

The Friendly Companion



"Redeeming the time, because the days are evil."
(Ephesians 5. 16)

January 2008

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All correspondence to be sent to the Editor.

Price 50 pence monthly, plus postage.

Annual Subscriptions inc. postage:

U.K.	U.S.A. & Canada	Australia	Europe (Netherlands)
£11.00	\$31	A\$38	€27.00

All correspondence concerning subscriptions should be addressed to Mr. H. Mercer, 8 Fairleigh Rise, Kington Langley, Chippenham, Wilts. SN15 5QF.

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

When you receive this letter from your Editor, it will be 2008, and the old year, 2007, will have gone. Having to write several weeks before the New Year starts is difficult for an Editor, especially as we believe that we should not presume on the future. James tells us that we should, when making arrangements, say: "If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that."

There was once a young man going on holiday, who did not like the bother of sending cards to his friends and loved ones. So before he left for his holiday, he wrote out several cards to post when he was there, saying what a lovely time he was having. Sadly, events did not go as he had planned and what he wrote on the cards was not at all what happened. He learned from this, the sin of presuming upon God's mercy, even in the natural affairs of our lives.

It was said of Napoleon when he was about to invade Russia, that he remarked: "Even God will not stop me from conquering St. Petersburg." A godly woman, hearing of this said: "You watch, from now onwards Napoleon will fail, because he has challenged the Almighty." And so it was! Napoleon suffered his first of many defeats in Russia and this began the decline which eventually led to his final defeat at the Battle of Waterloo.

However, although we write in anticipation, there are some things we may be sure of, if our lives are spared into 2008.

Firstly, God will still be on His throne.

Secondly, we will still be sinners needing mercy.

Thirdly, if our lives are spared into the New Year, then the most important matter to be concerned with will still be: "Where shall I spend eternity?"

So for you we would wish, as Rabbi Duncan, a godly professor, did to his students one year, a happy eternity. If that is secured, then we may be sure that whatever changes may come in 2008, the Lord will be watching over us for our good.

“He that has made my heaven secure
Will here all good provide;
While Christ is rich, I can’t be poor;
What can I want beside?”

We wish each of our readers a very Happy New Year in the best sense.

From your sincere friend and Editor.

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

The words on the picture of our front cover this month are in another language. I wonder if you know what language it is? The words appear on one of those beautiful wooden chalets which are to be found in the Swiss Alps. Evidently, the owner or builder of the chalet wanted those who passed by to realise the importance of eternity. I wonder how many passers-by have given thought to the words? In our language, roughly translated, they are:

*“It is a blessing to be content,
To be so is the work of the Master:
But consider, O soul, thou must die.
Be not careless, for each hour is weighty,
As eternity approaches us speedily.”*

As we are found at the beginning of another year, we should remember the words spoken by the prophet Jeremiah to one man: “This year thou shalt die.” Do you know his name?

We do not know, unless God tells us, in what year we will die. Can you think of another Old Testament man who did know the year he would die? This one was prepared to die whereas the other man was not.

One man, (*not David*), who wrote one of the psalms said this: “So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.” Do you know the Psalm and verse, and who wrote the Psalm?

More importantly is it your prayer, that in whatever year you may be called to die, that you will be ready?

OLIVE TREES

QUESTION: How much olive oil can be obtained from an average olive tree?

Olives are harvested from November to March, six to eight months after their spring blossoming. They do well in very dry climates, and can tolerate droughts and high winds, but require warm average temperatures and cannot tolerate cold below 10°F (-12°C).

Not surprisingly, they grow beautifully in the Mediterranean, with its mild winters and long, hot summers. The region accounts for ninety-eight per cent of the world's olive oil harvest. Spain is the largest producer, followed by Italy, then Greece. Other major producers include France, Turkey, Tunisia and Morocco.

There are about eight hundred million olive trees in the world. Botanists say the lifespan of an olive tree is three hundred to six hundred years, although some claim there are trees in the Mediterranean which are more than one thousand years old.

An olive tree doesn't bear fruit until it is five to eight years old, and doesn't reach full development until it is twenty. At maturity, it remains at full production strength from thirty-five to one hundred and fifty years of age, after which it will bear irregular crops almost indefinitely.

An average tree produces fifteen to twenty kilograms of olives a year, equivalent to three to four litres of oil. There are, however, more than seventy varieties of olive tree and high-yield varieties are known to produce more than fifty kilograms of olives (ten litres of oil) a year.

Andrew Sykes, Taunton (Daily Mail)

EDITOR'S POSTBAG

*First answers to the monthly questions have been received from **TOM ALDRIDGE** and **ALEXANDER RAYNER**.*

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**BEGINNING**

Many people question how and when the earth began. The Bible tells us very simply that *"in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth"*. He made the sun, moon and stars to give light upon the earth. They were also given for signs and seasons, days and years. God made the grass and trees, as well as all the living creatures on the earth and in the air and seas. *"And 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."*

In six days God made all these things. It was not hard for Him to do. He spoke *"and it was done."* Every part of the world was perfect and beautiful. *"And God saw every thing that He had made, and behold, it was very good."*

The work of God in creation is so great that man cannot explain it. We must believe God's Word alone. *"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed (made) by the word of God...."*

QUESTIONS:

1. What did the LORD God form man of?
2. What was breathed into his nostrils? (four words)
3. What did man become? (three words)

Please 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. A soul.
2. For ever.
3. Heaven or hell.

Contributed

*“... all things
were
created by
Him, and
for Him.”
Colossians
1. 16.*

BIBLE LESSONS**SMALL THINGS**

In the Old Testament the Lord asks the question: "*For who hath despised the day of small things?*" Our proud nature often looks right over small things. What a wonder that the great and mighty God never despises small things! He tells us that not a sparrow can fall to the ground or a hair from our head without His notice.

In one parable Jesus compared the kingdom of heaven to a tiny mustard seed. He said it was the smallest of seeds. You could hardly see it in the palm of your hand. Yet when planted, it soon grows and becomes a very great tree.

Perhaps you have heard about the godly prophet Daniel. During his time in Babylon, the king had a strange dream in which he saw a very great image. This image represented the great kingdoms of this world. Then he saw a stone cut out of a mountain. Compared to the great image, the stone appeared very small. Yet, it hit the feet of the image and broke them to pieces. The small stone became a very great mountain that filled the whole earth. This represented the kingdom of God which shall never be destroyed.

In another parable, Jesus compared the kingdom of heaven to leaven which a woman put in three measures of meal. Perhaps you have seen your mother making dough for bread. At some point she adds a small amount of yeast (leaven) to make the dough rise. When the Lord converts a poor sinner, He puts the leaven of grace in the heart. Just as yeast (leaven) spreads through the whole lump of dough, so grace begins to work in the heart. It seems so small at first that the poor soul can hardly believe he possesses grace. Such may not be able to say very much, but grace is seen in their actions and spirits. They no longer do the things they once did. More and more the grace that is given by God makes them love the things that God loves and hate the things that He hates.

In another parable Jesus said the kingdom of heaven was like a merchant man who went around seeking goodly pearls.

The merchant man is a picture of each of us by nature. What are the pearls that we seek after with our carnal (natural) hearts? One such pearl is riches. What time and energy are spent in seeking that! Another pearl is the pleasures of this life. Still another pearl is honour or fame. Oh how eagerly we seek after such pearls. These are the pearls of this world.

Even in a religious way our proud flesh seeks such pearls as self-righteousness, an outward profession of religion, church membership, and chapel attendance. Yet these may all be of the flesh.

But when the Lord changes the heart, the merchant man becomes heavenly-minded. He is no longer happy with those pearls but seeks for the pearl of true knowledge, the pearl of mercy, the pearl of pardoned sin, and the pearl of God's rich blessing. As he seeks for such things, he is led to Jesus Christ in whom all these pearls are found. He is called the "*One pearl of great price.*" The merchant man forsakes everything else to obtain the "*PEARL OF GREAT PRICE.*"

You can read about this in Matthew chapter 13 verses 45 and 46.

QUESTIONS:

1. Who never despises small things?
2. What seed did Jesus compare the kingdom of heaven to?
3. What leaven does the Lord put in the heart?
4. What did the merchant man go around seeking?
5. Who is the one pearl of great price?

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. The Son of man.
2. The children of the kingdom.
3. The devil.
4. Into a furnace of fire.
5. The sun.

G.L. TenBroeke

A BOY FROM STAVENISSE

This true story begins in the spring of 1886. The boy, Leen Potappel, lived in Stavenisse, Holland, until his death. You will read how the Lord began working in the life of Leen. Perhaps it will make you desire the same happiness, so that you will also begin calling upon the Lord. The Lord does not change. He is the same God as in 1886 and also wants children to come to Him.

This story is not written because Leen was such a wonderful or special boy. When Leen had grown up, he once said: "There are no special people, but there is special grace." The Lord does not convert a single sinner in the same way. Thus, it does not have to go the same way with you as it did with Leen, as long as you end up at the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ as a poor lost sinner.

Chapter 1: The Clockmaker

Swift clogs clatter over the street of shining paving stones. A little four-year-old boy runs over the Achterweg. A reed basket, filled with vegetables, dangles on one arm. He is bringing it to his grandmother.

"Careful, Leen," his mother calls after him. She looks over the lower part of the door and waves to him.

Leen waves back. Of course, he will be careful. He loves going to Grandma. He is allowed to go to her every morning. He is standing on top of the dyke, in a flash.

When his mother tells him to be careful, she means that he must not break the waffles. She has put them on top of the vegetables. Maybe Grandma will break a piece off for him. He didn't get any from his mother.

"For Saturday," she said abruptly and then he had not dared to beg anymore.

It is quiet on the street. There are no children playing. They are all at school. Leen doesn't know if it is nice at school. He doesn't have any older brothers or sisters that can tell him. He walks by sometimes. The doors are always closed. The

children are not allowed to come out anymore. What do they think of that?

It is probably nicer to go to Grandma. She is a dear; Grandpa is too, but he grumbles and grumbling makes you sad.

Leen softly swings the reed basket to and fro with every step. Maybe a waffle will fall out. He can't help that, then. You can no longer eat a waffle that fell to the ground. At least, grown-ups don't, but children will eat them, of course. Leen holds the basket a little slanted. The vegetables stay in. The paper bag of waffles shifts closer and closer to the edge. The little bag flips out of the basket. Leen looks at it. The brown paper contrasts with the light coloured sand along the road. What will Mother say? Quick, the bag has to go back into the basket. There is a small corner of the golden yellow waffle: a delicious corner of pastry. It is already in his mouth before he realises it. He closes the little bag and puts it into the basket. Leen chews on the soft piece. Delicious.

Grandma has company. On the sidewalk in front of the door stands a pair of clogs. Leen puts his one clog beside them and suddenly has to laugh about the difference. It is a funny sight. He takes off his other clog too.

"You can wait for me beside your big boss," he says.

Curious, he stumbles inside through the laundry room. He pushes the door open a crack and peeps inside. They are not sitting in the kitchen, but in the front room! He sneaks farther, dragging the basket behind him. Grandma and a man are sitting at the round table with the soft red cloth. Leen immediately sees who it is: the clockmaker.

Grandma didn't hear him coming in. She does see his blond head of hair come around the corner.

"Come in, my boy, just come and sit with us awhile," she says. She pulls a chair close to hers and softly draws him against her. He thinks that is nice. Grandma is so big and nice and soft. She puts her arm around him. The clockmaker looks at him and winks. Then those two continue their conversation.

Leen hears it already. They are talking about the Lord. With a reverent voice, the clockmaker tells Grandma how good the Lord is to all that fear and love Him. "If you know the Lord, you are happy, and if you do not know Him, you are unhappy. Then you will be eternally lost. But they that have come to know Him during their life will come to Him in heaven later on."

They talk about that difference.

Leen thinks the clockmaker knows a lot about it. Leen only understands a little of it, but he does understand the most important part: it is necessary to know the Lord. He suddenly thinks about the fallen waffles again and about the little piece he had secretly chewed off.

"The Lord doesn't wink at sin," he hears the man sitting across from him at the table, saying: "The Lord is righteous."

Leen looks at him in fright. He knows it for certain: the Lord also knows him and He knows that Leen has a sinful heart, does wicked things, and that he doesn't think about the Lord.

The two continue talking.

Leen doesn't hear it any more. Something started burning within him. He feels as if the Lord is looking at him very severely because he is unconverted. He presses himself even tighter against Grandma's arm.

The clockmaker stands up to go home. Grandma walks along to the door. When she returns, she suddenly sees Leen's ashen face. She strokes his hair and thinks that he was put to bed too late yesterday. "My, my," she sighs, "that man is so happy. Do you know, Leen, my boy, do you know why this man is happy? The Lord has forgiven all his sins, just as if he has never done them. And if he now dies, Leen, do you know where he will go, then, forever? He will go to heaven, to the Lord. That will be quite something, for then he will never sin any more, there is no pain and no sorrow. There you are always with the Lord." Tears run down her cheeks and her voice trembles.

Leen feels like comfortably wrapping his arms around her. "You too, I surely believe that you will come there also. You love the Lord, too, don't you?" But he can't say anything. It seems as if his tongue is glued tight. And what about him? He is without a new heart. How will it be with him?

(To be continued)

(Slightly adapted)

A LESSON FROM DANIEL

Some time ago, a survey was carried out by the Church of England, to discover the reason for the decline in Sunday school attendance, especially among older girls and boys. Various reasons were given, but the chief one seemed to be expressed like this: "We are tired of hearing over and over again about Moses in the bulrushes; Joseph and his coat of many colours; David and Goliath, etc. We can't see what it has to do with us today!

It seems there was a genuine two-fold complaint:

1. The lack of variety ("over and over again").
2. The lack of relevance ("what has it to do with us?").

The very well known Bible stories are so beautiful, but *there is so much we can learn from them*. Let me just take one of them: *Daniel in the lion's den*.

I am not going to tell you the story; you all know it. But one sentence stands out: "*Is thy God ... able to deliver thee?*" (Darius' question to Daniel).

1. LIONS. Very, very few of us have anything at all to do with lions – apart from seeing them at the zoo. But we do have things that we are frightened of – things which we fear are going to hurt us – things which are going to tear us in pieces. (When David said: "My soul is among lions," that is what he meant.)

It may be someone who is very unkind to you. Or it may be having to go into hospital. Or it may be an exam. It could be many things.

With God's people there are their many fears – their sins, the

day of their death, Satan – *lions*.

2. DANIEL. May we always remember he was a *real* man (it seems an old man) with *real* fears; and they were *real* lions. We must never forget that *we know the end of the story: Daniel didn't*.

Humanly speaking it seemed certain that Daniel was facing certain, cruel death. But he knew the answer to the question: "*Is thy God ... able?*"

We know that Daniel was a man of prayer and that he must have committed himself into the hands of his God. We wonder if he thought of the promise: "Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee."

We know also that Daniel would not compromise, give in. There is a beautiful word in chapter 1: "And Daniel continued" It was for over seventy years! Upheld, kept, he did not deviate, turn aside.

3. GOD. One of our hymns speaks of God as "our dear Deliverer." He is! Have you ever noticed: the Bible is a Book of deliverances, and the experience of God's people is an experience of deliverances – providence and grace?

God *is* able to deliver. Nothing is too hard for Him. The hearts of all men are in His hand. All creatures obey Him. Let Him but command, and lions will not bite. He is almighty.

All God's people, men, women, girls or boys, have to learn the answer to that question: "*Is thy God ... able to deliver thee?*" And God's usual way is to bring them into such terrible places that they cannot deliver themselves. Then He works.

For years I have loved that verse (like the old woman, we can write: "*Tried and proved*") – and to the tune *Newcastle* which so beautifully repeats the third line:

"Then let our humble faith address
His mercy and His power;
We shall obtain delivering grace,
We shall obtain delivering grace,
In the distressing hour."

B.A. Ramsbottom

SNOW

I expect many of the younger readers of the *Friendly Companion* in England, are hoping for a fall of snow this time of the year. In the USA and Canada they are much more used to snow than in England, whereas in Australia our readers are, we hope, enjoying a warm summer. It is comparatively rare in parts of Southern England to get a snow-fall sufficient for a snow-ball fight or sledging; that is why there is such interest and excitement if there is enough snow for children to play around in.

Snow is one of the most beautiful and interesting things that God sends on the face of the earth. Did you know that each snow flake is made up of crystals which are all six-sided? Another name for a six-sided figure is, of course, the hexagon. Did you also know that each flake is different from the rest, showing the precision, or the work of God's fingers, in His creation?

