers; Hannah and Thomas Sebaduka; Bryony Skelton; Emma and Kate Stearn; Alexander, Emma and Jessica Stevens; Anne Streeter; Ellen and Rebekah Suckling.

Abigail Thorne; James and Paul Topping; Alison and Andrew Tugwell; Helen Turner.

Joanna, Natalie and Thomas Warboys; Esther and Thomas Wheatley; Ben and Beth Wigley; Abigail, Bethany and Charlotte Wilderspin; Rebekah Wilderspin; Joanna, Matthew, Susie and Timothy Wiltshire; Edwin, Hannah, Joseph and Kate Woodhams; Benjamin, Jessica, Louise and Timothy Woodhams; Kelvin Woodhams; Rebecca Woodhams, Chloe and Lucy Woods.

*OVERSEAS NAMES:* Kyle and Miriam Aitch; Karina Baum; Beth Bleeker; Lydia Bleeker; Carina Breure; Michael and Thomas Casper; Jennifer, Marie and Melissa DeVries; Calvin and Kaira Glass; Kyle and Sharlene Greyn; Katelyn Kamp; Caleb, Elisabeth and Isaac Knol; Cori, Jeff and John Legemaat; Hannah Linna; Kyle and Thomas Marion; Kelly, Matthew and Thomas Mills; Danielle, Kelsey, Kendrick, Lindsay and Megan Oudshoorn; Emily and Jonathan Quist; John, Luke and Sandra Seymour; Andre, John and Valentina Sweetman; Nathaniel TenBroeke; Bethany, Kaitlyn and Michaela Teunissen; Jessie, Mariah and Matthew Toogood; Marilene van de Munt; Dena, Fred, Jacob and Julie Van Gemert; Benjamin and John Van Vugt; Cody and Dylan White; Joel, Jonathan, Kristina, Lydia, Natalie and Nathan Ymker.

*May the Lord bless you each with a saving knowledge of the truths you have searched.*



# *The Friendly Companion*



“Take ... the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.” (Ephesians 6. 17)

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*October 2005*

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### OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

A few weeks ago, I was travelling to preach at Allington Chapel one Lord's Day afternoon, when suddenly there were three loud beeps in my car. I hadn't heard these before, so I was rather puzzled. On my way back, I came to the same stretch of road and it happened again: three loud beeps! It took me some time to realise that I had inadvertently pressed a button which regulated my speed, so that every time I went above a certain speed, these beeps would tell me I was going too fast. I have now become used to hearing these beeps, and that is when I have to be careful still to listen to the warning and slow down and not ignore their voice to me.

These beeps are rather like our conscience. God has left a voice in us which tells us if we are doing wrong. If we are wise, we will listen and obey that voice, but if we are unwise, we will ignore it. God's Word says: "Whoso breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him" (Ecclesiastes 10. 8). That bite is the sting of a guilty conscience. Only the blood of Jesus Christ can heal our souls of those bites and stings.

But there is a very dangerous path we should seek especially to avoid. The Word of God speaks about a seared conscience. That is a conscience which has been so repeatedly ignored and despised that it no longer does its work. If we continually break through a hedge, the gap gets wider and we are no longer scratched. So repeated sins, without the voice of conscience, can bring us to a point where we are no longer conscious that it is sin. But it is sin in God's sight and in God's time He will, either in time or even more solemnly in a never-ending eternity, visit us for those sins of a seared conscience.

*"Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."*

*Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh: for childhood and youth are vanity" (Ecclesiastes 11. 9, 10).*

With best wishes from your sincere friend and Editor.

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### OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

This month the picture on the front cover shows a sword, a weapon commonly in use in Bible days. We even read of two swords in the Garden of Gethsemane, one of which was misused by Simon Peter to cut off the ear of the High Priest's servant.

Did you know that David had three swords?

Firstly, he had the sword of Goliath, with which he cut off the giant's head after the God-directed stone had done its work from David's sling. Of this sword of justice he said later: "There is none like that." When David said that, we must not forget that he was not looking to the Lord for help as he did when he went out to meet Goliath, but was trying to make his own way out of a difficult situation. However, we all need a sword to slay giant "self." David found that it was easier to slay Goliath than "self."

Secondly, he had Jonathan's sword given to him by Jonathan himself. This was the sword of friendship. Every time David looked on this sword, he remembered the kindness and loyalty of his faithful and unselfish friend. We could all do with this sword in our hand. Loyalty is a rare virtue, but it is something God's children will possess, especially towards His people and Himself; also as a token of God's lovingkindness.

Thirdly, David had the most important sword of all in his hand, the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. It was this sword which God put in his hand of faith that gained the victory over Goliath, Saul and himself. The Bible says that although all the other parts of the armour of a Christian are important, if we lack this weapon we are defenceless.

### A GREAT VENTURE

Many years ago there was a chapel in Coalville, a mining village near Leicester. A house was next to the chapel where a lady who was the chapel-keeper lived with her family. She was very poor and it was a great trouble to her when informed that the chapel and house were to be demolished, rendering her homeless. All the money she had was a silver sixpence, but she set out to buy a house. She was so tempted on her way to the agent. Satan told her that she was the greatest fool living and she would make herself a laughing stock and the object of ridicule, but she prayed to God for help and, passing over a footbridge, these words were spoken with power: "Every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills," and "The silver is Mine and the gold is Mine." She arrived at the agent's and told him her plight. He said: "I am going to do what I have never done before. I will lend you, free of interest, enough money to buy a house and you can repay me as you are able. You are an honest person and I can trust you."

More could be said of this person, but, not to lengthen the narrative, it is sufficient to say that when the writer became acquainted with the lady in her old age, she was found to be well instructed concerning her fallen condition and her sinnership. This caused her to have low views of herself and earnest desires after Christ. She was not satisfied until near her end, at which season, being visited, she said with smiling face: "God has been merciful to this sinner," and thus she obtained sovereign mercy as did the publican. The last words to be heard from her lips were: "Home, home, home."

*Contributed*

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Question: What are God's works of providence?

Answer: God's works of providence are His most holy, wise and powerful preserving and governing of all His creatures and all their actions.

1 Samuel 3. 18; Job 23. 13-14; Psalm 31. 15; 103. 19 & 145. 15-16;  
Proverbs 5. 21; 16. 9, 33 & 20. 24; Matthew 10. 29; Hebrews 1. 3.

*FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES***THE NAME OF THE LORD**

While Saul was king of Israel, the Philistines came to fight against them. A mighty giant of the Philistines, named Goliath, defied the armies of Israel. They were all terrified of Goliath. His armour and helmet were of brass and he carried a great sword and a spear of iron. Before him went a man with a shield.

David, a young shepherd, came to the camp and heard the words of Goliath. David said: *"Who is this ... Philistine, that he should defy the armies of **the living God?**"* He remembered how the LORD had helped him while caring for his father's sheep. With a staff in his hand and a sling and a stone, David went to fight Goliath. He said: *"Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts ...."* He slung a stone and it sunk into Goliath's forehead and killed him. David trusted in the name of the LORD and was given the victory.

Even in the present day: *"Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth."* (Psalm 124. 8)

**QUESTIONS:**

1. What was the name of the giant who defied Israel?
2. Whose armies had the Philistine defied? (3 words)
3. What did David trust in?

*Contributed*

*Send your answers to the Editor (see page 218 for the address). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word **ANSWERS** on the envelope.*

**ANSWERS TO SEPTEMBER QUESTIONS**

1. Samuel
2. The house of the LORD.
3. The LORD.

*“And they  
that know  
Thy name  
will put  
their trust  
in Thee.”*

*Psalm 9. 10.*

**BIBLE LESSONS****THE PREACHING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST**

Although Mary had gone to stay with her cousin Elisabeth until about the time that John was born and John was born six months before Jesus, yet it is not recorded that the two young men ever met. While Jesus was growing up in the city of Nazareth in the north of Galilee, John the son of Zacharias was growing up in the south of Judah.

John spent much of his time alone in the desert listening to the voice of God. Do you remember who else was in the desert till he was called to lead Israel? It was Moses. Like Moses, John learned much about God while in the desert.

John was different from all the other people in his dress and food. His garment was made of rough cloth woven from camel's hair, with a leather girdle about his waist. For his food he ate locusts for meat and wild honey.

It had been four hundred years since the LORD sent Malachi with His word to Israel. John began to preach the Word of God in the wilderness: "*Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*" He meant that the long-awaited King would soon appear. He warned the people of their sins and God's judgments. Some people might reason and say that it was of no use preaching out there in the wilderness. However, the Spirit of God drew the people out to John. Because his preaching was different from that of the religious leaders, news of John's preaching spread through the countryside. Soon the people from Jerusalem and all Judæa went out to him and many believed the Word of the Lord. "*And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then?*" He told those who had two coats to give one to those who had none. Likewise, those who had an abundance of food were to give to those without.

Then the publicans (tax collectors) asked what they should do. He told them not to cheat the people by taking more than the law required. Even the soldiers, who seemed to have no sympathy for others, asked what they should do. John warned them not to use their power and authority to harm others or



falsely accuse them. Also they must be content with their wages.

Those who confessed their sins, he then baptized in the River Jordan. For this reason he was called "John the Baptist."

With the common people eagerly going to hear John, soon the religious leaders, the Pharisees and Sadducees, also went out to hear him. These people loved to appear very religious before others. However, God, who looks at the heart, saw they were proud and self-righteous. He instructed John to speak very severely to them. He said: "*O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance ....*"

*You can read about this in Matthew chapter 3 verses 1 to 12 and Luke chapter 3 verses 1 to 14.*

**QUESTIONS:**

1. Where did John spend much of his time?
2. Where did John preach the Word of God?
3. What did he warn the people of? (5 words)
4. What did he tell the soldiers to be content with?
5. Who did he baptize in Jordan? (5 words)

*G.L. TenBroeke*

*Please send your answers to the Editor (see address on page 218). Please mark the envelope: ANSWERS. Remember to give your name and address.*

**ANSWERS TO SEPTEMBER QUESTIONS**

1. The feast of the Passover.
2. His (Jesus') own death.
3. In the Temple.
4. His understanding and answers.
5. The salvation of His people.

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**EDITOR'S POSTBAG**

*First answers to the monthly questions have been received from ELEANOR HOPE, HENRY POCOCK and JOHN SADLER.*

**OCTOBER 31:  
HALLOWE'EN OR REFORMATION DAY?**

*The following article was placed in the Grand Rapids Press,  
U.S.A. (Reprinted by request)*

The evening of October 31st is like no other. Children dressed up as witches, ghosts, demons, and other ghoulish characters, shout "trick or treat" on doorsteps throughout their neighbourhoods, hoping sweets will be dropped into their sacks. Many homes and schools display carved pumpkins, witches on brooms, and black cats with arched backs. To the majority of North Americans, October 31st means Hallowe'en. But from where did the custom come?

Few people realise that Hallowe'en dates back to ancient Rome, when feasts were held on October 31st in honour of Pomona, goddess of fruit trees. Druids in England expanded this celebration to honour Samhain, lord of the dead, whose festival was on November 1st. The Druids believed that on the evening prior to the feast, Samhain gathered together wicked souls condemned to inhabit the bodies of animals. Hence, October 31st was chosen as the best day to offer human or animal sacrifices to appease the gods. Before long, the Druids came to believe that spirits, ghosts, witches, fairies, and elves took pains to harm people on October 31st.

To this custom, the early Irish added the roots of trick-or-treating and jack-o'-lanterns. Hundreds of years ago, Irish farmers went from house to house on October 31st, begging food for village festivities honouring their gods. 'Good luck' (treats) was promised to generous donors and threats (tricks) promised to those who refused to give. The lighted pumpkin face (jack-o'-lantern) represented a man named Jack who supposedly was unable to enter heaven because he was too miserly, and barred from hell because he had played tricks on the devil. Consequently, he was doomed to wander the earth with his lantern until Judgment Day.