Snow has many lessons for us and the Bible has quite a lot to say about it to guide our thoughts. We read of a brave man in King David's reign who slew a lion in a pit on a snowy day. Do you know his name?

Here are one or two verses about the snow for you to think and pray about.

"Drought and heat consume the snow waters: so doth the grave those which have sinned" Job 24. 19.

"...He (God) saith to the snow, Be thou on the earth" (Job 37. 6).

"Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow...? (Job 38. 22).

"Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (Psalm 51. 7).

"He giveth snow like wool: ..." (Psalm 147. 16).

"Fire, and hail; snow, and vapour; stormy wind fulfilling His word" (Psalm 148. 8).

"As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is a faithful messenger to them that send him: ..." (Proverbs 25. 13).

“As snow in summer, and as rain in harvest, so honour is not seemly for a fool” (Proverbs 26. 1).

“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow...” (Isaiah 1. 18).

“For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, ... so shall my Word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void ...” (Isaiah 55. 10,11).

Editor

BIBLE WORDS/WORDS OF SCRIPTURE (I)

I expect you children sometimes read words in the Bible that you don't understand, or perhaps the minister says a word and you wonder what it means. I would like to help you by explaining some of these words. The words I would like to explain are important. It is not enough just to know in our minds what the words mean. May the Holy Ghost apply the truth of them to us, savingly.

Redeem

This word appears in texts such as: “To redeem them that were under the law,” and “Let the redeemed of the LORD say so.” We refer to the Lord Jesus as the Redeemer.

The word “redeem” means “to buy back.” The act of buying back is known as redemption. We don't hear this word in ordinary conversation much today. A hundred years or more ago, the word “redeem” would have been heard more often. In those days people were a lot poorer than they are today. Perhaps a poor person had something which was worth a lot of money. It might have been a watch or a nice overcoat. If he needed money, he would take the item to a pawnbroker, who would keep it and give some money in exchange. When the poor person received his weekly wages, he would then go back to the pawnbroker and redeem his possession. He would pay money to buy it back.

Today, if the Government wishes to raise money, it can issue Treasury Bonds, sometimes called Government Gilt. People can buy these bonds, and the Government will pay interest on them. There is also a date set on which the Government will redeem (or buy back) the bond, and that date is called the redemption date. A bond which is called 5% Treasury Stock 2011, means it pays interest at 5% each year and it will be redeemed in 2011.

Now, let us look at the importance of the word “redeem” in the Bible. The reason the Lord Jesus became Man and came to this earth, was to redeem His people. It was determined by God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost before the world was made. God chose a people to be His own. He knew they would sin, so in eternal love the Lord Jesus promised to redeem them. A day was appointed when He should redeem them.

If you are taught by the Holy Spirit, you will know that your sins are dreadful and absolutely hateful to God. The wages of sin is death. So what price had to be paid to redeem the Lord's people from eternal death? No amount of money can redeem them. We cannot redeem ourselves by keeping the holy law of God, for the law can only condemn. We need something of far greater value. The only price which could redeem sinners was the death and precious blood of the Lord Jesus, who bore the punishment due to His people's sins. How intense were the sufferings of the Lord Jesus! How great was the price paid! Then how dreadful sin must be! May we never think of sin as being a little thing.

When Jesus said on the cross: “It is finished,” the price had been paid. When He rose from the dead, it proved that He had redeemed His people. They can never suffer the eternal death which they deserve. They shall be found with Him in heaven at last. The blood of Jesus presented in heaven, demands it. What great redemption!

Contributed

A REMARKABLE DELIVERANCE

There was a family in Norwich who were very poor, and after I went to reside in Maldon, I used to correspond a little with them; but for some length of time I heard nothing from them, till for several days it was heavily impressed upon my mind that they were in distress; and because of my owing a little money in the town, when I thought of sending a small sum of money, the consideration of my debts checked it.

However, one morning I sat and wrote a note to them, and left it open in order to get a postal order for five shillings (25p) to enclose. I started for the post-office for that purpose, but when nearly there, the words: "Be just before generous," struck me so forcibly that I turned back and was nearly home again, thinking I would wait until I could pay my debts. However, "just before generous" had to give place to the powerful application of these words: "Freely ye have received, freely give." I therefore turned again, purchased the postal order, and sent it off.

The next morning, my wife came to me with a letter the postman brought, saying: "Someone has sent some stamps, but there is no letter with them." I said: "Well, there is five shillings' worth, is there not?" "Yes," was the reply; "and I suppose you know who sent them?" "Oh, no," I said; "I know nothing more about them than this – there is five shillings' worth." "Well, this is strange, Alfred; whatever do you mean?" "Mean? I mean this; the Lord told me yesterday to send Mrs. Wurr of Norwich, five shillings, and you see He has sent it me back in stamps; and mark, we shall have good interest by the time night is come."

Well, I started about three o'clock that afternoon to walk to Southminster for the Sabbath. When I reached what is termed the Wantz Road – just before one is out of the town, I remembered that a friend who attended my ministry at Heybridge had asked me the evening before to call as I passed on to Southminster, and just as I was about opposite the door, I remembered the request. So I knocked; and after I sat down,

the good woman of the house came to me and said: "I dare say, Mr. Dye, you rather wonder what I wanted you to call for?" I said: "Mrs. Keeble, if you tell me I shall know." "Well, Mr. Dye, I have had it upon my mind to give you half a sovereign (50p), and I hope you will accept of it." I did so, and thanked her, and started for my ten miles' walk to Southminster, with my loins girt about with the truth of God's Word, where it saith: "He that showeth mercy to the poor lendeth to the Lord," who, as you see, paid me ten shillings (50p) more than the amount I lent Him for His poor children at Norwich; and besides the money, I had a good conscience into the bargain.

A. Dye (1880)

GLOBAL FLOOD MAKES SENSE

The idea of a global flood, suggested by the apparent discovery of Noah's Ark in Turkey, does solve several mysteries which have perplexed scientists for decades.

It is an established fact that the fossilised remains of complete skeletons can only be the result of quick burial soon after death. If this doesn't occur, bones get scattered around, eaten or simply turn to dust. A global flood, resulting in instant burial, would explain why there are vast fossil beds of the complete skeletons of all kinds of animals right across the world.

There is also the mystery as to how the Arctic region at one time was warm enough for crops to grow and the Sahara cool enough to be filled with vegetation. If the Earth were, indeed, surrounded by a kind of water canopy in its outer atmosphere, as is being suggested, then Arctic regions would have been warm, and desert regions fertile.

The collapse of this water canopy, causing a global flood, would have brought instant freezing to the Arctic, created vast tracts of desert, and would have left seventy per cent of the Earth covered with water, which is exactly the situation today.

Michael Williams, Belfast. (Daily Mail)

A KING'S RESTLESS NIGHT

A German count, who had plotted against Frederic William III of Prussia – even attempting personal violence – was imprisoned in the fortress of Glatz, Upper Silesia.

The count had no other reading-matter than a Bible, which he was in no mood to open, as he was opposed to any religion. But after a long time of solitary confinement, he began to read the Book. Gradually it touched his life. The account says:

“On a rough, stormy November night, when the mountain gales howled around the fortress, the rain fell in torrents, and the swollen and foaming Neisse rushed roaring down the valley, the count lay sleepless on his bed. The tempest in his heart was as frightening as that outside. His whole past life rose before him; he was convicted of his many shortcomings and sin; he felt that the source of all his misery lay in his forsaking God. For the first time in his life, his heart was soft, and his eyes wet with tears of genuine repentance. He rose from his bed, opened his Bible, and his eye fell on Psalm 50. 15: ‘Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.’ This word of God reached to the depth of his soul; he fell on his knees for the first time since he was a child, and cried to God for mercy; and that compassionate God who turns not away from the first movement of faith toward Him, heard the cry of this sufferer in the storm-beaten dungeon of Glatz and gave him not only spiritual, but natural deliverance.”

And this is how the deliverance came, by the providence of God:

“The same night, in his castle at Berlin, King Frederic William III, lay sleepless in bed. Severe bodily pains tormented him, and in his utter exhaustion he begged of God to grant him a single hour of refreshing sleep. The favour was granted; and when he woke up again, he said to his wife, the gracious Louise: ‘God has looked upon me very graciously, and I am thankful to Him. Who in my kingdom has wronged me most? I will forgive him.’”

‘The Count of M——,’ replied Louise, ‘who is imprisoned in Glatz.’

‘You are right,’ said the sick king; ‘let him be pardoned.’

Day had not dawned over Berlin ere a courier was despatched to Silesia, bearing to the prisoner in Glatz pardon and release.”

The incident reminds one of the words in Esther: “On that night could not the king sleep, and he commanded to bring the book of records;” and out of the troublous night came deliverance to the Jews.

Selected (Little Gleaner 1910)

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES

CHRIST IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS

As the Lord may be pleased to help us this year, I would like to take you through the Book of Genesis and look at some of the sacred references that point to the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God who was made flesh and dwelt among us. The Holy Bible is the infallible, inerrant Word of the living God, the Word of truth. We can absolutely depend upon all its teachings. The Authorized Version or King James Bible is the most accurate translation in the English language. Do not be tempted to use other versions as they are based on different and inaccurate manuscripts. The great and fundamental thing that is revealed to us in the Holy Bible is man’s lost and ruined condition through the fall of Adam into sin and the only way of salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ. In the Word of God, we find Christ revealed to us in types, shadows, metaphors and prophecies in the Old Testament, followed by the glorious revelation of his Person in the New Testament.

The Beginning. Genesis 1 v 1

The Holy Scriptures open with a remarkable and fundamental statement: “In the beginning God...” The word “beginning” here is something far deeper than at first meets the eye. This speaks of the eternity of God. In Psalm 90. 1-2,

we read: "LORD, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God." This takes our thoughts to the second Person of the glorious Trinity, the only begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ. In the Book of Proverbs we read of Him speaking of Himself: you will again see the connection between beginning and eternity. "The LORD possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was" (Proverbs 8: 22-23). Again, in the introduction to the Gospel of John we have the connection made as the Holy Spirit speaks to us of the eternity of Jesus Christ who is called "the Word." "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not" (John 1. 1-5).

Lastly, I will refer you to the Epistle to the Colossians where the Holy Spirit leads the Apostle Paul to speak so beautifully of the Lord Jesus. "For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven" (Colossians 1:16-20).

These Scriptures lay the foundation for us as to who Jesus Christ is, the holy God-Man.

J.R. Rutt

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES. Younger children need only do five questions. Please give references for questions 6 to 10 and 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.

1. Solomon wrote the Book of Ecclesiastes, but what description does he give of himself by which we know this? (1. 1)
2. What should we especially remember whilst young? (12. 1)
3. What did Solomon say about laughter? What is better than laughter and why? (2. 2; 7. 3)
4. What is in the "house of mourning" and what is in the "house of mirth"? (7. 4)
5. Who will it be well with, and who will it not be well with? (8. 12, 13)
6. What solemn warning does Solomon give to young people in chapter 11?
7. What is "the conclusion of the whole matter"? (12)
8. What should we do when going to the house of God? (5)
9. What is the result of "much wisdom" and "much study"? (1; 12)
10. What should a person not do because "a bird of the air shall carry the voice"?

ANSWERS TO DECEMBER QUESTIONS

1. Solomon.
2. A fool. "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding."
3. Reveals secrets. The strife ceases.
4. "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall."
5. The fear of the LORD.
6. "Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him. Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit." (Proverbs 26. 4, 5)
7. The sacrifice of the wicked, the way of the wicked and the thoughts of the wicked. (Proverbs 15. 8, 9, 26)

8. "He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him." (Proverbs 26. 17)
9. "As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly." (Proverbs 26. 11)
10. "The days are prolonged, and every vision faileth." (Ezekiel 12. 22) "As is the mother, so is her daughter." (Ezekiel 16. 44) "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." (Ezekiel 18. 2)

Contributed

A PARAPHRASE OF GENESIS 28. 20-22

O God of Bethel! by whose hand
Thy people still are fed;
Who through this weary pilgrimage
Hast all our fathers led;

Our vows, our prayers, we now present
Before Thy throne of grace;
God of our fathers! be the God
Of their succeeding race.

Through each perplexing path of life
Our wandering footsteps guide;
Give us each day our daily bread,
And raiment fit provide.

Oh, spread Thy covering wings around,
Till all our wanderings cease,
And at our Father's loved abode
Our souls arrive in peace.

Such blessings from Thy gracious hand
Our humble prayers implore;
And Thou shalt be our chosen God,
And portion evermore.

P. Doddridge

The Friendly Companion



*Nihil doctrina, zelo, ac pietate secundo
Romane sedis terror & cunctatione
Dignus iudex nisi petrus, & petrus
Magis Calvinus sic tulit nos Petrus.*

*Die is Calvinus leed. Die edelste ocht hier bene
En Godes leedich dact. Die is gheen gheen
Die Gode nu truf by est, de leed met de dacten zyn
Die met de dacten so tunc hier als Calvinus.*

“Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.” (Proverbs 23. 23)

February 2008

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All correspondence to be sent to the Editor.

Annual Subscriptions inc. postage:

U.K.	U.S.A. & Canada	Australia	Europe (Netherlands)
£11.00	\$31	A\$38	€27.00

All correspondence concerning subscriptions should be addressed to Mr. H. Mercer, 8 Fairleigh Rise, Kington Langley, Chippenham, Wilts. SN15 5QF.

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

I wonder how many of you had the right answers to the questions posed in last month's Front Cover Picture article and the one on the snow? The answers were:

- (a) The language in the Front Cover Picture was German.
- (b) Hananiah was a false prophet, whom Jeremiah told that he would die the same year. You can read this in Jeremiah 28.
- (c) The good man was Hezekiah who knew that he would die in the fifteenth year that God had added to his life. You can read of this in Isaiah 38.
- (d) The man who wrote the Psalm was Moses and the text quoted is from Psalm 90. 12.
- (e) The man who slew a lion in a pit on a snowy day, was Benaiah. His account is in 1 Chronicles 11. 22.

It is very important to remember that these were real people and the events that the Bible relates are historically true in every respect. You will meet with many people who deny that the Scriptures are an infallible record given to us by God. The word "infallible" means that it cannot be untrue. Really, infallibility in its deepest sense only belongs to God, for He alone knows all things. Even Paul said that he only knew in part. However, when the Holy Spirit guided the pen and tongue of Paul and other holy men of old, the words they wrote are infallible because they record the mind of God, who cannot lie.

If God's Word were not infallible, then He would cease to be God. But God's children prove the infallibility of the Word of God by experiencing the faithfulness of God in His Word. This was what the widow woman of Zarephath said when her son was raised to life in answer to Elijah's prayer: "By this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in thy mouth is truth." Perhaps she had been arguing with God's prophet, as no doubt he spoke to her of the truth during his stay with her. However, the Lord taught her very clearly, by a "terrible thing in righteousness" when her son died, and then when he was restored to her.

It is a solemn thing to challenge the truth of the Word of God. This is what the devil did in the Garden of Eden with all the terrible consequences for mankind ever since. It is, however, a very blessed thing to be able to say from our own heart by God's gracious teaching that we know that the Word of God is true, and to know Him who is the Word, even His dear Son, Jesus Christ.

May the Lord be pleased to teach us these things, as only He can.

With every best wish from your sincere friend and Editor.

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

The imposing man shown on our front cover this month, is that of John Calvin. I wonder if any of our readers could help the Editor in translating the verses shown at the foot of the picture? The first part is in Latin, which was the language of the Roman Empire, and was one of the languages in which the inscription over the cross of the Lord Jesus, was put. Can you name the other two? The second part I believe to be in Dutch.

Of course, John Calvin lived many years after the Roman Empire had long sunk into oblivion. You can read the reasons for its decline elsewhere in this month's magazine. You will often hear true Protestants say that they are Calvinists. By this they mean that they believe the five points of Calvinism, which are:

1. The total depravity of man.
2. The unconditional election of God's people by God Himself.
3. The limit of the benefits of the atonement of Christ to His people only.
4. The irresistible power of God's grace in the hearts and lives of God's people.
5. The final perseverance of the people of God.

However, we must be careful that in using the term "Calvinism," we do not think that these were doctrines he gave to the church of God. These doctrines are clearly taught

throughout the Word of God. But God used His servant, John Calvin, to bring these things to light which had lain hidden so long from the people of God during the Dark Ages of Roman Catholicism's domination of the so-called "Christian church."

However, there is another danger, apart from these things being hidden, equally perilous. That is, to have knowledge of these truths in our heads, and acknowledge them as the truth, yet to be a stranger to the experience of the grace they display in our own hearts. Paul did not only know *what* he believed, but he could say: "I know *whom* I have believed." Until we can say that, we must not assume that we are saved by the grace that Calvin so rightly contended for.

WHY ROME FELL

In the book entitled "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," completed in 1787, Edward Gibbon lists the following reasons for that fall:

1. The rapid increase of divorce; the undermining of the dignity and sanctity of the home, which is the basis of human society.
2. Higher and higher taxes and the spending of public money for free bread and circuses for the populace.
3. The mad craze for pleasure: sports becoming every year more exciting and more brutal.
4. The building of gigantic armaments when the real enemy was within: the decadence of the people.
5. The decay of religion – faith fading into mere form – losing touch with life and becoming impotent to guide the people.

Does any of this sound familiar as pertaining to the present day circumstances in our own country? We need to be much in prayer, not only for our nation, but for our beloved Zion.

Ralph Harris

EDITOR'S POSTBAG

First answers to the monthly questions have been received from MARK CHAPMAN and OLIVER RAYMOND.

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**MAN AND WOMAN**

God planted a special garden in Eden. There He put the man He had made. God told him to rule over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and every living creature on the earth. The man was named Adam. There was no other person in the world beside him.

"And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." He caused Adam to fall into a deep sleep. While he slept, God took one of his ribs and made a woman from it. He brought her to Adam, and she became his wife. Adam called her name Eve. How happy they must have been as they talked together and helped each other in the beautiful garden home!

The woman (female) was made different from the man (male); but God joined them together as one. With Adam and Eve, the first man and woman, God showed His perfect plan for marriage. God said: *"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."*

QUESTIONS:

1. What did God say it is not good for man to be?
2. What did God make from one of Adam's ribs?
3. What did she become?

Please 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. Dust (of the ground).
2. The breath of life.
3. A living soul.

Contributed

*“Male and
female
created He
them; and
blessed
them.”*

Genesis 5. 2.

BIBLE LESSONS**JESUS STILLS THE STORM**

What a long day it had been! Jesus had been very busy teaching the people about the kingdom of God. He had also healed many who were greatly afflicted. As the evening passed and night came on, Jesus and His disciples went into a ship to go to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. You must not think it was a large ship with many levels on it. It was more like a large boat with rows of seats where men would sit and row the boat.

As they began to cross the sea (also called the Lake of Gennesaret), they were, no doubt, pleased to sit down after the busy day. How quiet it seemed compared with the commotion of the multitudes. Jesus went to the back of the boat, where He found a pillow and soon went to sleep. It seemed so peaceful with the oars lapping into the water as they rowed.

Soon everything changed as a great tempest of wind came down from the mountains and stirred up the sea. The wind howled as it swept over the sea. The waves beat against the boat, tossing it from side to side. The boat was lifted up by the crest of waves and then dropped to the churning sea below. Soon water was coming into the little ship. The disciples thought they would surely perish in the sea.

What a wonder! Through all the boisterous wind and crashing waves, Jesus was still asleep. The disciples were overcome with fear and dread and cried to wake Him: *"Master, carest Thou not that we perish?"* Still another wonder! Although the windy storm and tempest, with all their raging and howling, could not awaken the dear Saviour, YET the cry of His disciples could. The Bible tells us: *"...He will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when He shall hear it, He will answer thee."*

He first reprimanded His disciples saying: *"Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?"* Poor disciples! They had forgotten who was with them. What could harm them while they were with Him?

Then, *"He arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, PEACE, be still."* Immediately the wind ceased and the sea was quiet. The Bible says: *"and there was a great calm."*

The disciples were filled with awe and astonishment. They had been in many storms on the sea before. This one seemed worse than any before, yet the calm came so quickly. Never had it been seen like this. They marvelled, saying one to another: *"What manner of man is this! for He commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey Him."*

What a question! *"What manner of man is this?"* Just as others said: *"Never man spake like this Man,"* so the disciples, and many others too, could say: *'Never man controlled the wind and waves like this MAN.'* Here He showed to His disciples that He was more than man, for He was God as well.

You can read about this in Matthew chapter 8 verses 23 to 27, Mark chapter 4 verses 35 to 41, and Luke chapter 8 verses 22 to 25.

QUESTIONS:

1. What was the name of the sea?
2. Who went to sleep in the back of the boat?
3. What had the disciples forgotten?
4. What did He say unto the sea?
5. What effect did His words have?

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. God.
2. Mustard seed.
3. Grace.
4. Goodly pearls.
5. Jesus Christ.

G.L. TenBroeke

HOW BEES DECIDE

When a hive gets too crowded, half of the bees (together with the queen) swarm temporarily to a nearby tree to wait while several hundred go and scout for a new home. But how do they decide which site is best?

Researchers at Cornell University have now documented that the bees go through a group decision-making process, steadily narrowing down the options until a quorum develops. It has long been known that honeybee scouts perform what is called a “waggle dance” to report on food. Researchers have now confirmed that they dance to report on real estate, too – the better the housing site, the stronger the waggle dance, and that prompts other scouts to visit the site.

If they agree it is a good choice, they return to the swarm, and their waggle dance stirs other scouts to investigate the potential site, and so on. The researchers say that scouts advertising different sites compete to persuade uncommitted scouts to assess that proposed location. As bees grade their recruitment signals according to site quality, scouts build up most rapidly at the best site. Once a “quorum” of scouts is in agreement, they signal to the waiting swarm that it is time to move.

“This is a striking example of decision-making by an animal group that is complicated enough to rival the dealings of any department committee,” said Cornell University’s Thomas Seeley. He and his colleagues found that when the range of potential sites was equal in quality, it took the swarm longer to decide than in situations where one site was clearly superior (e.g. in size).

One wonders how the bee ancestors survived while this system of communication and group decision-making was evolving? Like the bee and its navigation system, it did not and could not have evolved, but reflects the design and purpose of the Creator.

*David Catchpoole
Creation On The Web*

A BOY FROM STAVENISSE**Chapter 2: Leen Is Sad**

Leen is playing with his sister in the street behind the house. He piles up empty cans and she is allowed to push them over. She shrieks with delight when the tower is ready, and hits against it with her little hand. The cans roll over the rocks.

“Boom, boom,” she shouts.

He patiently piles them up again.

“Ready?” she asks sweetly, with her head held sideways.

Only when he nods, does she hit. She never tires of the game.

Suddenly Leen sits up straight. He listens intently. Little Sientje copies him; she also sits up. What does her brother hear?

The church bell is ringing! Its peels resonate over the village. The wind carries the sound to them. Leen knows what it means when you hear the church bell in the middle of the day. Then someone is being buried. Suddenly he doesn't feel like playing with little Sientje anymore. He stands up and walks to the shed.

There is his mother. She is shaking out the last few pieces of the washing. Soon they will be hung out to dry. Mother heard the bell, too. Her red hands remain motionless and a sad expression comes on her face.

Leen knows why. It is because of the little sister, Johanna, who was between him and Sientje. She was fourteen months old when she became very ill. The church bell rang for her when she was buried.

Leen no longer looks at his mother. He walks around the shed. He falls on the ground behind a pile of wood and folds his hands.

“Lord, I get so afraid when the church bell rings. What if I have to die? I do not have a new heart and I cannot come to Thee! Then I will go lost. I am unconverted; I do not know Thee!”

It is just as if a little voice within tells him: "Just stop praying. Soon the bell will toll for you. You are unconverted and you will never be converted. You are still way too little for that."

Leen cries softly. No one sees him and no one hears him. No one?

Leen has to go to school. He has become six years old. Leen would love to learn to read. Then he can read in the Word of God together with his grandmother. Grandma always calls the Bible by that name.

There are many children at school. They are cheerful and play wild games. They soon notice something about Leen. He is always so quiet. He doesn't play with them and he never laughs about their jokes and mischievous tricks.

Leen becomes a lonesome boy. He often crawls into the dim loft of the shed. That is a spot where no one looks for him. Even Mother doesn't know about it.

"Leen, Leen, where are you?" Mother Potappel wipes her hands on her apron and looks around the corner of the laundry room. Where is that boy all the time? It is a mystery to her. It is high time for him to go to school. Fifteen minutes ago he was still feeding the chickens and now he has disappeared again. Mother looks angry. It happens all too often that Leen disappears. She would like to know where he is.

She enters the shed behind the house and leaves her clogs outside. Then he cannot hear her coming. She looks around in the shed. Would he be in the loft? Determined to know what her boy is doing, she quietly climbs the ladder. Quiet. Does she hear him talking? She climbs up the ladder a couple more steps. Now she can understand what he says and she sees him too. He is kneeled before a couple of bales of straw with folded hands. His mother cannot see his face properly.

"Lord, I am so unhappy. And the clockmaker is so happy, for he may be Thy child. I often hear him talking about Thee at Grandma's and I am so jealous of him."

The mother on the steep ladder holds her breath. She listens to the pleading and praying of her six-year-old boy with amazement. She can hear that he is very sad. He is complaining that he is unconverted. He is so little yet ...

Mother does not understand at all. She never prays for a new heart in such a pleading manner. Mother believes all will be well later on. God is love. She thinks that that is also possible without a new heart.

She slowly descends the ladder.

When she has her clogs on, she calls him again: "Leen, Leen, where are you? You have to go to school."

Upstairs the prayer is cut short. The boy clambers down from the loft and a moment later stands in front of his mother. The traces of tears can clearly be seen on his face. He had dried his cheeks with his dirty fists and now his whole face is dirty.

Mother grumbles. "Go to the pump and wash your face. Then get out of here. I get enough complaints about you already. The teacher doesn't know what to do with you."

Leen scoots past her and obediently holds his burning cheeks under the ice-cold stream while his mother swings the handle. To school: that is not nice for Leen. At school are the children that tease him and the teacher, who doesn't understand him. Leen is lonesome: lonesome with his great sorrow.

(To be continued)

(Slightly adapted)

Thomas Charles, an excellent man, and useful minister of Jesus Christ in Wales, had once a very remarkable escape from death. In one of his journeys to Liverpool, his saddle-bag was, by mistake, put into a boat different from the one in which he intended to sail, which made it necessary for him to change his boat, even after he had taken his seat. By this change, so contrary to his intentions, his life was preserved: for the boat in which he meant to sail was lost and all its passengers were drowned.

Little Gleaner, 1917

A LESSON FROM DAVID

There is a little children's hymn that begins:

“God has given us a Book full of stories,
That was made for His people of old:
It begins with the tale of a garden,
And ends with a city of gold.”

Perhaps you know it?

Now all this is very true and it is a lovely little hymn – but the Bible is much more than “a Book full of stories!” It does begin with “the tale of a garden” – but what a solemn tale it is! Here we have a revelation of the Fall. “Sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” True, it ‘ends with a city of gold’ – but what a vital need there is to be prepared by the Spirit of God to be an inhabitant of that city!

May we ever realise that God's purpose is not to “tell us stories” but to instruct us in the solemn matters of God and man, sin and salvation, heaven and hell.

So we come to another of the well-known stories of the Bible – David and Goliath. I am not going to tell you the story; you all know it so well. But I am going to tell you of some of the wonderful lessons we can learn from it. As last month (Daniel in the lion's den) we have the wonderful truth of God's almighty power, His ability to deliver. But also we learn:

1. **GOD USES LITTLE THINGS.** He used a lad; a stone; a sling to destroy a giant and to bring deliverance from the dreadful yoke of the Philistines.

God could have killed Goliath without David's help. One word – and the giant would have lain on the earth. But God has chosen to use means. (See 1 Corinthians 1. 27, 28). And often He uses very small things. How many can you think of? One is the jawbone of an ass. Another is a lad with five loaves and two fishes. And I am sure you can think of many more.

2. **IT IS BETTER TO TRUST IN THE LORD THAN IN OUR OWN WEAPONS.** Saul wanted David to wear his own armour – but

David said he had not proved it. He *bad* proved God. So he ventured, trusting in the Lord, and not in vain. It is no wonder that later he wrote: "In Thee, O LORD, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion." He knew God would never fail him.

3. NONE IS TOO YOUNG TO KNOW THE HELP OF GOD. David was only a lad, but he could tell Saul (and he was not afraid to tell Saul!) how God had helped him against the lion and bear that seized a lamb. How wonderful that this lad had a testimony he could bear even before the king!

4. WHAT GOD HAS BEEN, HE ALWAYS WILL BE. David had a sore trial before him: he was going to fight against a giant (a real giant!). Humanly speaking, he seemed to be facing certain death. But, "The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine."

That is good divinity! If God is eternally the same: if in the past in trouble He has delivered me – then "the LORD who *did* deliver ... He will deliver."

"He who *bas* helped me hitherto,
Will help me all my journey through."

Once, feeling very downcast, I hardly knew how I could preach or what I would preach about. One of my little boys said to me: "Tell them about David and Goliath!" And immediately it dropped into my heart: "The LORD that delivered me ... He *will* deliver me." So I *did* "tell them about David and Goliath."

Just a couple of other things. The story of David and Goliath has been used as a beautiful illustration of the doctrine of federal headship. When David went to fight against Goliath, all the Philistines were *in* Goliath; all the Israelites *in* David. If Goliath won, all the Philistines won; if he lost, all the Philistines lost. If David won, then all Israel won; if he lost, all Israel lost. Here were two representative persons.

The whole human race was *in* Adam. In Eden there was a battle between Satan and Adam (and the whole human race *in*

Adam). Adam fell – so we all fell in Adam.

In Gethsemane and at Calvary, there was a battle again – between Satan and the Lord Jesus Christ (and all His chosen *in* Christ). The Saviour conquered – and all His people *in Him*. (You older ones, this is the doctrine of Romans 5 verses 12 – 21).

The other thing: it has been said that David gained *two* victories in 1 Samuel 17 – and his victory over Goliath was the lesser victory! What can this mean? Well, in verses 28 and 29 *he gained the victory over himself*. What awful accusations his brother Eliab made against him! How unkind! And how untrue! And how many things David could have said (and done) to defend himself! But what an answer, so quiet and so gentle! “What have I now done? Is there not a cause?”

B.A. Ramsbottom (Friendly Companion February 1989)

BIBLE WORDS/WORDS OF SCRIPTURE (II)

Reconcile

You find the word “reconcile” in texts such as “We were reconciled to God by the death of His Son,” and “To make reconciliation for the sins of the people.” You will, no doubt, know the words of the hymn:

“Hark! the herald-angels sing,
Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!”

What does the word “reconcile” really mean? It means to bring two different things together, so that they agree. When I worked at a bank, we had to write down in a book all the money that came in, and was paid out. At the end of each day, we had to check that the amount of money in the till was the same as the amount shown in the book. They did not always agree, and we had to reconcile them. We had to find out why they were different and to correct any errors, until the amounts agreed, or were reconciled.

Perhaps you had an argument with a friend at school. Maybe you did not agree about something and you were so cross that you would not speak to each other. Suppose then that someone else came to you and explained to you both what you had thought was wrong; then you could agree with each other. You became friends again, and were reconciled.

Now the Lord Jesus has reconciled His people to God. When man sinned, he did not believe God's Word. He lost all right to life, and he deserves eternal death for his sin. God is holy and hates all sin. The holiness of God and the sinfulness of man are complete opposites. A holy God and sinners are as far apart as any two things could be. So how can God and man be brought together? If man is to have eternal life, he must be reconciled to God. Man cannot reconcile himself to God. All he can do is sin. He cannot earn it under the law.

The Lord Jesus is holy; there is no sin in Him. He is God and He became man. Before the world was made, the Lord Jesus agreed to suffer and die in the place of His people. He made a way so that sinners can approach a holy God. He did this by bearing the punishment due to their sins. God cannot now punish His people for their sin. In His sight they are without sin because of what Jesus has done. So God and man are now brought together through the sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus – they are reconciled. May we be among them.

Not only is a sinner reconciled to God, but when the Holy Spirit teaches a sinner, He reconciles him to the ways of God. First, the sinner has to be reconciled to the fact that the only way of salvation is through what Jesus has done, and not his own works. So he is brought to pray for mercy and confess that he is nothing but a worthless sinner. He is also reconciled to the will of God. Once the sinner hated the ways of God, but now he is brought to love the ways of God and under the teaching of the Holy Spirit to say "Thy will be done." May we each be reconciled unto God.