During the Middle Ages, the Roman Catholic church

indirectly allowed converts to hold on to Hallowe'en by attempting to Christianise it. The new converts were told to commemorate the death of the saints on this day rather than pray to pagan gods. The church declared November 1st to be the Feast of All Saints, referred to mass spoken on this day as "allhallowmas," and accepted the idea that the prior evening be called "All Hallowed Evening," later shortened to Hallowe'en.

We believe that Hallowe'en cannot be Christianised, because God forbids us from having anything to do with superstition, witchcraft, spiritism, or the demonic (see Deuteronomy 18). In a time when Satanism and witchcraft are practised by more than 500 established covens in America, Christians must abandon all association with Hallowe'en.

For us, October 31st represents God's work. On this day in 1517, Martin Luther nailed 95 theses to the church doors in Wittenberg, Germany. These 95 theses were statements that opposed the false teaching and practices of the church of Rome. They also promoted the church's return to Scripture. By God's grace, these theses were copied, published, and distributed throughout Europe within a few months and became instrumental in ushering in the sixteenth-century Reformation.

The twenty-first-century church also needs reformation. These statements of the Reformation: Scripture alone, grace alone, faith alone, Christ alone, and glory to God alone, must also be declared today.

*Selected*

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### **"O GOD OUR SHIELD"**

One of Oliver Cromwell's finest regiments was called the Ironsides. This regiment was made up of sober men who without exception carried a Bible under their uniform over their heart. On more than one occasion a bullet aimed at the heart was prevented from its object by the Bible.

### A HIDING PLACE IN TIME OF DANGER

In the distance a resounding explosion is heard. A woman collapses on the pavement from fright. She is terrified as she hears more and more reports. Rotterdam is no longer her fine, reliable city now that war has broken out. A few days since, that which few Dutchmen could believe became a fact: Germany is at war with the Netherlands. On May 10th flying boats landed on the broad Maas river. She shudders – what will it all come to? The fire service is extremely busy. A bomb has destroyed houses over there, and further on an office block. In another street are heaps of rubble. The little streets in the centre are so narrow that the fire engines cannot do their work properly.

Deaf C'nelia lives in Blackhorse Street. Everyone calls her Deaf C'nelia, but her real name is Cornelia de Vries. If any should ask what her real name is, hardly a soul knows the answer. They would shrug their shoulders. For them she is Deaf C'nelia, with no surname. She has lived for years in Rotterdam and at one time had a little shop. But now she has a weak heart and can no longer keep a shop. People who never go to church consider her a little peculiar, for she is an out and out Christian. She is different from others – but they have deep respect for her. Why? They find that difficult to explain.

And now the whole city is in turmoil. She is very deaf, but C'nelia does not miss much. Her neighbours explain: "C'nelia, it is all very tense. It is highly doubtful whether the Netherlands will hold out, for the German army is so strong. And what then?" Yes, what then? Above all, Deaf C'nelia loves the Lord. He directs all things, even this fearful war. She spreads all her cares before Him. Though she is deaf, the Lord always hears.

At New Year in 1940, Mr. Lamain preached from the text in James 5. 9: "Behold, the Judge standeth before the door." This sermon made a deep impression upon many, and among the little group with whom she regularly met, so C'nelia too had

heard about this sermon. It appeared that that time had now come.

In spite of everything, Deaf C'nelia remains very calm. She has much to occupy her mind, for the Lord has promised her that her little home will be spared, and she firmly believes this to be true. She feels that God is nigh. Bombs have already fallen on the city and the rumours are not without foundation; if Rotterdam does not capitulate there will be a huge bombardment. Many citizens move to other parts of the city where they think they will be safer if such a serious raid takes place.

C'nelia has lots of friends, people with whom she can talk concerning the Lord and His service. She loves to do this. Sometimes the friends write this or that on a slate to make their meaning clear to her. She is so stone deaf. One of these friends happened to be with her when hostilities began. He heard that people were leaving; were seeking a safe refuge. Those bombs – he dared not think about them. This man is a boatman and he has no fear of water, but he does dread the fire that can come. “Let us go, too, C'nelia, to a place where there is more protection,” he begins to say anxiously. Under her pure white bonnet she shakes her head decisively and her eyes look at him kindly but resolutely: “I am staying here, for the Lord has promised me that nothing shall happen to my little house. He has said: ‘There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling’” (Psalm 91. 10 – though the word came to her from the Dutch rhymed version of the Psalm “Thy tent shall be secure”). Secure, that is a strange word in context with the words “tension” and “anxiety.” He hesitates: could it really be true?

After some thought he believes that she is right. C'nelia lives so close to God and he knows himself that she has laid all their cares before the Lord. He says: “Then I shall stay, too,” and at once he feels more calm.

Some acquaintances come by and ask: “C'nelia, is it not

better that we leave?" The boatman tells what Deaf C'nelia so strongly believes. The friends tell it to others and the little house of C'nelia gets more and more crowded. All sorts of people come there – children of God and people who make no profession at all: "It must be safe here, if things go wrong."

It is twenty past one on Tuesday afternoon. The air throbs and reverberates. Now is coming to pass what everyone feared – ninety Heinkels, large German aeroplanes, open their bomb doors over the great city. Incendiary and high explosive bombs find their way below. Like great birds of prey those bombers circle above Rotterdam.

Deaf C'nelia sees it too. It gets dark as though night has fallen. People run out into the streets but there they are not safe either. The fire races through the streets and it seems as though this bit of land is changed into a great oven. None can breathe normally. Rotterdammers taste smoke and soot and the air they breathe is hot, all of which gives them a great thirst. Two streets close by Blackhorse Street are quite ablaze and Deaf C'nelia sits there in her little house with all kinds of friends and acquaintances. The house is completely full; fathers, mothers and children are sitting on the stairs.

Everyone is now really frightened. One direct hit will mean the end for them. Deaf C'nelia has said with complete confidence that nothing will happen to her house, but what if she has been mistaken? You can no longer see properly through the windows; they are covered with soot and if you touch them, they are glowing hot!

Deaf C'nelia's faith also undergoes a test of fire. Each of those people in her house has a never-dying soul. This greatly concerns her and weighs her down heavily. If ... if ... it could for all present be eternity in a moment. Her trust in God was stronger when there were no bombs falling here. "Let us all kneel," she cries. They do so, and the boatman, who is still there, begins to pray. He tells of their great fears and pleads with the Lord to spare them. Will He look down upon them?

They seem to be forsaken by all. Outside there is a deafening noise, but because God is almighty He can hear a feeble human cry. And then – the bombardment ceases. The wind, which was increasing the spread of the flames, drops. It is almost four o'clock and the ravaged city capitulates; there are hundreds dead and countless houses lie in ruin. The fire went round the street where C'nelia lived. God drew an invisible boundary. Hitherto, and no further. Those in the house are amazed indeed. The Lord always speaks the truth and He really did fulfil His promise to C'nelia.

Later her friends often recalled these incidents and there is still that deep sense of wonderment that the Lord held His protective hand over C'nelia's little house. For Him, indeed nothing is impossible.

*Translated from the Dutch by Marcus Banfield  
from the book "Preserved in night-time Darkness."*

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### KEEPING OUR WORD

Some years ago at one of our chapels, a Bible class used to be held for the children on a weekday by the Pastor. On one occasion the Pastor forgot to bring the questions for the young to answer. One little girl showed much disappointment, to whom he said: "As soon as I get home I will put them in the post and you should receive them tomorrow morning." The next morning, the girl was up early and standing at the front gate looking up the road. When her mother questioned her as to the reason for this, she replied: "I am looking for the postman. He will be bringing the letter that Pastor promised."

May God give us each such child-like faith. It is His rich gift which will always honour the giver, believing Him to be, among other things, truthful, faithful and powerful, enabling the believer to act accordingly in a spiritual way as the little girl did naturally. May God deliver us each from unbelief which makes the God of truth a liar, a most dreadful sin against His holy character and word.

*Contributed*

**“I WILL LIFT UP MINE EYES UNTO THE HILLS FROM  
WHENCE COMETH MY HELP” (PSALM 121)**

**4. Mount Nebo - Pisgah**

Mount Nebo is the mountain which God told Moses to climb, from which he saw the Promised Land before he died. Pisgah means “the hill” or “summit” and appears to be one of the summits of Mount Nebo. Mount Nebo is about 2,600 feet (800 metres) high and is on the eastern side of the River Jordan, opposite Jericho. Mount Nebo is in the country of Jordan, about 20 miles southwest of the capital Amman.

Moses was not allowed by God to enter into the Promised Land. We read that when the children of Israel came to the desert of Zin, and there was no water, they spoke against Moses. The LORD told Moses to speak to the rock, so that water would come forth. Moses, though usually very meek, spoke in anger, and “gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also. And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed Me not, to sanctify Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.” (Numbers 20. 10-12).

Moses told the children of Israel how he besought the LORD, saying: “I pray Thee, let me go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon. But the LORD was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me: and the LORD said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto Me of this matter. Get thee up into the top of Pisgah, and lift up thine eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward, and behold it with thine eyes: for thou shalt not go over this Jordan” (Deuteronomy 3. 25-27). And Moses did behold all the land from that point (Deuteronomy 34).

You will, no doubt, be familiar with the hymn: “There is a



land of pure delight,” which speaks poetically of heaven, and the prospect before each of the Lord’s people. It ends:

“Could we but climb where Moses stood,  
And view the landscape o’er,  
Not Jordan’s stream, nor death’s cold flood,  
Should fright us from the shore.”

The Lord’s people will all be prepared for death. Naturally we fear death, but

“Free grace can death itself outbrave,  
And take its sting away;  
Can souls unto the utmost save,  
And them to heaven convey.”

A glimpse by faith of the place the Lord Jesus has prepared for His people will remove fear. Shortly before He suffered, the Lord Jesus encouraged His fearing disciples by saying to them: “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14. 1-3).

Now Moses was not permitted to enter into the Promised Land, but we are sure he was a child of God and was taken to heaven. He did not have all that he desired in this life, yet he was given a glimpse of the place that in many respects was a type of the better country, and he was assured of its being the inheritance of the Lord’s chosen people. This reminds us of David, who in his last days had many things to mourn over. Amongst his last words were: “Although my house be not so with God; yet He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire” (2 Samuel 23. 5). In spite of all, he was enabled to rest in that covenant and in a God who performed all things for him. No doubt, when the Lord’s people come down to die,

they feel the same about their personal “house,” but as John Newton says: “The joy prepared for suffering saints will make amends for all.”

Moses is in many respects a type of the law. He could not enter into the Promised Land, and the law cannot enter with the Lord’s people into heaven, since Christ has fulfilled and made an end of the law; He has fully satisfied the demands of divine justice on behalf of each of His people. We read that God buried Moses, and “no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.” So for the Lord’s people, the law will be, as it were, buried. The Lord’s people will prove, before they enter heaven, that no man can find that law to condemn them. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” What a comfort that is in preparation for death!

We also read of Pisgah a little earlier in the Word of God. Towards the end of their journey through the wilderness, Balak, the king of the Moabites, brought Balaam to various places, asking him to curse the children of Israel. One of those places was Pisgah. Whether it was the same location as Moses stood is not clear, but certainly it is in a similar locality. Balaam is a most solemn character, prophesying the truth as directed by God, but lost at last. Even he could not curse the children of Israel. Read Numbers 23. 18-26 for yourself.

What blessings! And indeed, the Lord’s people cannot be cursed. On Pisgah, the eternal love and salvation of the LORD to His people was shown, in that He directed even a wicked man to pronounce such blessed truths and comforts. How comforting and encouraging to a child of God, that this is so!