Contributed

“THE STARS ARE NOT PURE IN HIS SIGHT”

How do you reconcile Genesis 1. 16: *“He made the stars also,”* with Job 25. 5: *“The stars are not pure in His sight”*? If God made the stars, how is it that they are not pure in His sight?

We must remember when we come to verses like these that they are the Holy Word of God, and we should pray that God would reveal what at first reading may seem contradictory and confusing. There is no contradiction between either Genesis or Job, as I will try and show in this article.

When God created the world, He created it perfect and without spot or blemish. He created the sun, moon and stars to give light to the earth. The stars are only seen when there is darkness over the earth. I understand that, like the snowflakes, every single star is unique and different from another star in space. Without the stars, the earth would be a darker place. In eastern countries, where the pollution is a lot less than in our country, the stars are seen more clearly than they are here. The darker the night, the brighter the stars are seen. We should remember that the stars are a gift of a kind and wise Creator.

The stars are given an honoured place in Holy Scripture. They were created on the fourth day of creation. We are told that they were good (or pure) in God’s sight. One of the first promises of the Bible mentions the stars (Genesis 15. 5) when God told Abraham that his seed would be like the stars of the heaven – they could not be numbered. A star guided the Wise Men to Jesus, when a Babe, in Bethlehem. The stars also tell us of the greatness of God, for while we cannot tell how many stars there are in the sky, Psalm 147. 4. tells us that God not only knows how many stars there are, but that He has called them all by names. And God, who knows the stars by name, also knows your name, too. He also knows if your heart is inclined by grace to serve and love Him, or if you are determined to disobey His commandments and live independent of Him. May the fact that God knows both the names and numbers of the stars, be both a warning and an encouragement to us.

Why then does it say in the Book of Job that the stars are not pure in God's sight?

Because of Adam and Eve's sin in the Garden of Eden, God put a curse on the whole of creation. As a result, nothing outside of heaven is now pure in God's sight. The earth and the sky have shared in the curse which resulted in the fall of man. An example of this is ground which is barren: this means that it will not grow anything. Another example is thorns which grow in the fields and hedgerows. No farmer ever planted thorns, but they have grown up as a result of the curse which God put on the earth. The stars, then, are not pure in God's sight because of your sin and my sin.

The second reason why Bildad states that the stars are not pure in God's sight, is as a warning to man not to make an idol of them. In Biblical times, like today, the sun, moon and stars were worshipped as if they were gods. Even today, there are people called astrologers. These are people who claim that their lives are governed by what position the stars are in the sky. This is very wrong, as these people are putting God's creation in the place of God Himself. They are seeking guidance from and giving glory to the stars, instead of to God who created the stars.

Thirdly, although the stars have not sinned themselves, they cannot save you and I from our sins or from a lost eternity in hell. No man or woman, boy or girl, ever reached heaven by seeking help from the stars, and he or she never will. Salvation can only be found in Jesus.

Finally, it serves as a reminder that if the stars are not pure in God's sight, and they have never disobeyed the will of God, how much less pure are you and I who are constantly disobeying the will and law of God. Indeed, the next verse talks about man being a worm in God's sight.

Rather than dismissing this text as contradictory, may we instead be given grace to bow under the Holy Word of God, and acknowledge that we are sinners who need mercy and forgiveness.

So the next time you look up at the stars on a dark night, may you be able to thank God for the stars and to remember the lessons that they teach us. They are there to give light when it is dark. They are the gift of a kind and loving Creator. They are not to be worshipped or relied upon, either for salvation or for deciding what we should do in our daily lives. Finally, they are not pure in His sight: how much less so are you and I. May you be enabled to pray to God that He will cover you in the righteousness of Christ, which is pure and the only way that you can be accepted before God and be made ready for heaven.

Contributed

SCRIPTURE MEANINGS

*“And it came to pass, when they were in **the field**, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him” (Genesis 4. 8).*

“Field,” in old English, meant something more than “field” in modern phrase, for we usually apply it to a space more or less enclosed or limited, be it large or small. “Expanse of country” or “the open district” would be perhaps nearer the meaning of the word in Scripture; any level place of considerable extent. Thus, a battle of the seventeenth century is generally called “The Battle of Chalgrove Field,” this “field” being a plain consisting of various minor fields. Again, in the Old Testament a distinction is made in the Psalms between the “trees of the *field*” and the “trees of the *wood*”; that is, those growing more or less scattered over the open country, and those growing thickly together in wood and forests.

From The Biblical Treasury

The Word of God and the Star

Too often even true seekers stop off at Herod’s palace (the place of human wisdom) and so get diverted from the object of their faith (Christ).

*BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES***CHRIST IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS****“Let there be light.” Genesis 1 v 3**

Light is a very rarefied substance created by God: light travels at about 11 million miles a minute. It is probably the nearest thing in creation to spirit. A spirit can pass through dense matter, light cannot: a spirit passes in a moment from one place to another. The Lord Jesus Christ is described as, “The Light of the World”. Light and darkness are used in a metaphorical sense in Holy Scripture to distinguish between good and evil. The word “God” is a Saxon word, which simply means, “what is good.” The Scriptures instruct us concerning God: “Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen” (1 Timothy 6. 16). God is so holy, so pure that He is likened unto a light so bright that it is unapproachable.

Satan, who is the devil, is called the prince of darkness: fallen sinful man is said to be in darkness. “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God” (John 3. 19-21). In the Second Epistle to the Corinthians the apostle connects the creation of light and the coming of Jesus Christ. “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Corinthians 4. 6). What a glorious light shines into the heart of a poor sinner when Christ is revealed; it delivers us from darkness.

There is a well-known prophecy in Malachi pointing us to Jesus Christ: “But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings” (Malachi 4. 2). The sun is the centre of the universe and the earth receives all

its light and heat from it. Without it, no life could exist on earth. Heat and light are both essential to life. That is why the Lord Jesus is likened to the Sun: there is no spiritual life for man out of Christ Jesus. The lesser light that God created was the moon. The church of God on earth is likened to the moon. The moon does not produce any light from itself: the light of the moon is reflected from the sun. So it is with the true believer and the church of Jesus Christ: they have no light in themselves, the light they have is reflected from Jesus Christ, the Sun of righteousness. As the sweet Psalmist of Israel declares: "For with Thee is the fountain of life: in Thy light shall we see light" (Psalm 36. 9).

A poor sinner, by the grace of God, by the power of the Holy Spirit, is brought from spiritual death into spiritual life, from darkness to light, from bondage to liberty. The apostle speaks of the awful and sudden day of judgment, as a thief in the night. He then speaks to the believers at Thessalonica; may it be true of each one of us: "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him" (1 Thessalonians 5. 4-10).

J.R. Rutt

Galileo, the most profound philosopher of his age, when questioned by the Roman Inquisition as to his belief in the existence of God, replied, pointing to a straw on the floor of his dungeon, that from the structure of that object alone he would infer with certainty the existence of an intelligent Creator.

Walter Baxendale

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about ANGER. Younger children need only do five questions. 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 turns away wrath and what stir up anger? (Proverbs 15. 1)
2. What causes God to be angry (one word)? (1 Kings 8. 46) and who is God angry with every day? (Psalm 7. 11)
3. Write out the descriptions Solomon gives of one who is "slow to wrath" or "slow to anger." (Proverbs 14. 29; 16. 32)
4. Even though Solomon gave such wise advice, we read that God was angry with him. Why? (1 Kings 11. 9)
5. We read of Jesus being angry. What was the cause of His anger? (Mark 3. 5)
6. Which two sons of Jacob were cruel in their anger, and as a result were not given any fixed inheritance in the land of Israel? (Genesis 49)
7. Why was Jonah angry after preaching to the Ninevites? (Jonah 3 & 4)
8. What reason does James give that we should be "slow to wrath"? (James 1)
9. Why was God angry with Miriam and Aaron, and what happened to Miriam? (Numbers 12)
10. God's anger is always righteous anger. What did Jesus do, because the temple had become like a "den of thieves"?

ANSWERS TO JANUARY QUESTIONS

1. "The Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem."
2. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them."
3. "It is mad." Sorrow.
4. The heart of the wise; the heart of fools.
5. Them that fear God; the wicked.
6. "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." (11. 9)

7. "Fear God, and keep His commandments." (12. 13)
8. "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools." (5. 1)
9. Much grief. A weariness of the flesh. (1. 18; 12. 12)
10. "Curse not the king, no not in thy thought; and curse not the rich in thy bedchamber." (10. 20)

Contributed

"YOUR LIFE IS HID WITH CHRIST IN GOD"

Rejoice believer, in the Lord,
Who makes your cause His own!
The hope that's built upon His Word
Can ne'er be overthrown.

Though many foes beset your road,
And feeble is your arm,
Your life is hid with Christ in God,
Beyond the reach of harm.

Weak as you are, you shall not faint,
Or, fainting, shall not die;
Jesus, the strength of every saint,
Will aid you from on high.

Though unperceived by mortal sense,
Faith sees Him always near,
A guide, a glory, a defence;
Then what have you to fear?

As surely as He overcame
And triumphed once for you,
So surely you that love His name
Shall triumph in Him too.

J. Newton

The Friendly Companion



“Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path.” (Psalm 119. 105)

March 2008

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All correspondence to be sent to the Editor.

Annual Subscriptions inc. postage:

U.K.	U.S.A. & Canada	Australia	Europe (Netherlands)
£11.00	\$31	A\$38	€27.00

All correspondence concerning subscriptions should be addressed
to Mr. H. Mercer, 8 Fairleigh Rise, Kington Langley, Chippenham,
Wilts. SN15 5QF.

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*(We sincerely apologise for mistakes made by Cbandler's in
printing and mailing, over the past three months.)* Editor

OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

Many years ago, I listened to a wedding address in which the minister spoke to the newly married couple about a hive of bees which he exhorted them to keep! The bees he was thinking of were not those we see flying around in the summer months. Instead, he was speaking of "*be*"s such as "*be ye kind*," and "*be patient*," all of which are necessary for a happy home-life.

One of the "*be*"s he spoke of was "*be loyal*." Loyalty in a marriage and in the home is essential for its true happiness.

Now it is a sad thing that loyalty in our generation has sadly declined. How quickly do some people drop one friend for another because it is more expedient at the time so to do. Of course, we must remember that to be loyal does not mean you condone the faults of your friends. True friendship would lovingly point them out, and yet wherever possible hide them from others, as Shem and Japheth covered their father, Noah's, sins, which Ham had disloyally exposed.

We read of some remarkable cases of loyalty and some surprising instances of a lack of it. How quickly did the disciples flee from the Garden of Gethsemane, so it was said: "They all forsook Him and fled!" And yet the Lord Jesus, in holy loyalty to them forbade anyone to touch them.

However, in the history of King David we read of the time when Absalom, his own son, usurped his throne, and would have killed him, had not God shielded His servant. When David had to flee, Ahithophel, who professed to be a chief friend of David, changed sides and went with Absalom. This was disloyalty in the extreme.

However we read of David's servants who said: "Behold thy servants are ready to do whatsoever my lord the king shall appoint." These were no fair-weather friends to David. In addition, Ittai, the Gittite, who had only recently come to serve under David said: "As the LORD liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether

in death or life, even there also will thy servant be.”

In the loyalty of these true friends of David, we see a picture of the loyalty which those who are taught to fear God and to love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, show to their Saviour.

The same minister who gave the wedding address often used to quote from one of the hymns of Augustus Toplady:

“This prayer and this ambition mine;
Living and dying to be Thine.”

May it please Almighty God to create and maintain such loyalty in each of us. “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” But also may we not forget to “be loyal” amongst our friends and acquaintances.

With best wishes from your sincere friend and Editor

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

Our picture this month shows a miner's lamp. These lamps are a vital part of a miner's kit, as he has to go into parts of the mine where there is no other source of light than these invaluable lamps.

The true incident below tells what a blessing one of these lamps was to a young boy in his last moments, as he read the Word of God by its light.

Many years ago, when coal mining was one of the major industrial occupations of England, it was the custom for men to start working in the mines at an early age, especially if their fathers were already there.

Such was the case with one father and his fifteen-year-old son, who worked side-by-side deep down in the heart of the earth in most un-hospitable and dangerous conditions.

In their spare moments, the father and his son would read the Holy Scriptures by the light of their miner's lamp. The father always carried a Bible in his pocket wherever he went and he taught his son to do the same.

One day, they were working in a newly opened section of the mine, when suddenly an arch above them gave way and

collapsed, separating them. The father, who was unhurt, in desperation ran to the pile of rubble to call his son's name.

After a few moments, his son answered from underneath a dense mass of earth and rock.

"My boy," cried the father, "are you alive?"

"Yes, Dad," said the lad, "but my legs are trapped under a rock."

"Where is your lamp?"

"It is still burning, Dad," the lad answered.

"What can we do for you, my boy?"

"I am reading my Bible, Dad," the brave lad replied, "and the Lord is strengthening me by it."

These were the last words of the young lad, as another fall quickly suffocated him and his short life came to an abrupt end; but what a comfort for his godly father to know that in his last moments in this life, the Word of God was precious to his dear boy.

Adapted from Little Gleaner 1910

THE REINDEER

The following article illustrates how wonderfully God has created each species and given the necessary faculties for the place where He has put them. Ed.

"The reindeer inhabits a country covered with snow the greater part of the year. Observe how admirably its hoof is formed for going over that cold and light substance, without sinking in it or being frozen. The underside is covered entirely with hair, of a warm and close nature; and the hoof altogether is very broad, acting exactly like the snow-shoes which men have constructed to give them a larger space than their feet to stand on and thus avoid sinking. Moreover, the deer spreads the hoof as wide as possible when it touches the ground: but, as this breadth would be very inconvenient in the air, by occasioning a greater resistance while he is moving along, no sooner does he lift the hoof than the two parts into which it is

cloven, fall together, and so lessen the surface exposed to the air, just as we may recollect the birds doing with their bodies and wings.

The shape and structure of the hoof are also well adapted to scrape away the snow, and enable the animal to get at the particular kind of moss, or lichen, on which it feeds. This plant, unlike others, is in its full growth during the winter season; and the reindeer accordingly thrives from its abundance at the season of the reindeer's greatest use to man, notwithstanding the unfavourable effects of extreme cold upon the animal system."

"Two Discourses of Science," 1846. Lord Brougham

A LESSON FROM MOSES

There is no story better known than "Moses in the bulrushes." Even the youngest children know it. But what a beautiful story it is! And what wonderful lessons we can learn from it!

There is no need to tell you the story of "Moses in the bulrushes." You all know it. But what are the lessons we learn from it? Let us limit them to one:

THE WONDERFUL PROVIDENCE OF GOD

How was it possible that Moses' life could be preserved? Pharaoh had given orders that all the newborn Israelite boys had to be killed. How could baby Moses escape?

It was God's purpose that Moses should be the leader of His people Israel and that he should bring them out of the land of Egypt. So he could not die (could he?) as a child. There is an old saying: "A man of God is immortal till his work is done."

But notice the mysterious working of God's providence, and the way in which Moses' life was spared!

Moses' mother decided to make an ark out of bulrushes and then to put the baby into it and leave him by the River Nile. But what a strange plan! (In modern-day language it was almost like leaving a new baby on the motorway.) What about the crocodiles?

But Moses was never safer in all his life than when he lay in

the little ark of bulrushes. (Who taught Moses' mother how to make the ark and see that it was watertight? It must have been a most skilful job.) When Moses' mother placed him in the ark, she put him right into the hands of God – and he was never safer.

I remember how precious this was to me when one of my girls had to go as a baby into hospital. I felt I walked in union with Jochebed (Moses' mother) in her burden, and yet in the privilege of putting the baby into the hands of God – and leaving her there. Jochebed's trust was in God alone. It was God who led her to do what she did.

Now see the wonderful providence of God. How much hangs on how little! And God's timing is always perfect.

1. The Egyptian princess came to the very spot at the very time. Had she come earlier, he would not have been there; had she come later, he would quite likely have been dead.

2. The baby cried – at the very time the princess appeared.

3. The princess heard, and her heart was moved with compassion. *It might have been otherwise.*

4. It was not an ordinary person who came; it was *the princess* – one who could with authority protect the Israelite child.

5. The princess agreed to Miriam's suggestion that her mother (Moses' mother) should care for baby Moses.

So we find baby Moses cared for by his own mother, in his own home (probably until he was four or five), instructed in the truth, yet protected, and even his upbringing paid for by Pharaoh's daughter.

When God needs a man to lead His people, that man is provided. And God orders all his steps for His own honour and glory. How amazing that an Israelite child should be educated at the Egyptian court – a fit preparation for when he had to lead God's people out of Egypt and deal with Pharaoh! God makes no mistakes.