*Contributed*

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### **TRUE STORIES FOR YOUNG PROTESTANTS (III)**

#### **The Poor Priest Turned Printer**

Decrees were issued against the possession of the New Testament: the seaports and ships were strictly watched; the

warehouses and houses were searched, but still the blessed Books arrived. Sometimes even Jews brought them over the seas; they came in pedlars' packs, and in sacks of corn – now in one way and then in another. At length, the Bishop of London hit upon a clever and cunning plan, as he thought, of putting a stop to the arrival of these Books. He supposed that if every copy could be bought up in the place where they were printed, the work would soon be at an end. A London merchant was engaged to do this business. "Do your diligence to get them," said the Bishop, "and I will pay for them whatsoever they cost you. I intend to burn them all at St. Paul's Cross." The merchant at once crossed the seas, and offered to buy up all the stock in hand. The bargain was soon made – the Bishop had the Books, the merchant the thanks, and Tyndale the money.

A few days after the Books were safely in the charge of the Bishop, a number of people were seen making their way along Cheapside and up Ludgate Hill. It was reported that there was to be a great sentence passed, to be followed by an execution. As they came to St. Paul's Cross, a large fire was seen sending up clouds of smoke high above the housetops. And now the Bishop's officers came with the poor prisoners – the Testaments, which were cast one by one into the flames. And when all was over, many in that crowd could not but think how wicked and how shameful it was thus to burn God's holy Book.

In a little time the Bishop found that Testaments were still brought to England. So, sending for the merchant, he cried: "How is this, Sir? Did you not promise and assure me that you had bought them all?" "Yes," was the reply; "I bought all that *then* were to be had, but I perceive they have made more *since*, and it will never be better so long as they have the letters and the stamps; therefore it were best for your lordship to buy the stamps too, and then you are sure." The Bishop only smiled at this answer, for he thought that if he parted with more money,

other stamps could be bought with it, and he should only serve to aid the cause he wished to crush.

Finding how vain were all attempts to stop the circulation of the New Testaments, the next plan was to secure their author. Spies were sent over to decoy him to England. Though ready to suffer anything in his heavenly Master's work he would not willingly throw himself into danger. But while quietly pursuing his labour beneath the hospitable roof of an English friend, named Payntz, in the city of Antwerp, two "wolves in sheep's clothing" came to the house – one in the disguise of a merchant; the other, a monk, dressed as his servant. They pretended great interest in the doctrines of the Bible Christians, and were soon welcomed to their society. But Phillips – for that was the name of the pretended merchant – came to watch Tyndale, and, if possible, to seize him. One day, when Payntz went some miles distant on business, a snare was laid for the noble reformer. Phillips called on Tyndale to borrow forty shillings, under the excuse that he had lost his purse on the road. They then walked out together, when Tyndale was arrested, carried off to a castle eight miles from Antwerp, and there put into a close dungeon. Once in the power of his enemies, nothing could save him from their hatred. In October, 1586, he was condemned as a heretic, and led forth to die. On being fastened to the stake, his last words were: "Lord, open the eyes of the king of England." His prayer was heard; for, before three years had passed away, King Henry of England gave his royal consent to the circulation of the Bible, in the native tongue, throughout the kingdom. Thus perished the noble man, and one of England's best reformers; as someone has said of him: "In putting the New Testament into the hands of Englishmen, he gave them a charter of salvation, the Book of eternal life; while his own history affords a beautiful example of its purifying and saving power, under the blessing of the Holy Spirit."

*Selected.*

*BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES***ESTHER (I)**

Now let us look at another gracious character during the time of the captivity, Queen Esther. Her original Jewish name was Hadassah and she was brought up by her first cousin, Mordecai. "And he brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle's daughter: for she had neither father nor mother, and the maid was fair and beautiful; whom Mordecai, when her father and mother were dead, took for his own daughter" (Esther 2. 7). We read here in the second chapter of the Book of Esther how, in the providence of God, Esther became the wife of King Ahasuerus. I would ask you to read the Book of Esther: it is very interesting and instructive. We notice the lovely character of Esther: even after she became Queen she still honoured Mordecai as if he was her father. "And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti. Then the king made a great feast unto all his princes and his servants, even Esther's feast; and he made a release to the provinces, and gave gifts, according to the state of the king. And when the virgins were gathered together the second time, then Mordecai sat in the king's gate. Esther had not yet shewed her kindred nor her people; as Mordecai had charged her: for Esther did the commandment of Mordecai, like as when she was brought up with him" (Esther 2. 17-20).

My dear young friends, her loving obedience to Mordecai beautifully reflects the law of the LORD: "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee" (Exodus 20. 12). Even when we are married, we are not exempt from honouring our parents.

Now there was a special purpose to be fulfilled through Esther by God: this was the deliverance of the Jews from the hand of Haman, a very powerful man in the land. Truly:

"God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform."

"After these things did King Ahasuerus promote Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes that were with him. And all the king's servants, that were in the king's gate, bowed, and revered Haman: for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence.... And when Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence, then was Haman full of wrath. And he thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone; for they had shewed him the people of Mordecai: wherefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus, even the people of Mordecai" (Esther 3. 1-6). You may say: "Why did he not bow?" Let us look again at the law of the LORD. "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep My commandments" (Exodus 20. 3-6).

*(To be continued)*

*J.R. Rutt*

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To find the way to hell needs no guide, but only to be left to yourself.

---

### **BIBLE QUESTIONS**

*This month the questions are about WALKING SAFELY. Younger children need only do five questions. Please give references for questions 6 to 10 and send your answers to the Editor (see page 218 for the address). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.*

1. Write out Proverbs 3. 23, which describes those made truly wise.
2. When is a man most likely to stumble? (John 11. 9-10)
3. Which three men walked safely in a fire? (Daniel 3. 25)
4. Of whom is it said: "there is none occasion of stumbling in him"? (1 John 2. 10)
5. What happened to some who "walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart"? (Jeremiah 7. 24)
6. "I will cause them to walk ... in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble." How will they come? (Jeremiah 31)
7. What question does God ask concerning two people walking together? (Amos 3)
8. What six things are described as the opposite of "walking honestly"? (Romans 13)
9. Of which occasion was it written: "And He led them on safely, so that they feared not"? (Psalm 78)
10. What precept follows both the Apostle Paul's exhortations that God's people should "walk circumspectly" (Ephesians 5) and "walk in wisdom"? (Colossians 4)

### ANSWERS TO SEPTEMBER QUESTIONS

1. The graven images of the heathen gods.
2. A bird.
3. They that will be (i.e. are determined to be) rich.
4. A flatterer.
5. An angry man.
6. Angling (fishing with baited hooks) and nets.
7. Snares and cords; nets; gins. (Psalm 140. 5)
8. He shall fall into it. (Ecclesiastes 10. 8 & Psalm 7. 15)
9. "Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin." (Nehemiah 13. 26)
10. Isaiah 24. 18 and Jeremiah 48. 44.

*Contributed*

**THE PRAYER OF THE DESTITUTE**

My land lies fallow; Master, till me!  
My heart lies empty; Master, fill me!  
It plays the traitor; Master, win me!  
It faints, it dies; Put new life in me!  
It goes astray; Good Shepherd, lead me!  
It sighs for hunger; Come and feed me!  
It is so poor; Give riches to me!  
It is corrupt; Oh Lord, renew me!  
So ignorant; oh, wilt Thou teach me?  
Has wandered far; But Thou canst reach me!  
Is so diseased; Physician, heal me!  
Exposed to danger; Oh, conceal me!  
It trembles! In Thine arms, oh, fold me!  
Begins to sink! Oh, Saviour, hold me!  
Is sinking fast; Lord, look upon me!  
Is cold and dark; Oh, shine upon me!  
A poor, lost sinner; Come and find me!  
A rebel! May Thy love now bind me!  
A beggar! Oh, wilt Thou relieve me?  
A prodigal! Wilt Thou receive me?  
A backslider! Wilt Thou restore me?  
Unholy! May Thy presence awe me!  
Unfit to die! Oh, God, prepare me!  
So weak! On eagles' wings, oh, bear me!  
So comfortless! Lord Jesus, cheer me!  
So lonely! God of love, draw near me!  
By sin accused! Good Lord, acquit me!  
Unfit for heaven's pure service! Fit me!  
Unfit for work on earth! But use me!  
A suppliant! Do not Thou refuse me!

*William Grant*



# *The Friendly Companion*



"I had rather be a doorkeeper  
in the House of my God ..."  
(Psalm 84.10)

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*November 2005*

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### OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

I wonder how good your memories are? I expect you hear of older people complaining of bad memories, by which they mean that they keep forgetting things they wanted to remember. But John Berridge described a bad memory slightly differently:

“My memory bad, but what is sad, can folly still retain.”

This is something we all have to bemoan, whatever our age, that we can retain wrong things much more readily than right things. This is why your parents are so careful that you don't fill your young minds with foolish and sinful things. What we read, hear or see is most important, and we should always remember the caution of Psalm 1.

But I wonder how good your memories are with regard to God's house? Satan would have us very quickly forget what we have heard. Jesus likens this to birds, which snatch away the seed from the ground as soon as it has been sown. Some parents have a very good practice. Around the meal table after a service, they ask their children to remember the text and anything of the sermon they can recall.

Just recently, I had the privilege of reading the diary of a lady who has now passed away. In this diary were simple records of the points made by ministers in some of the sermons she had heard over the years. I recommend this practice to my young readers. It may be that God will be pleased to bless the memories of some of the sermons you hear by causing the seed to go from the mind deep into the heart.

One last point. Many of our older readers will remember Mr. Stanley Delves, who was a well-known preacher in the last century in our churches. In his latter days he became almost blind. He said that he was so glad that in his younger days he memorised so much of the Word of God, and that when his sight failed he could recall these passages of Scripture. It really

was like bread cast on the waters, found after many days.

May God give us each a good memory and teach us to beware of a memory which likes to retain evil and not the things of God in our hearts.

With best wishes from your sincere friend and Editor.

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### OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

Our front cover this month shows a famous door. It is, of course, that of 10 Downing Street, London, where the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom lives. Through that door, over many years, famous men, world leaders, kings and queens have gone. Behind that door stands a most important person, the doorkeeper. It might seem a very mundane sort of employment, but in fact it is one of the most vital jobs. If it was done without proper care, it would mean that the life of the Prime Minister could be at risk. The doorkeeper must be reliable, diligent and vigilant as so much depends on him.

In Psalm 84, David speaks of a doorkeeper in the House of God. Though David was king, he said that he would rather be a humble doorkeeper, than to live in the tents of wickedness. A house is a permanent dwelling whereas a tent is only for a while. David, like Moses, knew that the pleasure of sin is only for a season, and then followed by God's wrath. Paul said: "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

I expect that young Samuel was the doorkeeper in the Temple, but what were Eli's wicked sons doing at the door of God's House?

Now my young friends, we all need to be doorkeepers. There are the doors of the mouth, the eyes, and the ears. If we do not guard the doors of the ear and eye, then all sorts of evil will enter our hearts and minds, which our fallen nature will welcome. If we don't watch the door of our mouth, then out of it will come the fruit of that same fallen nature. Peter, David and Moses all failed as doorkeepers in that respect. If such men of God failed, how much more should we be on our

watch to be kept and ask God to be our doorkeeper.

May we remember two prayers that all doorkeepers should be praying and a warning from the Saviour's own perfect lips:

*"Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips" (Psalm 141. 3).*

*"Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken Thou me in Thy way" (Psalm 119. 37).*

*"Take heed what ye hear: ..." (Mark 4. 24).*

---

### WORKING ON THE BESETTING SIN

There is nothing more common, in an early profession of religion, than for the enemy to watch the constitutional or besetting sin, and to work upon that, and if possible in some way or other to enforce the absolute necessity of being found in the full exercise of it, covered with the name of godly fear.

For instance, if I am naturally indolent, the enemy will soon impress me (but all in a wrong aspect) with such truths as these – I can do nothing; I cannot quicken my own soul; I must wait God's time; I must not be impatient. Thus the poor creature, before he well knows his right hand from his left, has these shades put upon his conscience to hoodwink him in every proceeding in life: and he is so bewildered as not to see nor to suspect the snare.

Waiting upon God is a very active principle, and so is waiting for Him; and he that waits in the Spirit will leave no stone unturned till he is fully satisfied the Lord is directing him. Would you know who is the man that is *not* actuated by godly fear, and makes not God his refuge? It is he who sits still, and vainly imagines that matters will come right, and makes no use of God's appointed means. Such an one not only meets with disappointment, but is surrounded with spiritual death, darkness, and confusion of mind: and is not aware of its being the consequence of that slothful inactive spirit which binds him down to the earth.

*James Bourne (1841)*

*FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES***THE HARVEST**

The farmer ploughs the field and sows his seed in springtime. With the Lord's blessing, the plants grow up and bear fruit. Then the crops are gathered in at harvest time.

The Lord Jesus told of a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while he slept, an enemy came and sowed tares (weeds) in it. When the plants had sprung up, the tares appeared among the wheat. His servants asked the farmer if they ought to pull out those tares. No: for some of the precious wheat might easily come up with them. The farmer said: "*Let both grow together until the harvest.*" Then the tares will be gathered into bundles to burn and the wheat gathered safely into the barn.

Jesus said that this world is like the farmer's field. The people who live together in the world are the wheat and the tares. "*The harvest is the end of the world.*" Like the precious wheat, the Lord's people will be gathered safely into heaven at the end of the world. Not one belonging to Him will be lost, but the other people will be cast out like the tares to be burned.

**QUESTIONS:**

1. When are the crops gathered in?
2. What appeared among the wheat?
3. Who will be gathered safely into heaven?

*Contributed*

*Send your answers to the Editor (see page 242 for the address). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.*

**ANSWERS TO OCTOBER QUESTIONS**

1. Goliath.
2. The Living God.
3. The name of the LORD.

*“To every thing  
there is a  
season, ...  
a time to  
plant, and  
a time to  
pluck up ...”*

*Ecclesiastes 3. 1,2.*

## BIBLE LESSONS

**JESUS BAPTIZED IN JORDAN**

All through the countryside, people were talking about John and his ministry. Many wondered if he was the Christ, the promised Messiah. John's heart was so tender that he could not bear the thought that anyone should think he was Christ. He told them that while Christ came after him *as a Man*, He was preferred before him, *as He was the Son of God from eternity*. John told them that he was unworthy even to stoop and unloose the latchet of Christ's shoes.

Then the people wondered if he was Elijah, who had been taken to heaven in a chariot of fire. Or perhaps he was the prophet that Moses had told the children of Israel about so long before: *"The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, ... unto Him ye shall hearken."* John answered that he was neither that Prophet nor Elijah.

Finally the people asked him: *"Who art thou? ... What sayest thou of thyself?"* Naturally we all like to talk about ourselves and our positions in life. The Bible tells us: *"Surely every man walketh in a vain shew."* What an opportunity! Now John could tell them what an important position he had, but his heart was too humble to boast of himself. He gave a strange answer: *"I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord."* Do you remember what John's father said of him when he was born? *"And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways."*

The people questioned why John baptized if he was not Christ or Elijah or that Prophet. John told them that he could only baptize with water, but there was one living among them who would baptize His people with the Holy Ghost.

Finally, the appointed time had arrived when Jesus must be revealed to Israel. Jesus was about thirty years old when he left the city of Nazareth and made His way to John in the land of Judæa.



One day, as John was preaching, he saw Jesus coming to him. John was filled with holy awe, love and fear. He saw more than the human nature of Jesus; he began to declare that *"this is the Son of God."*

When they met, Jesus told John that he had a special duty to perform. He told John that he must baptize Him in Jordan. Perhaps you think that John would be pleased to perform what the Lord asked. However, John felt so unworthy that he cried out: *"I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?"* Jesus assured him that it must be done *"to fulfil all righteousness."*

What an honour! What a sight! To see John take the Lord Jesus down into the River Jordan and baptize Him.

*You can read about this in Matthew 3, Mark 1, Luke 3 and John 1.*

#### QUESTIONS:

1. Who at first did the people think John was?
2. What did John say he was unworthy to unloose?
3. Who did John say he was? (8 words)
4. How old was Jesus when He left Nazareth and came to John?
5. Where did John baptize Him?

*G.L. TenBroeke*

*Please send your answers to the Editor (see address on page 242). Please mark the envelope: ANSWERS. Remember to give your name and address.*

#### ANSWERS TO OCTOBER QUESTIONS

1. (Alone ) In the desert.
2. In the wilderness.
3. Their sins and God's judgments.
4. Their wages.
5. Those who confessed their sins.

---

#### EDITOR'S POSTBAG

*First answers to the monthly questions have been received from EMILY HOPE, HEIDI NEELS and AMANDA VAN GEMERT.*

### **A MONSTROUS MOUND OF ... MINERALS!**

Tourists visiting the town of Thermopolis ('city of heat'), Wyoming (USA), are amazed by a monstrous rock mound in Hot Springs State Park. The mound dwarfs sightseers and many people would claim it looks immensely old. Astonishingly though, it is only young.

The mound began in 1903 when someone drove an iron pipe into the ground, allowing mineral-rich underground water to escape. Flowing out of the top of the pipe, the water released calcium carbonate mineral from the solution and deposited it as travertine on every solid surface. Within a few years, the travertine deposit had a huge base and tapered to a peak at the top of the pipe. The rock hung like pastel-coloured curtains and the locals called it Tepee Fountain.

Today the mound is a little fatter and rounder than a tepee, and the water flow has long ceased – it's an extinct fountain.

Why does this rock deposit astound tourists so? People are surprised because the huge mound challenges their cultural conditioning. It contradicts what we have been led to expect about the age of rocks.

People instinctively think of geological events such as petrification, fossilization and flowstone formation in terms of millions of years. When guides show us the stalactites and stalagmites in tourist caves, they tell us they took hundreds of thousands of years or more to form – drop by drop.

But the rock mound at Thermopolis proves it does not take vast amounts of time to form such objects. It just takes the right chemical environment.

This gives us in miniature an example of the sorts of things that could have happened during the global Flood of Noah's day. With lots of mineral-rich water flowing out of the ground, it is not surprising that sedimentary rocks all over the earth – often thousands of metres thick – have turned into rock since the Flood, 4,500 years ago. Tepee Fountain illustrates that millions of years are not needed to produce solid rock.

*Creation Magazine*

### JUDGMENT AND WARNING

Towards the end of a warm summer evening, some three hundred years ago, an old-fashioned coach made its way up a steep road in Scotland. The horse-drawn carriage contained two travellers. One was a young man and the other was a kindly middle-aged gentleman. Judging by his clothes, it was clear that he was a minister.

A little farther lay the town of Dunblane, where the pastor planned to preach the next day. Inside the coach, the young man was listening closely to a story the minister was telling about the ways of God with His people. The story was cut short by a loud cry which shattered the stillness of the evening.

"Shhh, Henry!" exclaimed the minister in a loud whisper. "What was that noise? Stop the horses a minute and I'll go and see what's going on." The minister climbed out of the carriage and looked around. They had reached a crossroads, and a little way down the side road the minister saw a very excited man pointing to what looked like a person lying on the ground.

"Stop! Stop!" cried the man, wringing his hands. "For pity's sake, sir, help me!"

The minister acted quickly. "Wait here till I get back, Henry. I'm going to see what's wrong." He ran over to the man without waiting for Henry's reply. The man immediately began thanking the minister for his kindness. He was a tall, muscular man. His worn, mud-spattered shoes, and sturdy walking stick indicated that he had already travelled quite some distance. "Thank you, sir, oh thank you for taking pity on a poor fellow in trouble. It's very kind of you to help out." But the minister had no time to listen to his thanks. He turned his attention to the man on the ground. The deathly pale face was smeared with dirt, and the afflicted man writhed in apparent pain.

"What's the matter?" asked the pastor, concern in his voice.

"Oh sir, I've had the fright of my life!" answered the first man. "My friend here suddenly dropped to the ground. I think he is dying!"

Just then the man on the ground gasped and struggled as if

he were exhausted.

“Let’s move him to my carriage,” suggested the minister, bending over the ‘helpless’ man. But as he did so, the man who had shouted for help roughly grabbed the unsuspecting pastor. The ‘dying’ man suddenly became very much alive, brandishing a pistol which he had hidden underneath him. The man who had so profusely thanked the gentleman now cruelly laughed at him. “Alright, hand over your wallet, and be quick about it.”

“Yeah, hurry up,” added his friend. “It’s time for my funeral and I need money for a coffin.” He laughed harshly at his offensive remark and pushed the pistol into the minister’s back.

For a moment the pastor’s face reflected painful surprise, but seeing resistance was useless, he allowed them to search his pockets, all the while praying for God’s protection. Calmly he spoke to the thieves. “My friends, stolen money carries a curse with it. Your ill-timed happiness will end in sorrow. I warn you, change your ways before it is too late.”

One of the men seemed somewhat stirred in his conscience by this sincere admonition. But his companion, who had played the dying man, was entirely unmoved. “Cut out the preachin’, wise guy. We want your money, not your sermons. Now get going, and don’t you dare breathe a word of this to anyone, or we’ll take care that you never preach again.”

The now penniless pastor strode back to the waiting coach.

“I saw everything,” whispered Henry, “but I thought it would make things worse if I tried to rescue you.”

“I’m glad you didn’t try to rescue me, Henry. Those men would probably have shot us both if you had, but what a shameful set-up, to imitate death as a means to achieve their goal. It pains me to see them pursuing their wicked aims. Often they are ruined by these very goals. These thieves are more hardened than most, I believe.” By this time they had almost reached the top of the hill, and in the valley they could

see the church steeple of Dunblane shimmering in the crimson glow of the setting sun. Just at that moment, however, the same cry which had interrupted their journey before, was heard again. Soon the same man came running up to the coach. "Oh, stop sir!" he shouted. "Please believe me!" he continued in a terror-stricken voice. "It's really true this time. My friend really is dead. Please stop and help me!"

"Ha! You just want to rob me now," jeered Henry. "Be satisfied with what you already have. We're almost in Dunblane, and we're telling the police right away."

"Oh no, sir! I'm serious! Honest, I am! I wouldn't risk being caught in this way if I weren't." The man was so obviously terrified that the travellers thought he must be a very good actor if this was not real fear. After a moment's hesitation, the carriage again came to a halt.

"What's the matter this time?" demanded the minister.

"Oh sir, please come back! The man whom you saw on the ground really is dead this time. He died right after you left. Oh please come back with me!" He looked anxiously from one traveller to the other as he wiped the perspiration from his damp forehead.

"Perhaps you think I'm easily deceived, Henry, but I'm quite sure that he's telling the truth. I'd like to see this strange adventure to the end. If you'd rather stay here, I'll go on alone." "No, I'm going with you, no matter what," stated Henry firmly.

So they returned to the site of the robbery, where they soon discovered that the man was not lying. The body of the robber, who had been feigning death, lay on the road, his face visibly stamped by the king of terrors. As the minister knelt down to see if he could possibly revive the man, he was struck with awe at the reality of this death. The exact cause of death was unknown to him, but there was no doubt that he was beyond assistance. He had been summoned into eternity almost in the very moment of committing his crime.