May Moses' God be our God.

B.A. Ramsbottom

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**CLOTHED BY GOD**

When God made Adam and Eve, they were perfect. They had no sin and knew no evil. They had no fear or shame and needed no clothing. After they disobeyed God, sin entered their hearts. They became ashamed and were afraid of God. Adam and Eve sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves and hid among the trees in the Garden of Eden.

They could not hide from God! *“And the LORD God called unto Adam.”* They were caused to confess what they had done. The fig leaf coverings they had made could not satisfy God. *“Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.”* An animal was slain for the skins to cover their nakedness and shame.

The clothing of skins showed their need for a sacrifice to cover their sin. The Lord Jesus gave His own life as a sacrifice to cover the sins of His dear people.

QUESTIONS:

1. What did Adam and Eve sew together to cover themselves?
2. Could these coverings satisfy God?
3. What did the LORD God make to clothe them?

Please 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. Alone.
 2. A woman.
 3. His wife.
- Contributed*

*“Blessed is
he whose
transgression
is forgiven,
whose
sin is
covered.”*
Psalm 32. 1.

BIBLE LESSONS

THE MAD GADARENE

After Jesus stilled the storm, He, with His disciples arrived on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee in the country of the Gadarenes. As soon as Jesus came ashore, a man came running to meet Him. This poor man was in a pitiful state: he was possessed by an unclean spirit. Thus, he was a wild man who could not be tamed.

The men of the city tried many times to bind his hands and feet with chains and fetters but to no use. He soon broke the fetters and cast off the chains as if they were a piece of thread. Do you remember how Samson was bound with new ropes and broke them off as if they were thread? Samson did it by the power of God! This poor man did it by the power of the devil, as he was possessed by the devil.

The evil spirit would not allow him to live at home with family and loved ones. Instead, he dwelt in the tombs where the dead were buried. We must remember that tombs were often caves in the hills or mountains. Likewise, the evil spirit would not suffer him to wear any clothes. Do you remember what God did for Adam and Eve in the garden after they had sinned? He made coats of skins and clothed them.

This poor man was so ill treated by the evil spirit that he could be heard crying night and day. The devil would not allow him a moment of rest. Sometimes he would cut himself with stones. Poor, poor man; the devil would have him destroy himself.

This is the man who now came running to Jesus and worshipped Him. The devil cried out of the man: *"What have I to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of the most high God? I adjure Thee by God, that Thou torment me not."* How wonderful to see the devil subject unto Jesus! How wretched the devil is, delighting in the torment of the poor man, yet seeking to escape it himself.

Jesus asked him: *"What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many."* Jesus

commanded the devils to come out of the man.

Nearby, a large herd of swine (pigs) was grazing. The devils asked the Lord to send them into the swine. When the Lord gave them permission, they quickly took leave of the poor man and entered into the swine. Suddenly the swine began to run violently toward a steep cliff and plunged into the sea and were drowned. Perhaps this was a judgment upon the herdsmen for keeping swine, for it was unlawful for the Israelites to eat them.

The herdsmen, dismayed at the loss of their pigs, quickly went into the city to tell all that had happened. The people came out to see what had taken place, and they *“... found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.”*

How sad that the people did not rejoice and give thanks to God for the great deliverance the poor man received! Perhaps they felt sorry for the loss of two thousand swine. Perhaps they feared that further loss would come to them for their sins.

Oh, the hardness of their hearts! Instead of praying that Jesus would abide with them, they prayed that He would depart from them.

As Jesus entered the ship, the man that had been possessed by the devil desired to go with Jesus. However, Jesus told him to return to his home and his friends and tell them what great things the Lord had done for him.

You can read about this in Matthew chapter 8 verses 28 to 34, Mark chapter 5 verses 1 to 20, and Luke chapter 8 verses 26 to 39.

QUESTIONS:

1. What was the poor man possessed by?
2. Where did the poor man dwell?
3. What was he heard doing night and day?
4. How did the people find the man after the devils were departed? (12 words)
5. What was he to tell his family and friends? (9 words)

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. The Sea of Galilee. | 2. Jesus. |
| 3. Who was with them. | 4. Peace, be still. |
| 5. There was a great calm. | |

G.L. TenBroeke

A BOY FROM STAVENISSE

Chapter 3: Lost

It is warm in the classroom. The sun is shining straight on the old building. The children are working hard over their slates and are longing for the end of the afternoon.

Leen is deep in thought at his desk. Last night he had heard the clockmaker talking about the Lord again. The old man came more often to Grandma in the little house at the bottom of the dyke. That man was able to die, for he was reconciled to God. This means that God is no longer angry with him. The Lord Jesus had borne the punishment of his sins for him.

Leen becomes so afraid and sad when he thinks about it. He does not have what the clockmaker has. He thinks that the Lord does not listen to little children and that he cannot come into heaven. You have to be converted to come there. Oh, what if he had to die? Then the church bell would toll its sombre strokes because a boy that did not love the Lord was being buried.

And then, on that warm afternoon at school, Leen suddenly lets his head fall on his arms. Sobbing, he exclaims: "Lost! Oh God, eternally lost!" Just like that, he loudly exclaims this through the classroom. He momentarily totally forgets where he is. He does not think about the children. Leen is in great distress.

It becomes quiet in the classroom. The scratching of the slate-pencils on the slates (for in earlier days the children did not write on paper yet) suddenly stops. All the children look at the crying boy with open mouths.

The astonished teacher is standing in front of the class. He actually does not understand that quiet little boy at all. The teacher had noticed that he always stands at the side of the playground. He knows that Leen never participates with the various games. The teacher does not understand this. A boy of Leen's age has to run and jump, laugh and have fun. Could it be that Leen does not have a sound mind? Or is he a lazy boy? He does not know. He has often punished Leen for daydreaming already, for not paying attention and just letting the teacher stand there talking for nothing.

The teacher has already talked with his father and mother about this. They have to do a better job of raising their son. The boy does not feel like going to school. He is good at lazing around and dreaming. Just listen to that boy making foolish talk in class. Soon all the children will start to laugh and he will have to see if he can get them quiet again.

The teacher becomes angry. He'll handle Leen differently. Those silly actions must stop.

Leen is pulled from his desk by his arm and in front of the class receives a couple of hard smacks with the wooden stick. "There, that will help," the teacher says with satisfaction.

"Now get to your work all of you and don't let me hear anyone." He threateningly swings his stick.

School is going out.

Leen walks on the dyke alone. He always walks by himself. No one wants to be his friend, because they all think he is a strange boy. Leen never wants to take part in their wild games. Leen never plays any mischievous pranks. They actually think he is a really boring fellow. They dislike him and are afraid he is a telltale.

Look, a group of children is following him. They run over the dyke to catch up with him. Some of them are big boys with firm fists.

"There he goes. He said: 'Lost.' Let's call him 'Lost.' Say, Lost, did you lose your tongue?" They keep him from going

further and swarm around him. They fire each other up and become more angry and bold. Who was the first to say that terrible word? Who called it out? Who had matches? "We will put him on fire!" they exclaim. They cheer and firmly tie him to a tree. Branches are dragged into place. The first branch crackles into flame. "Lost, Lost," they cheer.

Suddenly they become frightened. Nervously they nudge each other and point into the distance. "Let's get out of here!" one yells. Krign, the blacksmith is coming. All the boys in Stavenisse know that you have to watch out for Krign. You have to take care that he doesn't get hold of you, especially when he is angry, such as now! Terribly angry!

From a distance he had seen everything. Roaring with anger, he rushes towards the poor, tied up boy. With his clogs, he extinguishes the fire that is starting, and swiftly frees Leen. Leen tumbles forward into his arms. The blacksmith brings the small, sobbing boy all the way home to the small house on the Achterstraat. Leen's hair and clothes smell like fire.

(To be continued)

(Slightly adapted)

BIBLE WORDS/WORDS OF SCRIPTURE (III)

Charity

Today the word "charity" is almost exclusively used to mean a society or a fund set up for the benefit of some particular cause. When we read of "charity" in the Bible, it means love. But it does not mean love in the ordinary sense, or in the way that it is often used today. No: charity is a special kind of love. Like a charity set up to benefit a particular cause, it is particular or special love. Many charities are for the support of the needy, and true charity is love for the needy and undeserving. So it is not truly correct to replace the word "charity" with "love".

The thirteenth chapter of Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians deals particularly with charity, and gives us a description of charity and its qualities. This chapter is well known, but it is not often read in its context, and so we may

not realise the main reason why it was written. In this Epistle, the Apostle Paul had to reprove the church at Corinth for many errors and inconsistencies in its conduct. In the twelfth chapter, Paul admonishes the believers because they were seeking pre-eminence: desiring to be heard over one another. For example, they were trying to speak in different languages, and making up unknown languages, to copy the gift that was given to the early church to enable the gospel to spread through different countries before the New Testament was written. Paul corrects them, saying that they should rather seek to emulate the best gift, the gift of charity. He then describes it: "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth."

Charity in all its fullness, is the love that was shown by God the Father in giving His only begotten Son for His people, by God the Son in coming from heaven to suffer and die to save those sinners from their sin, and by God the Holy Spirit in revealing the Son and His work of redemption to those sinners. Now that is particular love. Those to whom God shows His love, know that they are undeserving of such great love. But such is the great love of God toward us, that Paul writes to the Roman believers: "While we were yet sinners (enemies), Christ died for us." No wonder that Paul tells the Corinthians, if I "have not charity, I am nothing."

If we do know this charity, then we will also have the fruit of charity. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." Jesus said: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another."

Contributed

IRAQ!

1. The Garden of Eden was in Iraq.
2. Mesopotamia, now in Iraq, was the cradle of civilization.
3. Noah built the ark in Iraq.
4. The Tower of Babel was in Iraq.
5. Abraham was from Ur, which is in Southern Iraq.
6. Isaac's wife, Rebekah, was from Nahor, which is in Iraq.
7. Jacob met Rachel in Iraq.
8. Jonah preached in Nineveh – which is in Iraq.
9. Assyria, which is in Iraq, conquered the ten tribes of Israel.
10. Amos cried out in Iraq.
11. Babylon, which is in Iraq, destroyed Jerusalem.
12. Daniel was in the lions' den in Iraq.
13. The three Hebrew children were in the fire in Iraq (Jesus had been in Iraq also as the fourth Person in the fiery furnace).
14. Belshazzar, the king of Babylon, saw the "writing on the wall" in Iraq.
15. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, carried the Jews captive into Iraq.
16. Ezekiel preached in Iraq.
17. The wise men were probably from Iraq.
18. Peter preached in Iraq.
19. The Babylon described in the Revelation is named after a city which was in Iraq.

And you have probably seen this one. Israel is the nation most often mentioned in the Bible. But do you know which nation is second? It is Iraq! However, that is not the name that is used in the Bible. The names used in the Bible are Babylon, Land of Shinar and Mesopotamia.

The word "Mesopotamia" means "between the two rivers," more exactly, between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. The name "Iraq," means "country with deep roots."

Indeed Iraq is a country with deep roots and is a very significant country in the Bible. No other nation, except Israel, has more history and prophecy associated with it than Iraq.

Selected and slightly adapted

THE SAMARITANS

"Into any city of the Samaritans, enter ye not" (Matthew 10. 5).

Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, destroyed the kingdom of Israel, and carried away the mass of the people into captivity. Some, however, were suffered to remain, that the ground might not become a complete desert; and these united and intermarried with colonists sent from various parts to supply the vacancies occasioned by the loss of the former inhabitants. Idolatry soon corrupted the whole people; but they retained with it the worship of the One living and true God (2 Kings 17. 28).

Cyrus afterwards permitted the Jews to return from captivity and rebuild the temple, when the *Samaritans*, so called, wished to unite in the labour, and share in their religious privileges. But Zerubbabel and the other Jewish rulers would not admit so corrupt a mixture among their nation.

The Samaritans then employed their most strenuous efforts to obstruct the rebuilding of the temple and the prosperity of the Jews (Ezra 4. 1-4; Nehemiah 2. 10-20). Hence originated a mutual hatred between the nations; they also at length (about 332 B.C.), aided by Sanballat their governor, obtained permission from Alexander the Great, and built a rival temple on Mount Gerizim. The two nations made this a subject of future contention, and each nation claimed superiority for its own place of worship. The rancorous hatred between them became at last so strong that to many of the Jews the Samaritans were objects of greater detestation than even the Gentiles (Luke 10. 33).

From the Biblical Treasury

What a mercy, however, that the Lord Jesus Christ "must needs go through Samaria" to speak to a sinful Samaritan; and that also He taught how the Good Samaritan, also like Himself, did not obey the prejudice and hatred which separated these two races of people, but whose compassion knew no hindrances.

Editor

ONE METHOD OF ANSWERING PRAYER

Now there is sometimes in men's minds a kind of confusion in this matter. They are in a certain path from which they want to be extricated; they are under a trial, from which they want to be delivered; they call upon the Lord to deliver them; and they ask some manifestation of Himself, some going forth of His hand, some divine leading which they are to follow. But the Lord may be working in a very different way from what they think; and they may really be inattentive to the internal voice of God in their conscience, because they are expecting the voice to come in some other way.

It was just so with myself. When I was in the Church of England, burdened with all the things I had to go through, and troubled and distressed in my mind, I was calling upon the Lord to deliver me, to lead me out, to show me what to do, to make the path plain and clear. Now that was my sincere cry; but I expected some miraculous interposition – to hear some voice, to have some wonderful leading; and in waiting for that, I was waiting for what the Lord never meant to bestow. And I was brought at last to this internal conviction: suppose I were living in drunkenness, suppose I were living in adultery, suppose I were walking in known sin, should I want a voice from God to say to me: “Leave this drunkenness, come out from this adultery, give up this sin”? Should I want some divine manifestation to bring me out of a sin, when my conscience bore its solemn witness, and I was miserable under the weight and burden of it? No, the very conviction is the answer of God to the prayer; the very burden which the Lord lays on us is meant to press us out of that in which we are walking.

So I reasoned with myself: “If I am living in sin, if it be a sin to be where I am, if I must do things which my conscience tells me are sins, and by which my conscience is burdened as sins, the very conviction, the very distress, the very burden, is the answer. It is the voice of God in the conscience, not the voice of God in the air, not the appearance of God in the sky, but the

voice of God in the conscience, and the appearance of the frown of God in the heart.” And on this simple conviction I was enabled to act, and never to this day have repented it. I have, therefore, been led to see by experience that we are often expecting wonderful answers, mysterious answers, and the Lord does not mean to give those answers.

J. C. Philpot. 1841. (Gospel Standard 1914)

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES

CHRIST IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS

The First Adam and the Second Adam

“And 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” (Genesis 2. 7). True human nature consists of a physical body, formed by God from the dust of the earth, and a soul or spirit breathed into man when he was created. Adam was the father of us all. We often call him the federal head of the human race, our representative before God: our seed was in his loins, we are his children. Adam fell into sin: he did what God commanded him not to do. We receive our nature from Adam by natural generation. God said to Adam and Eve that if they broke His commandment they would surely die. The Psalmist confesses: “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Psalm 51:5). What a sad and solemn state we are in by nature: we sin because we are sinners, we are not sinners because we sin. We are instructed in Paul’s Epistle to the Romans: “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Romans 5. 12).

Now we are also taught in the Epistle to the Romans that Adam is “the figure of Him that was to come”: the Lord Jesus Christ. Just as Adam is the federal head of the human race, so our Lord Jesus is the great King and Head of the Church. As man fell in Adam, so the church is saved in Christ. “For as by

one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 5. 19-21). Also in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, we are instructed: "And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening Spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second Man is the Lord from heaven" (1 Corinthians 15. 45-47).

We read in the Epistle to the Hebrews that the Son of God took a nature the same as ours, body and soul, a real Man. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people" (Hebrews 2. 14-17).

Our prayer is that you dear young friends may be brought to know this glorious Saviour: "For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2. 5).

J.R. Rutt

EDITOR'S POSTBAG

First answers to the monthly questions have been received from ZACH COTTINGTON, JOSEPH PLAYFOOT, JOSHUA WIGLEY and THOMAS WILTSHIRE.