"This is a fearful warning, my friend," said the minister, turning to the surviving robber. The thief, forgetful of the fact that he could have been arrested by the travellers, seemed confused and overwhelmed by this shocking experience. "These are the bitter fruits of the life you are leading."

The robber lowered his gaze under the pastor's intent look. "Take back your money, sir," he stammered, holding out the stolen wallet. "And believe me, I'll never again steal a penny as long as I live."

"Don't trust your own resolutions, my friend," replied the minister. "You must ask the Lord, who has so clearly shown you His power, to enable you to lead an honest life from now on. Here is something to help you get started," he added, pressing some money into the man's still trembling hands. "I hope you will soon find yourself a good job."

"Thank you, sir! You are very kind to me," he said softly, and this time his thanks were sincere.

*Selected*

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### **"REPROACH"**

Life at college was not easy. I was "different" and the other students knew it. I regularly attended three services on Sundays, there being an afternoon prayer meeting and an open invitation to stay at the chapel for tea. Also I went hungry every Thursday so that I could go to the service. But I was weak. Once I fell under pressure and went to see Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night" at the Old Vic, and had a guilty conscience. At another time I enlisted a cousin for company and went to see a performance by the college Operatic Society, only because I dreaded adverse comments if I failed in what was considered loyal support. A year later I was helped to absent myself from the annual show; and at breakfast the next morning, the opera being the topic of conversation at the table, one turned and said: "How was it you went last year? I thought you didn't go to that sort of thing." Oh! My shame and confusion! I had earned more reproach by going against my principles than by standing firm by them!

*L.N.*

**“I WILL LIFT UP MINE EYES UNTO THE HILLS FROM  
WHENCE COMETH MY HELP” (PSALM 121)**

**5. Carmel**

Carmel is a mountain in the north west of the land of Israel. Its name is given to a range of hills which runs from the Mediterranean Sea and continues south eastwards for 13 miles, bordered by the River Kishon to the east. Mount Carmel itself is not particularly high at 556 feet (171 metres), but as it is surrounded by low plains and the sea, its summit is particularly conspicuous. The modern day port of Haifa is built on the lower slopes of Carmel.

We always associate Mount Carmel with Elijah, and the wonderful appearance of God to him. Here he stood alone against 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of the groves, watched by a large congregation of Israel, who were halting “between two opinions.” In such a situation, when his life was at stake, how was he to do? He was there at God’s instruction: Elijah by himself would not have had the courage to stand as he did. James tells us that he “was a man subject to like passions as we are.” His courage soon fled when threatened by Queen Jezebel. Therefore it must have been the courage that God gave for that time, like that which Jesus promises to His disciples: “I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist” (Luke 21. 15). Remember that there had been no rain for three years, and there was a severe famine in the land. The prophets of Baal had the blessing of Queen Jezebel, and therefore of King Ahab. Ahab called Elijah “he that troubleth Israel.” Moreover the true prophets of the LORD were hated, and Obadiah hid one hundred prophets by fifties in a cave and fed them. The LORD hid Elijah, first by the brook Cherith and then with the widow woman at Zarephath. This was for Elijah’s safety, because Ahab sought for him in all countries. A further judgment was upon the land, in that there was a famine of the hearing of the Word of God.

At the command of God, Elijah made a proposal to the

prophets of Baal which, as Baal was supposedly the god of fire, they could not refuse. Two altars were built: "... the God that answereth by fire, let Him be God." The prophets of Baal spent much of the day calling upon Baal, eventually cutting themselves in desperation. When this failed, it was Elijah's turn, and God gave such a wonderful answer to prayer, leaving the people in no doubt that: "The LORD, He is the God." The prophets of Baal were then slain.

We can draw parallels with today. The days in which we live are exceedingly evil. The solemn judgments of God are upon us, but the hearts of the people are not turned unto God – "Judgments nor mercies e'er can sway their roving feet to wisdom's way." In these days the Lord's people feel very much isolated, and often have to stand alone before others. But as the Lord stood by Elijah, so the Lord has promised never to forsake His people.

Let us not be presumptuous, however: Elijah was not. Let us notice some significant things in this account. It is clear that Elijah was acting under Divine command when he made himself known to Ahab, when he asked him to call all Israel to Mount Carmel, and the method he proposed. He prayed: "I have done all these things at Thy word" (1 Kings 18. 36). None of us must go beyond what God has commanded. Everything Elijah did was "after the due order." "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Elijah repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down. Clearly the people of the land had not felt any need of an altar, but Elijah repaired it as an outward sign of the confession of sin and a turning to the LORD. "He built an altar in the name of the LORD ... he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood" in line with the pattern the LORD gave to Moses. Twelve barrels of water were then poured on, so that the sacrifice and the wood were drenched. Man would not then have been able to light the fire, and so Elijah's whole dependence was upon the LORD alone. At the time of the



evening sacrifice, Elijah drew near and prayed. This was the time when the burnt sacrifice was offered in Jerusalem, setting forth the sacrifice that Christ would make for all His people. So by faith, Elijah prayed towards Christ, the sacrifice He would make and the blood of the everlasting covenant. Take note of Elijah's prayer; he did not seek his own glory, but the honour of God, and the good of His people, and these should always be our motives.

Spiritually the Lord's people feel they are alone, and surrounded by many enemies. They feel their sins and temptations from without and from within. They may feel in an impossible situation, and vain is the help of man. But, in the same way that the Lord delivered Elijah, and the false prophets were destroyed, so the Lord's people will prove, in the way God appoints, that they are delivered from their enemies, through faith in Christ, the Sacrifice once made for sin.

But this is not all we read of Carmel. Immediately after this wonderful event, we then read of Elijah going to the top of Carmel for earnest prayer. Though he had received a remarkable deliverance, Elijah still waited to see the fulfilment of God's promise, that He would send rain on the earth. What an example of fervent prayer is here! "He prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit" (James 5. 17, 18). Notice that Elijah is not commended for standing on Carmel against the prophets of Baal, but for his prayer. We see Elijah in humility before Almighty God. "He cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees." Not only did he pray, but he watched, saying to his servant: "Go up now, look toward the sea." But even with such fervent prayer, the promise of God was tried, for it was not until seven times later that the sign was given: "Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand." This was a small sign, but foretold "a great rain."

The Lord's people are exhorted to watch and pray. Though the Lord has promised to hear prayer, He has not promised to answer it immediately, but most certainly He will fulfil all His promises in His way and in His time. Elijah was not disappointed, nor will any of the Lord's dear people be, who wait upon Him in humble, submissive prayer, pleading His promises to them. In due time He will give the sign of His appearing.

It is also interesting to note the number of times that Elijah and Elisha were to be found on a mountain or hill. For example, Elijah was on a hill (was it Carmel?) when King Ahaziah sent to him enquiring whether he would recover of his disease (2 Kings 1). Elisha was on mount Carmel when the Shunammite went to him in her distress (2 Kings 4. 25). It is as if the prophets spent their time drawn up away from worldly things, in prayer and meditation. More than once, the Lord Jesus Himself went into a mountain to pray. This is a pattern for the Lord's servants in every age. We find in the early days of the Church, the apostles said: "It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables ... we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6. 2-4). The Apostle Paul writes to his son in the faith, Timothy, a young minister, giving good counsel: "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them" and "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please Him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." O that the Lord would draw our thoughts and affections more often heavenwards!

*Contributed*

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### **A REMARKABLE PRAYER**

The late Lady Lucy Smith, of Wilford House, of sacred memory, one day during her residence in Scotland, was visiting a poor old woman in her hut, talking to her of spiritual things. It was a cold, wintry day, when a packman opened the door and asked the old woman to allow him to light his pipe and to

give him a drink of water. Lady Lucy, anxious not to miss an opportunity of speaking the truth to the poor man, said: "Let him come in and warm his fingers. He looks cold." He had no sooner seated himself than Lady Lucy said: "Do you ever pray?" "I try." "Then try now;" when immediately the three kneeled down on the floor of the hut, and the stranger uttered, in his slow, solemn Scotch style, this remarkably full and short prayer: "Lord, give us grace to feel our need of grace; give us grace to seek grace; give us grace to receive grace; and give us grace to use grace when we have got grace. Amen." He then disappeared, leaving her Ladyship and the old Scotch woman filled with amazement, and never afterward could they ascertain who he was.

*Copied from The Sower 1894*

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## OUR CHRISTIAN HERITAGE

### **The Royal Injunction**

In 1538, Thomas Cromwell, on the authority of Henry VIII, published this Royal Injunction to every parish clergyman:

"That ye shall provide one book of the whole Bible of the largest volume in English, and the same set up in some convenient place within the said church that ye have cure of, whereas your parishioners may most commodiously resort to the same and read it; the charge of which book shall be ratably (proportionally) borne between you the parson and the parishioners aforesaid. ... That you shall discourage no man privily or apertly (openly) from the reading or hearing of the said Bible, but shall expressly provoke, stir and exhort every person to read the same, as that which is the very lively word of God, that every Christian man is bound to embrace, believe, and follow, if he look to be saved. ... That ye shall make one sermon every quarter of the year at the least, wherein ye shall purely and sincerely declare the very gospel of Christ ... and not to repose their trust in wandering to pilgrimages, offering of money, candles, to images, or reliques or saying over a number of beads or in such like superstition."

Thus the Great Bible, a revision by Coverdale of Matthew's Bible, came into being. So large, it was only suitable for church lecterns and cost ten shillings (50p) which many churches had to pay for in instalments. To prevent theft it was chained to the lectern or wall.

*Selected*

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**BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES**

**ESTHER (II)**

Now God honoured Mordecai, but it was through a great trial. As we look at the experience of God's own people on earth, let us consider the word: "The LORD trieth the righteous." Mordecai persevered under the opposition of Haman, and as it intensified, he remained firm and clear in his purpose, a man of vision, of faith. He now exhorts Queen Esther to speak to the king on behalf of her people. She was reticent to do so because of the danger, but Mordecai, knowing that deliverance would come, believed God had put Esther in her position of influence for the purpose of delivering the Jews. You can read what he says to her in Esther 4. 13-14. "Then Esther bade them return to Mordecai this answer, Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Sushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish. So Mordecai went his way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him" (Esther 4. 15-17). Now the Lord hears and answers prayer.

Haman, in the meantime is preparing a gallows to hang Mordecai on. But, we have a little thing that now happens: "On that night could not the king sleep." On this little providence hangs so much. My dear young friends, nothing happens by chance; all things are ordered by God. Because the king could not sleep he called for the book of records, and in the records it was found that Mordecai the Jew had helped the king. "And it was found written, that Mordecai had told of

Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's chamberlains, the keepers of the door, who sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus. And the king said, What honour and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this? Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, There is nothing done for him" (Esther 6. 2, 3). Now look at the wonder-working hand of God: on the very day that Haman comes to the king to ask permission to kill Mordecai, the king calls in Haman, and before Haman can ask for the life of Mordecai: "The king said unto him, What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour?" Look at proud Haman: "Now Haman thought in his heart, To whom would the king delight to do honour more than to myself?" Read Esther 6. 7-10. How Haman's heart sank, how God overthrew his desire and brought to naught his counsel.

"Remember that Omnipotence hath servants everywhere."

"God never is before His time, and never is behind."

May you dear young friends lay this to heart: "Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for Me? (Jeremiah 32. 27).

Eventually Queen Esther confronted Haman before the king and Haman was hung on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai. "Lay not wait, O wicked man, against the dwelling of the righteous; spoil not his resting place: For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief" (Proverbs 24. 15-16).

What a contrast between Haman when he was in authority: "... *but the city of Shusban was perplexed*" (Esther 3. 15), and Mordecai when he succeeded Haman under the king: "... *and the city of Shusban rejoiced and was glad*. The Jews had light, and gladness, and joy, and honour" (Esther 8. 15-16). We are instructed in the Word of God: "When it goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth: and when the wicked perish, there is shouting. By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted: but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked" (Proverbs 11. 10-11).

*J.R. Rutt*

**REMEMBER, REMEMBER**

Foreigners are baffled by Bonfire Night. Why do the British burn Guy Fawkes, an obscure Jacobean terrorist, in effigy? Why does the most tolerant society in Europe persist in this pyrotechnical anti-popery? They would be even more perplexed, and perhaps offended, if they had been present in Lewes on 5th November (1998). There the good burghers have for centuries burnt effigies of the Pope himself; this year, for good measure, they blew him up. Ought so anachronistic, so incendiary, a custom be permitted in Tony Blair's modernised Britain?

It should. The naked no-popery of Lewes is only a more authentic survival of a national tradition that embraces anybody who gives a penny for the guy or is thrilled by a Roman candle. Religious conflicts have indeed taken ugly – occasionally murderous – forms for long periods of our history, bitter memories of which still resonate today. But the peaceful expression of that tradition on Bonfire Night, like the Orange marches, is legitimate. And the commemoration of the Gunpowder Plot has a deeper meaning.

The narrowly averted physical threat to King and Parliament was a gift to Protestant propagandists. But the conspiracy was aimed directly at the independence of the then recently united Anglo-Scottish state; and the persistence of Guy Fawkes in popular mythology, long after anti-Catholic passions have cooled, tells us something about the British identity.

For no-popery is much older than the Reformation. It dates back at least to the Gregorian Reform and the conflicts between Anselm and William Rufus, or Thomas a Becket and Henry II. Its essence is a refusal to submit to the temporal power of the Pope, and hence to any foreign dominion over these islands. Even today, when the Holy See has long since abandoned its temporal claims, that symbolic resistance remains valid. British sovereignty is now threatened, perhaps not openly by zealots on behalf of the Bishop of Rome, but by zealots on behalf of the Treaty of Rome. Now is not the time to

douse bonfires by decree, but to remember the Fifth of November and why we celebrate it.

*Daily Telegraph. (6.11.1998.)*

### BIBLE QUESTIONS

*This month the questions are about FRUIT. Younger children need only do five questions. Please give references for questions 6 to 10 and send your answers to the Editor (see page 242 for the address). Please give your name and address and write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.*

1. What fruit did the spies, who were sent to search the land of Canaan, bring back with them? (Numbers 13. 23)
2. What fruit would you *not* expect to find on thorns and thistles? (Matthew 7. 16)
3. What fruit was eaten in disobedience to God's command? (Genesis 2. 17; 3. 6)
4. In the parable of the sower, which ground was fruitful? (Matthew 13. 8, 23)
5. Of whom did Jesus say: "The same bringeth forth much fruit"? (John 15. 5)
6. Who is described as "a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well"? (Genesis 49)
7. What did Jesus curse because it bore no fruit? (Mark 11)
8. Write out the nine things that the Apostle Paul calls "the fruit of the Spirit." (Galatians 5)
9. Find two similar verses which liken a good man to a fruitful tree planted by a river. (Psalm 1 & Jeremiah 17)
10. John the Baptist spoke to the Pharisees about the necessity of fruit. What fruits did he say they should bring forth? What would be the end of a tree which didn't have good fruit?

### ANSWERS TO OCTOBER QUESTIONS

1. "Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble."
2. A man who walks in the night is most likely to stumble.
3. Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego.
4. He that loveth his brother.
5. "They went backward, and not forward."

6. "They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them." (Jeremiah 31. 9)
7. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3.3)
8. Rioting and drunkenness, chambering and wantonness, strife and envying. (Romans 13. 13)
9. The crossing of the Red Sea. (Psalm 78. 53)
10. Redeem the time. (Ephesians 5. 15,16; Colossians 4. 5)

*Contributed*

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### WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

Thy Word is for my feet a *Light*,  
 A *Lantern* for the darkest night,  
 The *Oracle* from which is heard  
 The Message of the Living Word,  
 A *Fountain* flowing from the Throne  
 That quickens into life His own,  
 A *Mirror* where the Soul may see  
 Its guilt and stain, and then 'twill be  
 A *Laver* where for cleansing stored  
 Is water, washing by the Word.  
 'Tis *Milk* and *Bread* and *Honey* sweet,  
 And for the full-grown man *Strong Meat*;  
*Fine Gold* that we enriched may be,  
 The *Eye-salve* that our eyes may see.  
*Fire* that will purge and try our work,  
 A *Hammer* that can break the rock,  
*Seed* that we scatter o'er the plain,  
 And *Dew* and soft distilling *Rain*;  
 A *Sword* with which we meet the foe  
 And overcome him blow for blow;  
 A *Telescope* through which behold  
 The City with the Streets of Gold!

*G.G.*



# *The Friendly Companion*



“Then they that gladly received his word  
were baptized: ...” (Acts 2. 41)

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*December 2005*

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### OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

The month of November is said to be the month of *remembering*, so what would we call the month of December?

December should be the month of *thanksgiving*. Why?

Firstly, this is the last month of the year. Soon the year 2005 will end and who can count all the blessings God has given us in this year now ending? For example, every breath we draw is a blessing from God and who can count how many of those we have taken during the past twelve months? In fact, like so many of God's mercies, we take for granted our next breath, but we should never forget what Paul told the worshippers on Mars Hill: "For in Him we live, and move, and have our being."

But another question is more searching. How many of us are able to thank God for the life of God in our souls?

Many years ago, at the end of the year, a godly man who attended a nearby chapel gave a young lad the choice of a bookmark. There were several of them to choose from, each having a Scripture text. The young lad, in whom the work of grace was just beginning, noticed one which had the words: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10. 10). The young lad felt such a longing that these words would be fulfilled in his heart before another year had passed, that he chose this bookmark.

But then, what is this abundant life? The Lord Jesus Christ is that abundant life, and He came into the world to save sinners. Those who are blessed with this life which the Holy Spirit brings into the heart have most reason of all to thank God. May it be the prayer of each of our readers to be taught to say: "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift." The word *unspeakable* is a word for something which is indescribable. This gift has to be experienced in the heart for it to be really known what it means.

May God bless you each, as this year closes, with His abundant life.

From your sincere friend and Editor.

### **OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE**

The picture on our front cover shows an ancient baptismal pool. It is reputed to be the one in which Ambrose baptized Augustine, one of the early leaders of the Christian church after apostolic times. The structure of the pool adds weight to the belief we have that New Testament baptism was by immersion, symbolising a grave. Paul spoke of being buried (immersed) in baptism and rising again to newness of life (Romans 6. 4).

The Word of God does not teach us that baptism regenerates (gives spiritual life to) the baptized person, but that those believers who are obedient to the command of Jesus in this ordinance, confess that their hope of salvation is in the death and resurrection of Christ, and that they desire from henceforth to live a new life, by grace, following the Lord Jesus. Whilst we do not believe that baptism is essential for salvation, it is nevertheless a path honoured by Jesus Himself at Jordan and one that honours Him. It is also the Scriptural door into the professing church of God on earth.

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### **OUR REACTION TO THE TRUTH**

At the time of the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, (one of whose names is 'the Truth'), the reaction to these tidings betrayed the true state of heart of those affected by this sacred event.

- The wise men earnestly sought the truth, travelling hundreds of miles to find the Saviour.
- The scribes, who admitted that they knew the truth, in as far as they could say where Christ was to be born, never stirred themselves to find Him of whom the prophet had spoken. They rested in the letter of the truth.
- King Herod was seriously alarmed at the truth, to such an extent he sought to destroy the Saviour.
- Mary, and to a lesser extent one would hope that Joseph also, pondered and kept the truth in their hearts.
- The shepherds spread the truth of the Saviour's birth. They that heard wondered. Did they ponder as Mary, we ask?

How does our heart respond to these sacred events? Has grace turned us from the false faith of the scribes and Herod, to grant to us the saving knowledge which the others had?

---

### THE EXAMPLE OF THE SHEPHERDS

It is sometimes said that children learn by example. This is, of course, very true and what a responsibility it puts on those who are older, brothers and sisters, friends and parents, to set a good example! How sad if our bad example should be the means of setting another person on the road to sin and ruin!

At the time of the birth of Jesus Christ, God's Son, into this world, there were both good and bad examples set. What a good example did Joseph set in obeying the Lord's command at every turn, but what a terrible example did Herod set his people by the slaughter of the young boys at Bethlehem! This terrible deed is still spoken of centuries after, with horror.

The shepherds, however, are an excellent lesson to us of a good example of diligence.

*Firstly*, it was whilst they were diligently following their calling as shepherds, that the wonderful tidings of the birth of Christ were given to them.

*Secondly*, they listened to those tidings as they were spoken by the angel.

*Thirdly*, they believed what the angelic hosts had to say to them.

*Fourthly*, they obeyed the command of the angel and went and saw for themselves the Babe, so newly born. In doing so, they did not let their occupation as shepherds hinder them from seeking.

*Finally*, having found and seen the Babe, they glorified God, and were not ashamed of telling others what they had seen and believed.

May we be found following the same example, in the footsteps of faith, which these humble shepherds set.

**FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES****WISE MEN SEEK JESUS**

When Jesus was born, the LORD caused a special star to appear in the sky. In a country far away in the east, some men saw the star. They were given wisdom to know that the long promised Saviour, the “King of the Jews” had been born. How they longed to see Him with their own eyes and worship Him!

These wise men came to Jerusalem to seek for the new-born King. Perhaps they thought He would be near the temple where the Jews worshipped God. Yet the people didn’t know about the birth of this wonderful Child. Herod the king asked the leaders of the Jews “*where Christ should be born.*” Then he sent the wise men to Bethlehem to search for Him there.

As they went on their way, they saw the star again. How they rejoiced! It went before them and stood over the very place where Jesus was. Then they “*fell down, and worshipped Him.*” The wise men who came so far to seek for Jesus were not disappointed. The LORD “... *is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.*”

**QUESTIONS:**

1. What appeared in the sky when Jesus was born?
2. Who came to seek for the new-born King?
3. Were they disappointed?

*Send your answers to the Editor (see page 266 for the address). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.*

*Contributed*

**ANSWERS TO NOVEMBER QUESTIONS**

1. At harvest.
2. Tares (weeds).
3. The Lord’s people.

*“... if ye  
seek Him,  
He will be  
found  
of you.”*  
*2 Chronicles*  
*15. 2.*

**BIBLE LESSONS****JESUS TEMPTED IN THE WILDERNESS**

After Jesus was baptized by John in the river Jordan, He came up out of the water and the heavens were opened. The Spirit of God was descending like a dove and sitting upon Him. What a sight for John to see! Suddenly a voice was heard from heaven saying: *"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."* What a sacred moment! What a sacred place! God the Son dwelling on earth, God the Spirit dwelling upon Him, and God the Father witnessing of Him.

After this wonderful experience, we might naturally think that Jesus was ready to enter into His public ministry. But God's thoughts are different from ours. The Lord Jesus must first experience mighty temptations. So He is led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

Do you remember the account about the beautiful Garden of Eden, where the first man and woman lived? Satan entered and tempted Eve to disobey God's command by eating of the tree in the midst of the garden. She then gave the fruit to Adam, who also ate, and thus sin entered the world. Adam and all his children (you and I included) became great sinners before God. What an easy prey man had become. How happy Satan was to see man fallen from the image of God.