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about RELIGIOUS PEOPLE IN THE TIME OF THE LORD JESUS. 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. The Pharisees and Sadducees were two religious groups among the Jews. What was the difference between them? (Acts 23. 8)
2. When the Pharisees were upset (offended) at what the Lord Jesus said, He replied: "Let them alone." What solemn words follow? (Matthew 15. 14)
3. Which Pharisee taught the Apostle Paul and also gave wise advice in a Jewish council? (Acts 5. 34 & 22. 3)
4. Which Pharisee came to Jesus by night? (John 3. 1)
5. What did Jesus say was the motive for all the works which the Pharisees did? (Matthew 23. 5)
6. By what name did the Lord Jesus call the scribes and Pharisees seven times in Matthew 23 and what does this name mean?
7. "The Pharisees... murmured." What did they say of the Lord Jesus in scorn which we should be so thankful for? (Luke 15)
8. "Search the Scriptures... they are they which testify of Me," the Lord Jesus said. (John 5. 39) "Search and look," the Pharisees said, but what was their opposite conclusion? (John 7)
9. On one occasion we read, "The Pharisees also, who were covetous... derided Him." What did Jesus reply? (Luke 16)
10. Often the Pharisees asked questions to try and catch Jesus out ("tempting Him"). Find and write out two such questions.

ANSWERS TO FEBRUARY QUESTIONS

1. A soft answer; grievous words.
2. Sin; the wicked.
3. "Of great understanding;" "better than the mighty."
4. Solomon's heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, who had appeared unto him twice.

5. The hardness of their hearts.
6. Simeon and Levi (Genesis 49. 5-7)
7. Jonah was angry because God had repented of the evil He had said He would bring upon the Ninevites for their sin. (Jonah 3. 10 - 4. 3))
8. "For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." (James 1. 20)
9. Miriam and Aaron had spoken against Moses. Miriam became a leper and was shut out of the camp seven days. (Numbers 12. 8-10, 14)
10. "Overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves." (Matthew 21. 12; Mark 11. 15; Luke 19. 45; John 2. 15)

Contributed

"A WITHERED HAND"

(Mark 3. 1)

Ashamed before my God I stand
A Christian with a withered hand!
The zeal and prayer of former days,
My busy life no more displays.
My spirit harsh, my words unkind,
Speak of the withering in my mind.
The mind of Christ is not in me,
And this is plain for all to see.
A wretched man, I helpless stand,
Symbolic of that withered hand.
Great God! in mercy to my soul,
Speak Thou with power and make it whole.

K.B.

An Arab nomad was once asked how he came to believe in God. "In the same way," he replied, "that I can tell by a print in the sand, whether it was a man or a beast that passed that way."

(It was by seeing the works of God in creation that the nomad believed there was a God.)

LIST OF NAMES

The following young people have answered questions during the months July to December 2007. The total number is 291, for which we would thank God.

Maia and Harry Aldridge; Tom Aldridge; Daniel and Naomi Aston.

Alasdair Bailey; Sarah Ball; Joseph, Mary and Samuel Banfield; Josiah Barker; Benjamin and William Bos; Abigail, Daniel, Joanna and Nathan Broome; Jonathan and Nicolas Burton; Sophie Buss.

Bethany and Victoria Chapman; Mark Chapman; Christopher and Nathan Christie; Jacob and Martha Collins; Karen, Matthew and Sarah Cooper; Lucy, Ruth and Samuel Cooper; Alice, Charlotte and William Cottingham; Annie, Lucy and Miriam Cottingham; Michael Cottingham; Emma and Jessica Cottington; Jacob Cottington; Philip Cottington; Samuel Cottington; Abigail, Hannah, James and Sarah Crowter; Annabel, Elsie and Kate Crowter; Jonathan Crowter.

Christine, Esther and Louise Dadswell.

Bethan Field; Esther, Naomi and Rebekah Field; Benjamin and Oliver Funnell.

Adam Green; Edward, Stephen and Thomas Green; Oliver and William Green.

Jacqueline and James Hallier; James Hanks; Eleanor, George and Jonathan Hare; Emily and Thomas Hart; Mary Hart; Benjamin and Suzanna Hayden; Cornelia, Joseph, Joshua, Luke and Nathanael Hayden; Andrew, Marcus and Susanna Hickman; Benjamin, Heidi and Thomas Hickman; Bethan and Rosalind Hickman; George Hickman; Thomas Hickman; Henry and Sophie Hook; Albert and Emily Hope; Eleanor Hope; Joseph Hydon.

Abigail Izzard.

Emily Janes; Henry Johnson.

Emma, Helen, Joanna, Joshua and Marianne Kerley; James, Rebecca, and William Kerley; John and Thomas Kerley; Edward, Matthew, Naomi and Samuel Kingham; Jennifer and Stephen Kingham.

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

Katie Macpherson; Hannah McNaghten; Claudia and Florence

Mercer; James and Julia Mercer.

Anna, Jonathan, Rebekah and Simeon Pack; Helen, Joseph, Matthew, Priscilla, Rebecca, Robert, Samuel and Sarah Parish; Anna, Chloe and Phoebe Parsons; Ruth and Sarah Payne; Elisabeth and John Pickles; Heidi, James and Katie Playfoot; Naomi and Robert Pocock; Esther, Lukas and Martine Pont; Nathan Pont.

Bethany Ramsbottom; Jessica and Oliver Raymond; Alexander and Joshua Rayner; Matthew and Nathan Rayner; James Rice; Susanna Risbridger; Freddie and Harry Rokison.

Chloe and John Sadler; Jessica, Rosanna and Timothy Salkeld; Charles, Emily and Rosaleen Saunders; Ethan and Samuel Saunders; Jasmine, Joseph and Timothy Saunders; Joseph Saunders; Emily and Philippa Sayers; Jessica Seymour; Emma, Kate and Matthew Stearn; Alexander, Emma and Jessica Stevens; Ellen and Rebekah Suckling.

Harry and James Tarbin; Abigail Thorne; Elisabeth, James and Paul Topping; Henry Townsend; Alison and Andrew Tugwell.

Joanna, Natalie and Thomas Warboys; Esther and Thomas Wheatley; Emma Wigley; Abigail, Bethany and Charlotte Wilderspin; Bethany, Cordelia, Francesca, Gad, Jemima and Kitty Wiltshire; Joanna Matthew and Susie Wiltshire; Benjamin, Jessica, Louise and Timothy Woodhams; Edwin, Hannah, Joseph, Kate, Lucy and Matthias Woodhams; Chloe and Lucy Woods.

Overseas Names:

Calvin, Dennis and Kira Glass; Katelyn Kamp; Caleb, Elisabeth and Isaac Knol; Jeff and John Legemaat; Hannah Linna; Kyle and Thomas Marion; Kelly, Matthew and Thomas Mills; Heather and Heidi Neels; Paul Nowlan; Caleb, Danielle, Kelsey, Kendrick and Megan Oudshoorn; Emily and Jonathan Quist; John. Luke and Sandra Seymour; Brie Anne Sweetman; Will Spote; Nathaniel TenBroeke; Bethany, Kaitlyn and Michaela Teunissen; Jessie, Mariah and Matthew Toogood; Marilene Van de Munt; Evangeline, Philomena and Savannah Van Oort; Benjamin and John Van Vugt; Cody and Dylan White; Aaron, Andrew, Carolyn, Jonathan, Kristina, Lydia, Natalie and Nathan Ymker.

The Friendly Companion



Box Tunnel in Wiltshire

“Make straight paths for your feet.”
(Hebrews 12. 13)

April 2008

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All correspondence to be sent to the Editor.

Annual Subscriptions inc. postage:

U.K.	U.S.A. & Canada	Australia	Europe (Netherlands)
£11.00	\$31	A\$38	€27.00

All correspondence concerning subscriptions should be addressed to Mr. H. Mercer, 8 Fairleigh Rise, Kington Langley, Chippenham, Wilts. SN15 5QF.

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

What a wonderful gift of God is our sight, and how thankful we should be to be able to see the created works of God all around us. Also we should use our eyes well, and not let “eye gate” be a source of temptation to us. How wise were Shem and Japheth in this when they covered their father’s sin, unlike Ham whose eyes led him sadly and badly astray. The psalmist says: “Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity”: a very necessary prayer as we are surrounded on every hand with those sights which aim to pollute the mind.

The Bible tells us of a man who was born blind. There was something out of order right from his birth. This was the man whom Jesus healed on the Sabbath Day, much to the annoyance of the Pharisees. Even more wonderful, however, is the way in which we see how gradually the Lord Jesus opened his eye of faith to see that He is the Son of God.

Firstly, he speaks of the Lord as: *“A man that is called Jesus.”*

Then we hear him call the Lord Jesus *“a prophet”* of God.

Then he says: *“If this Man were not of God, He could do nothing.”*

Then, finally, after the man had been excommunicated by the Jews, the Lord Jesus found him and asked him: “Dost thou believe on the Son of God?” He answered: “Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?” Jesus said: “It is He that talketh with thee.” We read the man said: *“Lord I believe,”* and also *“be worshipped Him.”*

The Lord Jesus told His disciples that the man’s blindness had been permitted of God to be the means whereby God would be glorified in the mighty miracle that was wrought and also in the giving of faith to this man. I am sure that the man valued the faith even more than his natural sight, because that was an eternal gift, whereas his sight was only for the remainder of his natural life.

It is sad to see what bitterness this conversion brought upon

the man born blind; but heartening to see how he was not ashamed to confess the Lord Jesus Christ, even though that meant he was shunned by his former friends.

May it be our desire that we, too, might be possessed of the same faith with the same fruits as this once despised beggar, whose life was so transformed by the Saviour, Jesus Christ.

With best wishes from your sincere friend and Editor.

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

The picture on this month's cover is of the entrance to Box Tunnel on the Great Western Railway line between Chippenham and Bath. This tunnel is 1.8 miles long and perfectly straight. It took four and a half years to build: 4,000 men and 300 horses toiled to excavate the entire length. Sadly, 100 of those men died in that undertaking. To give them light whilst they worked, a ton of candles was used each week and a ton of gunpowder! We hope the two were kept properly separate! I expect the Health and Safety Inspectors of today would have had something to say! Its designer and builder was Isambard K. Brunel. He is said to have designed it so that on his birthday, April 9th, the rising sun would shine straight through and could be seen at the westward end of the tunnel.

We take for granted the ability to get quickly from one place to another, but we should remember that our forefathers had to rely much more on travelling by foot. Of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, we only read once that He rode on an ass. It is said that He walked forty miles to be baptized in Jordan. Even in Brunel's day in Great Britain most of the poorer people would walk to get where they needed to go.

Further, we must remember that the talents, such as Brunel undoubtedly possessed, were given by God. We read in Exodus and 1 Kings how He gave special wisdom, both at the making of the Tabernacle and of the Temple, to those who were to be the makers of them.

There are some important lessons we should learn from such men as Brunel.

He was a man of consuming ambition and would let nothing get in the way, if at all possible, to prevent him from achieving his object. Such diligence is, of course, commendable in its place if used in a God-glorifying way. Of Brunel we know nothing of his religious views. Paul, the apostle, was no doubt of a similarly determined disposition. Before he was called by grace, as Saul of Tarsus his determined spirit cost the lives of many believers, but how wonderful was the change when grace took these talents in hand and we read of him being “determined not to know anything ... save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.” He said: “This one thing I do ... I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

Then in Brunel's life we see what a difference one man can make in natural things. In the history of God's people how often the Lord has used one man to accomplish His purposes: Nehemiah, Elijah and Josiah, to name but three. But all these pale into insignificance compared with the work of the Lord Jesus Christ who trod the winepress alone in finishing the work His Father gave Him to do. No doubt Brunel wished he could have lived longer to do yet more spectacular things in his day, but the Lord Jesus Christ perfectly accomplished all that He came to do. There was no disappointment at the end of His life, but a satisfaction both in His holy Person and in that of His Heavenly Father too, who sent Him.

EDITOR'S POSTBAG

Thank you to the friends who kindly translated the words on the front of the February *Friendly Companion*. The rough translation is: *This is a portrait of Calvin. He made the “nest of Rome” to tremble, and returned the glory of God of old times, back to God's Word. He made clear the sin of the heart. The church should be thankful that it has such a faithful minister as Calvin.*

First answers to the monthly questions have been received from **EVAN BAUM**, **CHLOE GUDGEON** and **JEREMY WINKLEY**.

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**SORROW, PAIN, AND DEATH**

Big changes came upon the world after Adam and Eve disobeyed God. Their sin brought sorrow, pain, and death.

They were sent out of the Garden of Eden for ever. God said to Adam: *"Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee."* Weeds began to spring up. Adam must work hard to grow food. They would feel pain and sadness. Finally, their bodies would die and return to the dust.

How sorry Adam and Eve must have felt as they saw the evil that came from their sin! Yet, they were taught to look for the Saviour whom God promised to take away sin.

For His people, God has promised eternal life in heaven, *"... and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain"* (Revelation 21.4).

QUESTIONS:

1. What did the sin of Adam and Eve bring? (4 words)
2. What was cursed for his sake?
3. Who did they look for? (2 words)

Please 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. Fig leaves.
2. No.
3. Coats of skins.

Contributed

*“For the wages
of sin is death;
but the gift of
God is eternal
life through
Jesus Christ
our Lord.”*

Romans 6. 23.

BIBLE LESSONS

PRESSING THROUGH THE CROWD

After healing the mad Gadarene, Jesus and His disciples went back into the ship and crossed the Sea of Galilee to return to Capernaum. When they landed, a great multitude of people were waiting for Him. Luke tells us: “...*the people gladly received Him: for they were all waiting for Him.*”

Suddenly, there was a great commotion in the multitude as a man was rapidly approaching Jesus. No doubt, the people were moving aside for him when they recognized him as the ruler of their synagogue. What was he coming to Jesus for? Most of their rulers despised Jesus and, like the Gadarenes, would be happy if He departed from their city.

However this ruler, named Jairus, was greatly troubled; his daughter, who was only twelve years old, lay at home dying. Whatever he and his wife had tried was of no use; she grew weaker and weaker. Out of necessity he comes to Jesus. He humbly bows at the feet of Jesus and begs Him to come and lay His hand upon her. How glad he was when Jesus said He would come!

As they made their way to the house of Jairus, the people thronged around Jesus. It must have been very slow going: all too slow for Jairus. Would they get there in time?

In the midst of the thronging multitude was a poor woman who had had a great affliction for twelve years. Through the years she had gone to many doctors, hoping that one of them could cure her. Some had tried one thing and some another, many of which were very painful. Through all her doctoring, she only grew worse and had spent all her money.

When she heard of Jesus, she said within herself: “*If I may but touch His garment, I shall be whole.*” Quickly she went out to see Him. What a disappointment! Mobs of people were all around Him. What was more, He was now on the way to the ruler’s house. What was she to do? Go back home? NO. She began to press through the crowd. Just as Jesus had

exhorted the people on another occasion: *"Strive to enter,"* so she began to strive to get near Him.

Finally, she was close enough. She reached out and touched the hem of His garment. Immediately she felt the power in her body and knew she was healed of her plague. How happy she was! Quietly she would withdraw from the multitude and go back to her house.

Before she could get away, Jesus turned around and called out: *"Who touched Me?"* His disciples thought this was a strange question. They said to Him: *"Master, the multitude throng Thee and press Thee, and sayest Thou, Who touched Me?"* How wonderful the answer of Jesus! *"SOMEBODY bath touched Me: for I perceive that virtue (power) is gone out of Me."*

As Jesus turned around, He looked upon the woman. Although He had asked the question, He knew who it was. The woman felt she could not hide. Trembling and fearing, she came and fell down before Him. *"She declared unto Him before all the people for what cause she had touched Him, and how she was healed immediately."*

Never would she forget the words Jesus then spoke to her: *"Daughter, thy faith bath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague."* This would seem too good to be true, but it was true. Jesus had called her a daughter!

You can read about this in Matthew chapter 9 verses 18 to 22, Mark chapter 5 verses 21 to 34, and Luke chapter 8 verses 40 to 48.

QUESTIONS:

1. How many years did the woman have her affliction?
2. What did she touch? (five words)
3. Who did Jesus say had touched Him?
4. What did Jesus feel had gone out of Him?
5. What did Jesus call her?

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 unclean spirit (a devil *or* an evil spirit).
2. In the tombs.
3. Crying.
4. Sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind.
5. What great things the Lord had done for him.

G. L. TenBroeke

A BOY FROM STAVENISSE
Chapter 4: "God Sees Him"

That evening, the headmaster looks up a godly woman in the village and tells her about the boy's strange behaviour.