The Lord Jesus had come to obey the law of God for His people. When the Spirit led Him into the wilderness, Satan found Him all alone. He began to tempt Jesus first in one way and then in another. Satan has many devices and snares to tempt men by. He tried them all upon Jesus. The Bible tells us that He *"... was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."*

Jesus fasted and prayed for forty days and forty nights, as He endured Satan's powerful temptations. At the end of the forty days Jesus became very faint and hungry. Do you remember how Satan tempted Eve with very pleasant food? He now came to Jesus in His humbled condition saying: *"If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread."* WHAT A



TEMPTATION! Jesus could both satisfy His hunger pains and show that He is God. Yet what an example Jesus set! He showed poor sinners how Satan can be defeated. He answered: "**It is written**, *Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*" He would not please Himself but rather trust His Father to supply all His needs. When Jesus would not yield to this temptation, Satan tried another.

Satan took Jesus up to the highest part of the temple in Jerusalem. Since Jesus trusted His Father to supply His needs, he would now tempt Jesus to presume upon His Father's care. He told Jesus to cast Himself to the ground, for it is written: "*He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee: and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone.*" How solemn that even the devil knows Scripture. Again Jesus answered: "**It is written** ..., *Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*"

After this Satan led Jesus to the top of a very high mountain. He caused all the kingdoms of the world and their glory to be set before the eyes of Jesus. Then he said: "*All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me.*" He had successfully tempted Adam and Eve to love the world and the things in it more than God, thus robbing God of His glory. Jesus answered: "*Get thee hence, Satan: for **it is written**, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.*"

Then Satan left Him, knowing that he could not introduce sin into the pure heart of Jesus. Angels were sent of God to supply His needs. Having suffered under the powerful temptations of Satan, Jesus understands and sympathizes with His people and is able to succour them.

*You can read about this in Matthew 4, Mark 1, and Luke 4.*

#### QUESTIONS:

1. Who descended like a dove upon Jesus?
2. What did the voice from heaven say? (11 words)
3. Though Jesus was in all points tempted, what was He without?

4. How many days and nights did Jesus fast and pray?
5. With what three words did Jesus begin each answer to Satan's temptations?

*G.L. TenBroeke*

*Please send your answers to the Editor (see address on page 266). Please mark the envelope ANSWERS. Remember to give your name and address.*

### ANSWERS TO NOVEMBER QUESTIONS

- |   |                         |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1. Christ.                                    | 4. About Thirty.        |
| 2. The latchet of Christ's shoes.             | 5. In the River Jordan. |
| 3. The voice of one crying in the wilderness. |                         |

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### ANNA THE PROPHETESS

One of the people rarely spoken of, when the history of the birth of Jesus is mentioned, is Anna the prophetess. Just three verses in the whole of Scripture are all we are told about this lady, but there is enough in those few words to tell us she was a true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

In fact, there are *seven* things in this short account which commend Anna to us.

- She was consistent. It appears she had only been married seven years when her husband died, and then, until she was eighty-four years old she devoted her whole life to the worship of God in the Temple, waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- She was a true worshipper. She worshipped God in spirit and in truth.
- She was willing to sacrifice the greater part of her life to the Lord's service.
- She was a woman of prayer.
- She was guided by the Holy Spirit.
- She was thankful to God for the gift of His dear Son.
- She spoke of Him to others who, like her, were looking for the coming of Christ.

May we be seeking the same grace as Anna had, and especially to have a personal knowledge of the Saviour.

### JESUS OF NAZARETH

In Micah 5. 2 there is a prophetic word given, seven centuries before Christ: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Even the most modernistic critic, in what would be styled an up-to-date commentary, has described this verse as dealing with "Messianic anticipation." Reading the Old Testament and consulting historical records, we learn that Palestine had been conquered, the Jews captured and scattered throughout other lands, and that foreigners had come to reside in the land formerly occupied by the children of Israel. How, then, could Jesus be born in Judah and, moreover, in a particular little community so small and insignificant that it had to be distinguished from two other places carrying the same name, by a second name – Ephratah?

But God caused the Persian to succeed the Babylonian Empire. King Cyrus of Persia was in complete control. Surely he was the last person who would be expected to make it possible for the Jews to return to Palestine so that Jesus might be born there! Yet God had predicted that Cyrus would reverse the decree and restore the Jews to Palestine, in general terms in Jeremiah 29. 10; then more particularly in chapter 30. 10, 11; but most positively in chapter 33. 7-14. But the most astounding passage is at the end of chapter 44, and the beginning of chapter 45 of Isaiah's prophecy, which was given *more than a century before Cyrus was born*, yet called him by name.

But how could this be done? The answer is found in two records: 2 Chronicles 36. 22, 23 and Ezra 1. 1-4. Cyrus, king of Persia, for no accountable human reason, issued a decree that the Jews should return to Palestine, and that those who did not desire to do so should give material help to those who, in the fulfilment of the decree, returned to the Promised Land. This is only explicable by divine prompting and power, which can

only be explained as the fulfilment of the prophecy in the terms used in the records referred to: "Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia ...."

So the Jews returned to Judah and occupied the region surrounding Bethlehem-Ephratah. Now we begin again with the little Book of Ruth, in which we read that Elimelech, a native of Bethlehem-Ephratah, because there was a shortage of food, decided that he would take his wife and his two sons down to the land of Moab, where apparently there was plenty. The two sons married two Moabitish women. In due time the three men went the way of all flesh and died, leaving behind three widows. Then Elimelech's widow, Naomi, informed her two daughters-in-law that she was returning to her homeland and town. They decided to go with her, but one, Orpah, went back, while Ruth continued with Naomi until she met a kinsman named Boaz of Bethlehem, and the ultimate issue was Jesus of the house of David and the tribe of Judah. But we do not call Him Jesus of *Bethlehem*. We always call Him Jesus of *Nazareth*. Why? Luke 4. 16 will do as well as any other passage, for it states: "He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up: and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath Day."

I can remember when scholarly critics were rather contemptuous of conservative Christians who believed in the record of the historian Luke in chapter 2 in the opening verses. They claimed that it conflicted with secular history, though why those who call themselves Christians when it comes to a divergence between secular and sacred history take it for granted that the secular history must be right and therefore the Bible wrong, puzzles me! But what Luke records actually happened. Cæsar Augustus had issued a decree that all the world should be enrolled. The Jews objected for reasons found in the Old Testament. The Roman Governor was not

competent to deal with the objection that they should not have their census taken. He therefore referred the matter to Rome, and it took four years before the answer could reach Palestine. The Roman Emperor rejected the petition and this resulted in the Jews having their census taken four years later than the rest of the inhabitants of the Roman World. Sir William Ramsey discovered this as the result of his own personal research work in Asia.

There was a humble carpenter, named Joseph, whose birthplace was Bethlehem-Ephratah. According to the customs and methods of those days, a member of a family had to go to the family headquarters to make his census returns. So Joseph went to Bethlehem accompanied by his espoused wife, great with Child. She gave birth to her Babe in Bethlehem-Ephratah. So God controlled empires, emperors, governors, priests, and leaders to take the people back to their own land; a family and the individuals thereof, and then a Roman Emperor and governor and a carpenter and his espoused wife, all to bring to fulfilment His Word given 750 years before, that He who was to be the Leader of God's people, Israel, should be born in Bethlehem-Ephratah.

From *'The Debt we owe to the Jew'* by Dr. F.J. Miles, D.S.O., O.B.E.

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#### **THE EDITOR'S RECENT VISIT TO THE USA AND CANADA**

The Editor would like to express his deep gratitude to the Lord, for the manifold mercies shown to him during his recent visit to North America. Also he heartily thanks the friends in the USA and Canada for their warm and most gracious welcome. The prayers and many expressions of support from friends here in England are also most gratefully acknowledged. (Psalm 115. 1)

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#### **EDITOR'S POSTBAG**

*First answers to the monthly questions have been received from ANNIE COTTINGHAM.*

### SATISFIED WITH THE BEST

Some years ago, a wealthy businessman in New York was travelling along Fourth Avenue using public transport. As they were about to pull away from a stop he heard the voice of a young lad, about twelve years of age, cry out: "Please wait. I can't run very fast!" In response, the driver pulled the bus to a halt and the young lad climbed on to the bus. He was crippled in one of his legs, and had been so from birth. The businessman could see by the clothes the lad was wearing that he was from a wealthy family, yet his young face was lined with suffering and pain. Despite his evident pain, there was a cheerful look on his face and as he sat down he gave a winning smile to the other passengers, whilst trying to put his crippled leg in as comfortable a position as was possible.

At the next stop the person sitting near the lad got off, and the businessman went and sat by him. As he did so he heard the lad humming the tune to "*Rock of Ages*" softly to himself.

"That's one of my favourite hymns," he commented to the young lad.

"It always helps me to sing when my leg hurts," replied the lad.

"Does it often hurt?" asked the man kindly.

"Yes, I was born like this, and the doctors tell me it will never be any different."

"Well," said the man. "How is it you are so happy and cheerful?"

The boy gently smiled and said: "You see, I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is He who has sent me this trial to bear. My father tells me that God would not have sent it, unless He knew that it would be best for me. And don't you think that I should be satisfied with the best?"

With tears in his eyes, the businessman held out his hand to the disabled lad. "Thank you for the lesson you have taught me today," he said. "I shall never forget it as long as I live."

The young lad evidently knew something of the truth of Isaiah 26. 3, 4: "*Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose*

*mind in stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee. Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength.” May we seek and be given the same grace to believe that God never makes a mistake.*

*Adapted*

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### **“SAY ‘NO’ AT THE BEGINNING”**

When about fifteen years old, one Lord’s Day in Sunday School, the class I was in was reading in Proverbs from chapter one, and when we reached verse ten the teacher stopped us. The verse is: “My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.” The dear aged teacher spoke to us very lovingly, explaining to us how much easier it is to stand against what is wrong, by saying “No,” right at the beginning, rather than giving way even just a little. He warned us how hard it would be to pull back, once we have begun to enter into a wrong path.

About four years later, having to serve two years’ National Service, I was sent to Germany to a place a few miles from one of the large cities. As soon as we had some free time, about five of us went into the city, as tourists do when sightseeing.

However, I soon realised that the others were looking for different places than I was, and that they intended to enter into one of them. As they tried to persuade me to go with them, the teaching which had been spoken so lovingly in Sunday School, came into my remembrance, and I refused. “But we are only going to go for a drink and come out again,” they said. We stood in the road for probably fifteen minutes while they tried to get me to change my mind, but the Lord enabled me to stand firm and eventually they went in without me.

After waiting in the road for them for about half an hour, I went for a walk on my own, and then to the NAAFI in the city to wait for them. About four hours later, they arrived at the NAAFI and very much the worse for drink, and poorer.

How thankful I was then for the teaching I received in Sunday School which was brought to my memory years later in a time of great temptation and need, enabling me to say: “No,” right from the start.

*Contributed*

**“WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?”**

“Pilate, what is your verdict concerning Jesus Christ?”

*“I find no fault in this Man.”*

“And you, Judas, who have sold your Master for silver – have you some fearful charge to hurl against Him?”

*“I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.”*

“Pharisees, what is your charge?”

*“He eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners.”*

“And you, High Priest Caiaphas, what have you to say to Him?”

*“He hath spoken blasphemy.” – “Jesus said: Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.”*

“And you, centurion and soldiers, who led Him to the cross, what have you to say against Him?”

*“Truly this was the Son of God.”*

“And you, demons?”

*“He is the Son of God.”*

“John the Baptist, what think you of Christ?”

*“Behold, the Lamb of God!”*

“And you, John the Apostle?”

*“He is the bright and morning Star.”*

“Peter, what say you of your Master?”

*“Thou art that Christ, the Son of the Living God.”*

“And you, Thomas?”

*“My Lord and my God.”*

“Paul, you have persecuted Him; what testify you against Him?”

*“I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.”*

“Angels of heaven, what do you think of Jesus?”

*“Unto you is born ... a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”*

“And Thou, Father in Heaven, who knowest all things?”

*“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”*

Reader, what do you think of Christ? What does He mean in your life? Is He *anything* to you? *Selected*



### **A CASE OF SHEEP WORRYING**

One late winter's afternoon, a shepherd arrived at his flock of sheep to find them in much trouble and consternation. Immediately he realised the reason: an angry, aggressive dog had entered the field and had begun to worry and chase the ewes about.

As he climbed the stile into the field, he could see that the fittest and strongest of the ewes had managed to escape this frenzied attack by the unwelcome intruder. However, one of the most needy ewes, who was carrying the burden of twins inside her, and who at this time had been weakened by the onset of milk fever, had been singled out and viciously attacked by the dog, who inflicted deep wounds into her neck and legs; this brought her to her knees. Had the shepherd not intervened at this point to chase away the dog, she would have surely died.

Thankfully, the story of this ewe does not end here, for while her master was finally banishing her attacker permanently from the field, his thoughts were for the care and welfare of the injured. He needed to heal her wounds and save her life quickly. Returning to her as she let out her mournful cries, he took her up and carried her to a warm spot in a nearby barn, where he could stitch and apply ointment to her wounds, satisfy her hunger and thirst with hay and water and treat her milk fever with an injection of calcium. Here she remained for several weeks, being tended by the kind hand of her friendly master until her wounds healed, her feverish condition improved and two healthy lambs were delivered fit and well.

Dear young friends, in this story of the ewe, her shepherd and a wild dog, we see a picture of something far greater. Sometimes the sheep of God's flock are found in deep trials of faith caused by the approach of Satan. He, the enemy of souls, desires to cause dismay, and even death, in the lives of God's children while they carry about with them their providential and spiritual burdens in this life. It often seems to be the case

that this arch-enemy strikes when the children of God are at their lowest ebb, weakened by the feverish effects of sin inflicting deep wounds into their hearts and minds, causing much pain and suffering such as they have never known before, bringing them to their knees in prayer and crying out for God's help.

What mercy is shown then by the Good Shepherd, when He comes to their aid to intervene and banish this fierce foe from his devilish assaults on the soul. What compassion is imparted as He hears the cry and takes up these "lambs of Christ's fold" into the barn of His grace to tend to their wounds, to feed and water them through His Word and to inject some necessary medicine into the heart so that spiritual life is maintained and the cares of this life removed.

"Now may He who from the dead  
Brought the Shepherd of the sheep,  
Jesus Christ, our King and Head,  
All our souls in safety keep."

The sheep of God can say: "... He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed."

*S.D.H.*

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### **PRIDE**

Amongst all the evils which lie naked and open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do, pride seems especially to incur His holy abhorrence; and the outward manifestations of it have perhaps drawn down as much as – or more than – any other sin, His marked thunderbolts. Pride cost Sennacherib his army and Herod his life; pride opened the earth to Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and hung up Absalom in the boughs of an oak; pride filled the breast of Saul with murderous hatred against David, and tore ten tribes at one

stroke from the hand of Rehoboam. Pride drove Nebuchadnezzar from the society of his fellow-men, and made him eat grass as oxen, and his body to be wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown as eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws.

And as it has cut off the wicked from the earth, and left them neither son nor nephew, root nor branch, so it has made sad havoc even among the family of God. Pride shut Aaron out of the Promised Land, and made Miriam a leper white as snow; pride, working in the heart of David, brought a pestilence which cut off seventy-thousand men; pride carried captive to Babylon Hezekiah's treasure and descendents, and cast Jonah into the whale's belly, and in his feelings into the very belly of hell.

Pride is the only source of contention, the certain forerunner of a fall, the instigator of persecution; a gin for the feet, a chain to compass the whole body, the main element of deceitfulness, and the grave of all uprightness. The very opposite to charity (1 Corinthians 13), pride suffereth not long, and is never kind; she envieth always, and ever vaunteth herself; is continually puffed up, always behaveth herself unseemly, ever seeketh her own, is easily provoked, perpetually thinketh evil. Rejoiceth in iniquity but rejoiceth not in the truth; beareth nothing, believeth nothing (good in a brother), hopeth nothing, endureth nothing. Ever restless and ever miserable, tormenting herself and tormenting others, the bane of churches, the fomentor of strife and the extinguisher of love. May it be our wisdom to see, our grace to abhor, and our victory to overcome her, and may the experience of Hart's hymn be ours:

"Thy Garden is the place  
Where pride cannot intrude;  
For should it dare to enter there,  
'Twould soon be drowned in blood."

*J.C. Philpot.*

*BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES***THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY AND ITS CHARACTERS**

(concluded)

As the time drew near for the children of Israel to return to the land of Israel, the LORD raised up His servants and put the exercise in their hearts to return to their land. My mind, in particular, is drawn to godly Nehemiah. He, in the land of captivity, had the trusted and honoured position of being the king's cupbearer. This gave him access and influence in the royal house. This was not by chance, but by God's decree.

Nehemiah was a man of prayer; all God's living family are. He heard from a friend that Jerusalem was burned with fire and that the remaining Jews were in great affliction. Please note, he did not fold his arms and say: "Well, I cannot do anything." No! God stirred up his spirit. We see exemplified in Nehemiah what James speaks of in his epistle: "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (James 2. 26). As Nehemiah prayed, so he saw by faith the path he had to take. He would speak to the king and ask his support and help to return to his own country. The Lord's direction is: "Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established" (Proverbs 16. 3).

So Nehemiah proved it. As he stood before the king an opportunity was given him and he took it: "And said unto the king, Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire? Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven" (Nehemiah 2. 3,4). Notice this last important clause, after the king asked him; in those few moments his heart was lifted up in prayer.

In the Book of Nehemiah, it is recorded how God prospered His servant. Why? "But thou, O LORD, shalt endure for ever; and Thy remembrance unto all generations. Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones,

and favour the dust thereof" (Psalm 102: 12-14). How we need such a day now in Zion; may the Lord grant it.

Nehemiah returned, and eventually about 42,000 captives joined him. He built the walls of Jerusalem. He had much opposition from Sanballat and others, also many Jews, but by God's grace he persevered. We see the wonder-working hand of God in fulfilling His Word to His people. Nehemiah was able, by God's grace, to establish again the law of God among the Jews and separate them from the heathen, who some of them had married. This was no easy task. He had with him Ezra the scribe. He re-established the Sabbath day, which was widely violated.

The Jews settled down in the city of Jerusalem, and after about eighteen or twenty years the LORD raised up Haggai the prophet. He sent him to stir up the children of Israel from a state of ease; they dwelt in their cieled houses, but the House of the Lord had not been built. They were very industrious in sowing fields, etc: "Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste? Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. Ye have sown much, and bring in little ... Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD" (Haggai 1. 4-8). We need to look into our own lives to see why we do not prosper, whether in our personal spiritual experience, or in the church of God. Do we have our priorities right? "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Matthew 6. 33,34).

There were men who God through Haggai, stirred up unto an holy diligence, to build the house of God, the second temple: "And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and did work in the

house of the LORD of hosts, their God" (Haggai 1. 14). In chapter 2, he exhorts these men: "Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the LORD; and be strong O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the LORD, and work: for I am with you, saith the LORD of hosts: According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not."

He now foretells the coming of Christ: "For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts. The silver is Mine and the gold is Mine, saith the LORD of hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace ..." (Haggai 2. 6-9). The house would be filled with glory because the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God in the flesh, would walk and teach in it. Also in Zechariah we have the same sweet promise of Christ: "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD" (Zechariah 2. 10).

The wonderful truth is that all these things are being fulfilled today. The Lord is still delivering His people from the captivity of sin and Satan, by the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. In Him is life, He is the way, the truth and the life. The only hope for us personally is in this glorious God/Man; the only hope of deliverance for the church is through the preaching of Jesus Christ and Him crucified: "Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5. 31).

Our longing desire is that the Lord may bless you each by His Spirit with repentance and forgiveness of sin, and that you may bring forth those works meet for repentance.

*J.R. Rutt*

**BIBLE QUESTIONS**

*This month the questions are about UNDERSTANDING. Younger children need only do five questions. Please give references for questions 6 to 10 and send your answers to the Editor (see page 266 for the address). Remember to give your name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.*

1. Who was described as "a woman of good understanding"? (1 Samuel 25. 3)
2. Who prayed for an "understanding heart"? (1 Kings 3. 9)
3. What was the name of the place where God confounded the language of men so that they could not understand one another? (Genesis 11. 9)
4. What do we need if we are to "know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints"? (Ephesians 1. 18, first part)
5. How does the Apostle Paul describe those who "walk in the vanity of their mind"? (Ephesians 4. 17, 18, first part)
6. What was the name of the altar that caused a serious misunderstanding between the tribes of Israel? (Joshua 22)
7. Who did Stephen speak of in Acts 7, who was misunderstood by his own brethren?
8. What does the Apostle Paul say "passeth all understanding"? (Philippians 4)
9. What answer was given to the question: "Understandest thou what thou readest"? (Acts 8)
10. Five times in Psalm 119 David prays: "Give me understanding." What did he say gives "understanding unto the simple"?

**ANSWERS TO NOVEMBER QUESTIONS**

1. Grapes, pomegranates and figs.
2. Grapes and figs.
3. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
4. The good ground.
5. "He that abideth in Me, and I in him."
6. Joseph. (Genesis 49. 22)
7. A barren fig tree. (Mark 11, 14, 21)

8. Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. (Galatians 5. 22, 23)  
9. Psalm 1. 3 & Jeremiah 17. 8.  
10. "Fruits meet for repentance." (Matthew 3. 8). To be "hewn down and cast into the fire." (Matthew 3. 10) *Contributed*

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**"WHAT MANNER OF MAN IS THIS?"**

What manner of Man is this?

With a word, He could still both the wind and the wave.

With a touch, the poor leper from banishment save,

With a look, at dear Peter, conviction He gave.

What manner of Man is this!

What manner of Man is this?

A Man who could stoop, dusty feet clean to lave,

A Man who could free those whom sin did enslave,

A Man who brought Lazarus back from the grave.

What manner of Man is this!

What manner of Man is this?

His wisdom could triumph while Pharisees rave,

His power shone out as He walked on the wave,

His sympathy showed as He wept at the grave.

What manner of Man is this!

What manner of Man is this?

When falsely accused, no answer He gave,

When pierced by the nails, He freely forgave,

When taunted by others, Himself would not save.

What manner of Man is this!

What manner of Man is this?

For others He lived, those whom sin did deprave,

For others He died, and was laid in the grave,

And then He arose, His bought ones to save!

What manner of Man is this!

*J.M. Chaplin*



# THE FRIENDLY COMPANION

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#### **OUR MAGAZINES**

With this issue of this Friendly Companion, another year of its long history draws to a close and Volume 131 is complete. Looking back over the year we would be thankful for all the help so loyally and lovingly given by our band of helpers behind the scenes as well as our regular contributors and others. May God richly reward them for their labour of love which we hope "is not in vain in the Lord."

As Editor we feel increasingly our inadequacy but would humbly acknowledge that from time to time it would seem that the truths set forth have fallen into receptive ground. For this we would be thankful to the Lord to whom alone belongs all the honour for any lasting fruit. Also we thank those who have kindly offered constructive criticism in love which we trust we have also received in the same spirit.

For 2006 (if the Lord will) the price for the Friendly Companion will remain at £6.00 a year or £0.50 per copy.

May the Lord give us each a deeper hunger and thirst for the truths of His holy Word and enable one to set them forth clearly for our younger friends and others

"Brethren pray for us."

G. D. Buss (Editor)