Thoughtfully, she looks in front of her. Then she tells the teacher: "That boy is not happy. He is sad because he is unconverted. He cannot die the way he is born." She looks at the teacher. "I talked with his grandmother a while ago. This child is uneasy. He has to be converted, but doesn't know how."

The teacher ponders deeply. He is ashamed of himself when he thinks about the beating. It would have been better if he could have talked ... or prayed with the boy.

"This child already knows at a very young age that God does not take us to Himself in heaven if we are not His child. Teacher, you must not beat or punish that boy any more. Also, not when he starts daydreaming during his work."

The teacher went home silently. He has much to think about. He never punished Leen Potappel again.

Leen thinks it is terrible that the children do not want to play with him. One day, when they ask him if he wants to take part in stealing some carrots out of a garden, he hesitates. The devil makes him think that God has never yet converted such a small boy. One must be older for that. Such a little boy may surely have a little fun in his life. He doesn't need to worry about partaking with the boys. If he is elected, God will convert him anyway. Leen allows himself to be persuaded.

"You do not have to steal, yourself," William, the caretaker's

son says: "you only have to be on the lookout. It is very exciting. If someone comes, you only have to make the sound of an owl three times." He looks at Leen intently. "Will you do it?" Leen nods: "Yes." He will take part. He will not steal, himself; he is only standing by. Nothing special. When hiding behind the hedge he can look down the whole path. There is not a chicken to be seen.

He shivers and shrugs deeper into his coat. A cold wind almost blows him off the road. This morning, his father said that it was going to freeze. He has cold hands. Just like his father, he makes a cup of his hands and blows his warm breath into them. How silly of him to forget his warm mitts that Grandmother had knitted for the children.

Suddenly, he is greatly shocked by a voice in his heart. It seems as if someone is standing beside him; that is how clear that voice is. "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."

God sees him! The Lord sees everything, for he has no doubt from whom this warning comes. Leen is sinning. He tried to simply take part in what the boys are doing: to be unconcerned. But all things are opened unto the eyes of the Lord. The eyes of the Lord! He feels them burning on his little frame. He jolts upright. He swiftly looks back to the boys. Look how busy they are in someone else's garden. Stealing!

Oh, he has to get out of here before the Lord punishes him. He runs home as fast as he can. His watch post is deserted.

The boys are furious when they hear the racing steps of their friend. "Look at the coward go," hisses William. "Come on, we'll get him tomorrow, lest someone else be on the look out."

Suddenly, they do not think their game is fun anymore. "We have to think up a plan to rid that annoying fellow of his silly tricks," says one.

"Let's wait for a good chance," William said.

(To be continued)

Slightly adapted

A LESSON FROM JOSEPH

So far this year, we have had “Daniel in the Lion’s Den,” “David and Goliath,” and “Moses in the Bulrushes.” Can you remember the lessons we learned from these well-known stories?

I suppose you can guess what is coming next? Yes, “Joseph and his Coat of Many Colours.” You remember the story well: how old Jacob loved Joseph so much – the coat of many colours he gave him – the way Joseph’s brothers hated him – how they threw him in a pit, and then sold him to the Midianites – and, last of all, how they dipped the coat in blood and took it home to Jacob. Then we think of all that happened in Egypt.

Now do not forget, I am trying to tell you month by month that it is not just the story; it is what we can learn from it. Years ago, when a group of children left Sunday school and were asked why, they said they were “fed up with hearing about Joseph and his coat of many colours”! They could not see what it had to do with them. They should have been taught lessons from it.

1. GOD WAS WITH JOSEPH. It did not seem as if He was, and Joseph did not always realise that He was, but the Bible tells us: “But God was with him” (Acts 7. 9). That did not mean that Joseph was free from trouble – but it did mean that every step in Joseph’s life which seemed *downward* (his brothers’ hatred; his being sold into Egypt; the wickedness of Potiphar’s wife; the prison) was really a step *upwards* to Joseph being exalted next to Pharaoh.

Again, as in the story of Moses in the bulrushes, we see how much hangs on how little. Look at Genesis 37, verse 17. A man had overheard the brothers say they were going to Dothan; and he was the very man Joseph met when he could not find them. Apart from this, Joseph would have gone back home to his father.

If we fear the Lord, He will be with us. That does not mean that everything will be easy; but it does mean that all things

will work together for our good. See Romans 8, verse 28. Also, we shall see in our lives how important little things are.

2. GOD ALWAYS FULFILLS HIS WORD. Of course, no Bible was written when Joseph was a boy. God spoke to him through his dreams. You remember the dreams about the sheaves in the field, and the sun, moon and stars. This was God's promise, that one day things would be different; his brothers, who now hated him, would have to bow down before him.

And so it came to pass. But Joseph had to wait a long time, didn't he? And it did not seem possible that God's promise could be fulfilled. But it was. "Until the time that His word came: the word of the Lord tried him."

3. A TYPE OF CHRIST. I have not written to you about "types" before, have I? In the Old Testament there are many things and people that are a beautiful picture of the Lord Jesus. We think especially, for instance, of the lamb that was killed, its blood shed. It is a "type" of what the Lord Jesus would do.

So with Joseph. Try to think of the ways in which he resembles the Lord Jesus: hated of his brethren; sold for twenty pieces of silver; falsely accused; cruelly treated; exalted to a position of honour – and all this that the lives of those who hated him might be spared.

B.A. Ramsbottom

"WE HAVE FORGOTTEN GOD"

We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven. We have grown in numbers, wealth, and power, as no other nation has grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us, and we have vainly imagined in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with our unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to God that made us.

Abraham Lincoln

BIBLE WORDS/WORDS OF SCRIPTURE (IV)**Sojourn**

“Sojourn” is not a word we hear very much today. We read it several times in the Bible, for example: “And Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there” (Genesis 12. 10), and “I am a stranger with Thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were” (Psalm 39. 12).

When we use the word, we may think that it is another word for “travel,” especially if the travel is on foot, or in a way that is difficult.

The real meaning of the word “sojourn” is “only for a day.” Those of you who have learned French will notice that it contains “jour,” which is French for “a day.” Other words which have the same origin are “journal” – which is a day book, and “journalist” – one who writes in a day book. Even the word “journey” originally meant the distance one travels in a day. The word “sojourn” reminds us then that time is short. Yes, even if we live to be one hundred years old, our life is but a vapour compared with eternity.

We read of the Old Testament saints, that they sojourned. This tells us they knew they were on earth, but for a short space of time (and many of them had long lives). In Hebrews 11, we are told: “they confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.” Time was short; they were only passing through this earth. Yes, God promised to Abraham that his seed would dwell in the Promised Land, but this was a picture of a better land. By faith they looked for a better country, that is, an heavenly, which is where they desired to be. Do we have the same desire? Our main purpose in life should be to be prepared for eternity; the things of this life are very much second.

You will notice that in the Bible, the Lord’s people are referred to as “strangers and pilgrims,” “a stranger **and** a sojourner,” etc. That is, not only are they on a journey and passing through this earth, but they are strangers to it. If we are one of the Lord’s people, we too shall be both a pilgrim

and a stranger. To illustrate this, suppose I walked from one end of the country to the other, I might then be described as a pilgrim and a stranger. But if I joined in the company and customs of the places through which I passed, I would be a pilgrim but not a stranger. On the other hand, if I shut myself up and stayed in my own home and did not mix with my neighbours, then I would be a stranger, but not a pilgrim.

So being pilgrims **and** strangers, the Lord's people are passing through this life; they are not conformed to this earth or its ways. They are separated by God unto Himself. Their home and their country is heaven, not the earthly country where they now reside. They mind heavenly things. May the same grace be given to us.

Contributed

“WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT A MAN?”

Recently it was reported that a man who had won £19,000,000 on the National Lottery, has developed a serious and incurable heart condition. Now, face to face with possibly imminent and sudden death, he is reported to have said: “I would give my entire fortune away if a cure could be found for my heart.” This is similar to the words of Alexander the Great who is reported to have said as he was dying: “I would give the half of my kingdom for an inch of time.”

These words from a modern man and an ancient ruler, show us the folly of thinking only for time. “What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” Neither £19,000,000 nor half an empire can save a soul. The only price that can save a soul is that which Peter speaks of: “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot ...” (1 Peter 1. 18,19).

Happy and rich for time and eternity is the one who knows what Peter knew.

INTERNET ABUSE – A WARNING

We live in an age where there have been great advances in technology, especially during the last 10-15 years. Although there are many ways in which we may benefit from these developments, there are also many dangers and pitfalls that come with them. The Internet, which has developed in its present form since 1990, has been very useful in that it makes searching for information much easier, and allows messages and documents to be sent across the world within minutes via electronic mail (email). This magazine, for example, is prepared at home and sent to the printers directly using email.

One particular danger, however, we wish to call our readers' attention to, is the development in the last four years or so of the "social networking" website, started by *MySpace*, but there are now many others, of which the most popular are probably *Facebook* and *Bebo*.

The purpose of such websites is to allow users to store personal profiles online, which may include personal information, photographs, diaries, videos, music, etc., which can be shared with other "friends" who can send their own comments on anything which is recorded. No doubt, there are honourable ways of using such websites, and if restricted to those whom we could trust they could be used to make communication with friends and relatives easier. Sadly, far more often than not, such websites are not used honourably.

- People often put personal information on such websites which is sought after by criminals, who will pose as "friends" to gain access to it.
- Many use such sites to make careless statements and criticisms of others, which invite inflammatory replies and further evil comments. "Speak not evil one of another, brethren" (James 4. 11), is not a motto in use in the world as it should be by those who fear God.
- Others can gain access to information which is put on the website – and once it is there your data cannot be removed permanently; there will always be an electronically-held record

somewhere. Employers sometimes look on these sites to check on prospective employees' background and behaviour when with their "friends," and any ill-timed comment could endanger their prospect of employment, and come back to haunt them at a later date.

- Because of the dangers of users' profiles being used by predators, children especially are often told to use spurious identities, to hide any personal information as to where they live or who they really are – and thus the "friends" they contact online become faceless people who they never really know and are afraid to trust, and this invites further "evil communications [*which*] corrupt good manners" (1 Corinthians 15. 33), in the hope that their real identity will not be revealed. Anything which is not open and upright must be shunned by all who fear God – anything which requires duplicity or guile has the devil's mark on it.

There are many cases recorded of teenagers scarred for life or murdered by those who have posed as friends on social networking websites and drawn them into terrible danger. Many spend hours wasting their time exchanging messages with unknown "friends," which even in a natural sense could be far more profitably employed in helping others and studying.

Two scriptures come to mind: "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5. 15, 16). "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5. 22). We are particularly concerned to know that some who use the Facebook website are using the name of "Gospel Standard Strict Baptist" on their profiles.

May the Lord put His tender fear in the hearts of our young friends and keep them from this evil.

Contributed by a concerned parent

The warning given by this article is both timely and important. The Word of God says: "From such things turn

away.” The Editor has been witness to some very distressing and distasteful material on the Facebook website on the profiles of some who profess to be Gospel Standard Strict Baptists. It is incumbent upon all godly parents to ensure that their children are kept from these snares.

What sometimes begins as a plausible desire to be friendly can often lead to being “busybodies in other men’s matters” (see 1 Peter 4. 15 and 1 Timothy 5. 13) and social networking websites encourage just such an unprofitable curiosity in the lives and activities of others.

May each of our readers take heed lest Satan gain an advantage over them and leave their souls sorely wounded. Especially should those who are church members be vigilant lest by such an inconsistent profession they become a stumbling block to other seekers.

Editor

DESPISE NOT THE DAY OF SMALL THINGS

A cake of barley bread was what Gideon was likened to, yet in God’s hand he overcame the Midianites.

David met Goliath with but a sling and five smooth stones, but these gained the day because the battle was the Lord’s.

A widow woman and only a drop of oil and a handful of meal, but these according to God’s word fed three people for many days.

It was only a little cloud like a man’s hand that Elijah’s servant saw, but it presaged a sky full of clouds and rain.

They were only feeble Jews who rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem, but the walls were completed despite the strength and power of their enemies.

A lad had but five small loaves and two small fishes, but in the hands of Jesus Christ, these fed five thousand people.

In the history of the fall of Napoleon, it is recorded that a messenger misread just one word which completely altered the meaning of the letter and the battle was lost.

*BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES***CHRIST IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS****The Creation of Woman on the Sixth Day**

“And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed” (Genesis 2. 21-25).

We have already noted that in Romans we read concerning Adam, “... who is the figure of Him that was to come” (Romans 5. 14). Adam was a figure of Christ. In the portion of Scripture above from Genesis chapter 2, we notice how God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam to remove one of his ribs; out of that rib God made Eve, the first woman, the mother of all living. This speaks to us so beautifully concerning the Lord Jesus Christ when He became bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. As a real Man He entered into death, the sleep of death; He being pure and holy, death could not have dominion over Him; He died to atone for the sins of His bride, His church. When He was in the sleep of death, we read: “But when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead already, they brake not his legs: but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water” (John 19. 33-34). Just as God opened the side of Adam to make the woman, so the side of the second Adam was opened, pouring forth blood and water. That blood cleanses the bride of Christ, the church, from all sin; the water sanctifies her. In this precious blood and water, is the redemption of the bride, the Lamb’s wife. So we see a sacred figure of our crucified Redeemer.

J.R. Rutt

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about THINGS WHICH WERE NOT AS THEY SEEMED. Younger children need only do five questions. Please give references for questions 6 to 10 and 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.

1. What did the Lord Jesus liken the scribes and Pharisees to, which appear beautiful outwardly? (Matthew 23. 27)
2. Which people appeared to Joshua to have come from a long way away, but were actually neighbours? (Joshua 9. 3-21)
3. Which otherwise godly man on one occasion pretended to be a madman? (1 Samuel 21. 12-13)
4. What three things did Jesus say we should do in secret, so that others don't know about it? (Matthew 6. 1-18)
5. Who went to a prophet in disguise, but was found out and returned with a sad message? (1 Kings 14. 2)
6. King Saul said: "I have performed the commandment of the LORD." But why had he not done so? (1 Samuel 15)
7. Ahab was angry because Naboth would not cooperate with him in what seemed a good idea. Why was Ahab wrong and what commandment had he broken? (1 Kings 21)
8. "And Ehud said: I have a message from God unto thee." What unexpected message was it? (Judges 3)
9. Which man appeared to be a disciple, but whose end solemnly proved the words of the Lord Jesus, "One of you is a devil"? (John 6)
10. Which two kings of Israel disguised themselves, but proved that God's judgment was upon them, for they both died shortly afterwards? (1 Samuel 28; 1 Kings 22)

ANSWERS TO MARCH QUESTIONS

1. The Sadducees denied the resurrection of the dead, which the Pharisees affirmed.
2. "They be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."

3. Gamaliel.
4. Nicodemus.
5. To be seen of men.
6. Hypocrite, which means an actor, or one who acts differently from the person he really is.
7. "This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them." (Luke 15. 2)
8. "Out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." (John 7. 52)
9. "Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." (Luke 16. 15)
10. Matthew 19. 3; 22. 17; 22. 36; Mark 10. 2; 12. 15; Luke 10. 25; 20. 22; John 8. 5.

Contributed

THE SEALED OF GOD

(Ephesians 1. 13)

(Large quantities of timber were brought to the port of Ephesus to be bought there by the merchants. Each one sealed his purchase with his own peculiar seal, and then left it exposed to wind and weather, frequently for a long period of time. When, however, the merchant wished to claim it, he either came himself or sent a trusty servant bearing his signet ring. If the impression in the wood answered to the signet, the claim was at once allowed.)

A gallant ship her anchor cast
 'Neath Prion's rocky height,
 Her gilded bow still flashing back
 The sunset's glowing light.
 Behind her, far as eye can reach,
 The rippling waters lay;
 Before her, palaces and fanes¹
 Mingled in fair array.

¹ temples

Yes, the oft longed-for port was reached,
And fondly gazed the crew,
Noting each dear familiar spot,
Their happy childhood knew.
The circling hills and peopled plain,
The Cayster's glancing stream;
The glorious temple's pillared front,
All Asia's boast and theme.

A few calm hours and morning broke
O'er Pactyas' rugged brow,
And wrestlers in the Stadium met,
And crowds passed to and fro.
And many a rapid footstep turned,
To swell the eager throng,
Who pressed to greet the stately ship,
Absent from port so long.

Goodly her freight – for firmly bound
Broad massive rafters lay;
In Lebanon's dim forest hewn,
Through many a toilsome day.
Not Tyrian purple was more prized,
Scarce gold more keenly sought,
Than cedar from the solemn heights
Of snow-capped Syrian brought.

A merchant to the vessel came –
Far off, in his own land,
He built a high and beauteous house,
Which many years should stand.
The firm foundation had been laid,
The corner stone was placed;
But with carved polished cedar work,
The ceilings must be graced.

So he had crossed bleak misty hills,
 And stream and sultry plain,
 At costly price, and risk, and toil,
 This treasure to obtain.
 Pile after pile he chose, and each
 Sealed with his signet ring:
 Faint was the impress, but it bore
 The likeness of a king.

And then he left them – days and months,
 And years passed slowly by:
 Men marvelled that such precious store
 Neglected thus should lie.
 Cold midnight rain upon them fell,
 And noontide's scorching ray;
 But the sealed impress, faint at first,
 Grew deeper every day.

A sterner winter than the rest
 Had passed – but with the spring
 A trusty messenger appeared,
 Bearing the signet ring.
 It answered to the ancient seal
 Those time-stained rafters bore:
 He claimed them in his master's name,
 Nor left them as before.

For wind and calm had done their work,
 Seasoned by sun and rain:
 The wood could bear the carver's tool,
 The varnish well retain.
 'Twas carried o'er the far-off hills,
 O'er plain and surging stream:
 And soon the merchant's house was decked
 With many a polished beam.

Children of grace – ye who have been
By God the Spirit sealed:
To whom the things eye hath not seen,
Have been in part revealed –
Deem not, though summer's drought consume,
Though wintry tempests frown,
That He who purchased you, will fail
At length to claim His own.

Bought not with perishable things,
Silver or shining gold,
But with the precious blood of Christ,
The Lamb ordained of old:
Can ye not trust His faithful love,
Whether by joy or woe,
To deepen into perfect lines
The impress on your brow?

Though years should linger, faint ye not,
In Jesus' might be strong;
The darkest night has still a morn,
The leafless tree a song.
The veriest wanderer on earth,
Doth not for ever roam;
The messenger shall surely come,
The sealed be taken home.
(Friendly Companion July 1927)

“If once the love of Christ we feel
Upon our hearts impressed,
The mark of that celestial seal
Can never be erased.”

Hammond

The Friendly Companion



“Train up a child in the way he should go:
and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”
(Proverbs 22. 6)

May 2008

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All correspondence to be sent to the Editor.

Annual Subscriptions inc. postage:

U.K.	U.S.A. & Canada	Australia	Europe (Netherlands)
£11.00	\$31	A\$38	€27.00

All correspondence concerning subscriptions should be addressed to Mr. H. Mercer, 8 Fairleigh Rise, Kington Langley, Chippenham, Wilts. SN15 5QF.

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

You will often hear ministers and God's people say: "Nothing happens by chance," and "All is ordered." It is not always easy to believe this truth when, according to our view of things, it seems just the opposite.

The case of Bernard Gilpin, a persecuted minister in the days of Queen Mary I, is a case in point. He was known as the Bishop of the North because the Lord used him so mightily and extensively in that part of our land.

For some long while Bishop Bonner, who was a violent enemy of the truth, had tried to get Bernard Gilpin arrested. Through God's preserving care he was unable to accomplish his intention whilst the ministry of the Lord's servant was being greatly blessed. However, at last Bonner thought he had enough evidence to arrest Gilpin and so the warrant was signed. Gilpin had been wonderfully forewarned of this by intimation from the Lord. His friends urged him to flee, but he refused, saying that it was the Lord's time that he should testify to the truth, and he was ready, if necessary, to go to the stake, as so many of his friends had already done. He even had a special gown made in which he hoped to be burnt.

Soon the bishop's agents arrived with their warrant, and to the dismay of his friends, Gilpin was taken on the journey south to London. On the way down, through what men would call an accident, although Gilpin knew otherwise, he fell and broke his leg. His callous captor, seeing his added trial, asked what he now thought of the doctrine that nothing happens to us but what is intended for our good? Gilpin replied that he was sure that even this added trial would prove a blessing in the end.

It proved to be true, because whilst he was held up recovering strength to resume his journey, news came that Queen Mary had died, and Gilpin was immediately released. Dear readers, younger and older ones too, you may be in such a path where you cannot see what good can come out of it.

Remember what the Lord Jesus said to Peter: "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." May God give us each patience to wait His time.

With every best wish from your sincere friend and Editor.

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

The text engraved on the wall shown on our front cover this month, can be seen at Pavenham First School in Bedfordshire, England. I wonder how many of our readers know the chapter and verse where it is to be found, without looking it up in a concordance?

Many of the early schools of universal education in England were provided by the national church, the Church of England; so it is quite common to see texts like these engraved on the walls of Victorian school buildings. Not only were the texts engraved on the walls, but the education given to the children was very much based on the Bible. Several generations of school children, therefore, were raised with knowledge of the Scriptures, and this was one of the reasons why Great Britain was at its greatest in that period. As Queen Victoria said: "The secret of England's greatness lay in the Bible." The long decline from its former glory can be directly traced to the exclusion of the Word of God from the classrooms.

However, if the Word of God is excluded from the classroom, it need not be excluded from the home. Many of us have reason to thank God that we have had godly parents who read and prayed over the Word of God with us from our earliest days. So in a natural way, we were taught to seek the Lord early. However, what a blessing if we can say that the Lord has taught us to seek Him. Then we shall surely find Him and prove to be amongst those whom He loves. Those who are thus taught of the Lord will find that seeking is one of the fruits of love to Him.

The largest oak tree in the country was an acorn once.

THE UNKNOWN GOD

Pammehanuit, an Indian of the high class, and his wife, buried their first five children successively within ten days after the birth of each. In the year 1638, which was before the English settled there, a sixth child was born.

The mother, agitated with fears lest this child also should die, took the babe in her arms and walked out into the field, that there she might freely vent her sorrows. Whilst there, it was powerfully suggested to her mind that there is One Almighty God who is to be prayed to; that this God had created all the things that we see; and that the God who had given being to herself and all other people, and who had given this child to her, was easily able to continue his life. Upon this, the poor pagan resolved that she would cry to this God for that mercy. The outcome was that her child lived.

Soon after this, the English came to settle there, and the Indians who were present at some of their devotions, reported that the man who spoke, frequently looked upwards. The woman, hearing this, concluded that their prayers were to that very God whom she had addressed for the life of her child. In this opinion she was soon confirmed when Mr. Mahew preached the gospel there to the Indians, which gospel she readily, cheerfully and cordially embraced. In the confession she made at her admission into the church, she related that preparation for the knowledge of Christ with which God had so wonderfully favoured her. But that which enhances this wonderful mercy is, that this very child proved to be an eminent preacher of Christ among the Indians. His name was Japhet.

An account by Dr. Cotton Mather (Little Gleaner, 1910)

EDITOR'S POSTBAG

First answers to the monthly questions have been received from JOANNA COTTINGTON; AMY and EMILY NORTHERN; CLEMENTINE and MARIA SAYERS; THOMAS WOODHAMS.

*FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES***TWO OFFERINGS**

Two brothers brought two different offerings unto the Lord. One offering was accepted and the other was not. Cain offered the **fruit** he had grown. No doubt, he chose the best fruit he could find. Abel brought a first-born **lamb** from his flock as a sacrifice. *“And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering; but unto Cain and to his offering He had not respect.”*

Cain’s offering came from the ground which God had cursed. Although he worked hard to grow and gather the fruit, it was not the right kind of offering. The works of man, however good, can never take away sin. Cain’s sacrifice was not accepted by God. Abel made his offering unto God *“by faith.”* The blood of the lamb spoke of a better sacrifice to come, even the Lord Jesus Christ. He is *“the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”*

QUESTIONS:

1. What did Cain offer unto the LORD?
2. What did Abel bring as a sacrifice?
3. How did Abel make his offering unto the LORD?
(2 words)

Please 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. Sorrow, pain and death.
2. The ground.
3. The Saviour.

Contributed

*“... for it
is the
blood that
maketh an
atonement
for the soul.”
Leviticus
17. 11.*

BIBLE LESSONS**RAISING THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS**

While all attention was fixed upon the woman who touched the hem of Jesus' garment, the ruler of the synagogue, Jairus, seemed forgotten. At the very time when haste was most needed, everything seemed against it. Why had the woman come just at this time? Why was Jesus so concerned about "somebody" touching Him when the multitude was pressing upon Him? Everything seemed to be going against Jairus. It was taking all too long!

Jairus might well have been one of the Jewish rulers who had interceded on the centurion's behalf, telling the Lord how he had built the synagogue for them. Did he not remember that the centurion asked the Lord to speak the word only and his servant would be healed? Do you remember what the Lord said of the centurion's faith? *"I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."* How Jairus lacked the strong faith of the centurion! On another occasion the Lord had said: *"According to your faith be it unto you"*. Poor Jairus could not believe that the Lord needed only to speak the word and his daughter would live.

While the Lord talks with the woman, the fears of Jairus increase and his hopes sink. Suddenly he sees one of his servants running towards him. What can this mean? His heart breaks as the servant conveys the message: *"Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further?"* For the servant and Jairus, too, it was now too late. There was no point in the Lord going any further. How heart breaking it was! At first, hope sprang up when the Lord agreed to go with him, but now all hope is dashed.

Jesus also heard the words. However, He was not affected in the way that Jairus was. It was not hopeless or impossible to Him. He knew just what Jairus was feeling and quickly spoke words to strengthen him: ***"BE NOT AFRAID, ONLY BELIEVE."***

This would require a good measure of faith. He believed that Jesus could heal his daughter's sickness, but could he

believe that Jesus was able to restore her to life again? The Bible tells us that He "...is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think."

As they draw near to the house, they see a great company of people gathered. They are weeping and wailing so loudly that they can be heard outside the house.

When Jesus entered, He asked them: "*Why make ye this ado, and weep? The damsel is not dead but sleepeth.*" Was Jesus mocking them with such a statement? No, indeed not! His heart was too tender for that. Instead, He would teach them that death was like "sleep" to Him. However, the people laughed at His words and scorned and ridiculed Him. Their unkindness and unbelief could not turn Jesus from His purpose.

He put all the people out. Then, in the presence of Jairus and his wife; Peter, James, and John, He took the damsel by the hand and said: "*Damsel, I say unto thee, arise.*" How powerful is His word! Immediately the little girl rose up and walked. Prior to her death, she was so weak that she could only lie on her bed. Now she immediately walks about. When Jesus gives a command, He gives strength also. Now Jairus knew that there was nothing too hard for the Lord.

You can read about this in Matthew 9. 18-25; Mark 5. 22-43; and Luke 8. 41-56.

QUESTIONS:

1. Finish the sentence: "Thy daughter is dead, why ... "
2. What did Jesus say to strengthen him? (5 words)
3. What did Jesus call death?
4. Which five people did Jesus allow in the room?
5. What did the little girl do when she rose from the dead?

Please 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. Twelve. | 2. The hem of His garment. |
| 3. Somebody. | 4. Virtue (power). |
| 5. Daughter. | |

G.L. TenBroeke

A BOY FROM STAVENISSE

Chapter 5: Through The Hole In The Ice

The next morning there is a thick layer of snow. The boys are busy throwing snowballs and making snowmen. They forget Leen. They have all the more fun when it starts to freeze. A good layer of ice forms on the ditches. The boys hardly have enough patience to wait until the ice is strong enough to bear them.

They zoom down the dyke with their sledges. They stop right in front of the ditch. The most daring do not stop at the bottom of the dyke, but fly over the frozen ditch with their sledges. The others dance with excitement when the ice cracks dangerously.

Jack Waverijn is the most daring. He swoops down the slope with his sledge, flies over the ditch and jumps on to the snow-covered bank on the other side. With a proud look he pulls his sledge up. "And now back again," the children shout.

Jack doesn't let on. He carefully finds the strongest places on the ice and jumps back. The sledge jolts along behind him. Exactly in the middle of the ditch, one foot sinks through the ice. The children at the edge hold their breath. Jack's leg sinks into the cold water. He quickly grabs hold of the sledge and lifts himself out of the hole in the ice. Very carefully, he struggles to the edge. Cold and with a soaking leg, he stands between the boys.

"Great, how exciting," laughs William. Jack pulls up his shoulders indifferently. "Doesn't matter at all. I'm just going to put on dry pants. See you."

He turns around at the top of the dyke. "Boys, there comes Lost. You still have to get even with him for something. Just let him sniff the hole in the ice."

They get into action at once. "Yes, yes, we'll do that. He was mean to us. He stood on the lookout and then secretly ran away. Come on, boys, grab him," shouts William.

He is the first to stand on the top of the dyke and points to Leen Potappel. The boy is on the way home and didn't even

see them at first. They were all at the bottom of the dyke and now they storm towards him. Leen has not time to think. They grab hold of his arms and legs and drag him down the dyke. They stumble over each other in their wild haste and roll over each other in the snow. Snorting and laughing, they jump up again and pull him farther down the slope.

He is pushed on to the ice. He speeds over the ice and plunges into the dark hole in the ice. They cheer at the edge and watch him with vicious pleasure.

Leen is up to his waist in the cold water. Like a wounded bird, his hands grasp for support on the ice. The ice-edge only breaks off further. He cannot pull himself up on anything.

"Come on boys, we're going," calls William.

"Yes, soon he will tell on us when someone comes by," warns another.

"Leen, Leen, we are going home to eat. Just call loudly for help, then you will soon be rescued."

They follow each other to the top, pulling their sledges behind them.

With large, fearful eyes, Leen sees them go. He struggles to stay up. How strange that his legs are becoming so heavy and stiff: like lead. When he cannot move them anymore, he sinks ever deeper into the hole.

Call for help? He has absolutely no strength or breath for that. His chest heaves up and down. His arms hurt from looking for something to take hold of. Die? Now Leen has to die. The cold numbs his thoughts. He is getting so tired. Shall he let go and go to sleep? Is this drowning? He is groggy due to the terrific cold and the biting wind over the ice. He cannot think anymore. The only thing left is to sink away in the dark hole.

A biker rides over the dyke. It is John Van Dommelen. Deeply hunched into his warm coat, he hurries homeward to the warm stove. It sure is cold. Suddenly he sees a pair of gloves in the snow. What happened here? The snow is

roughed up as if there was a fight. Children were playing here. Oh yes. It's nice to go down the dyke on the sledge. He used to play that game, too. If the ice were strong enough the sledge would fly right on to the frozen ditch. That was great fun. John remembers it well. You had to be careful if the ice was not strong enough yet. Then you would sink in with sledge and all.

His eyes glance over the frozen ditch at the bottom of the dyke. Suddenly he steps on his brake. It causes his bike to make a strange motion and he is sliding over the path before he knows it. It is extremely slippery here. Frightened, he looks at the ditch, and again. What is lying there? He decides to take a closer look at the hole in the ice. It is becoming dusk already. But John is not mistaken. A child is in the hole! The child is despairingly grasping for a hold of the slippery ice. After every failed attempt, he sinks deeper into the ice-cold water.

"Keep trying," John cries hoarsely. "Keep trying. I'll get you out." Flat on his stomach, he shuffles towards the boy. He sees the numb hands and swollen fingers. He gets nearer to the hole. He silently asks the Lord for help. "Take that scarf, then I'll pull you out," he says.

With an arch, the scarf lands on the ice right in front of Leen. Leen tries it. His fingers almost cannot move anymore. But suddenly, hope of being rescued flashes through him again. He must do it. He must be pulled out of here. The first attempts fail because his hands are too cold.

John keeps talking to him quietly: "Come on, try it again. It'll work now. I'll pull on the scarf, hold on."

John thinks: "As long as he is a little way out of the hole, I'll be able to grab him." John doesn't dare get any closer to the hole for fear of falling in himself.

Meanwhile another biker approaches on the dyke. Only when he rides around John's fallen bike does he see what is happening on the ice. This biker, an older man, acts just as

swiftly as John. He disappears for a few seconds but returns with a long, sturdy plank.

“Hey there, if you move over a moment, you can lie on this board,” he exclaims breathlessly.

Together, they finally succeed in getting Leen onto the shore. John peels off his soaked coat and wraps him in his own thick coat. Strong arms carry Leen to the farm a little distance away. The older man bangs on the door and immediately opens it.

“A half-drowned child, people. Help him quickly.”

The farmer’s family is just eating supper. Frightened faces look up over the steaming plates of potatoes.

The farmer’s wife is the first to push back her chair. “Ah, that dear child, and with this cold weather.” She doesn’t hesitate, but gets busy at once. Not fifteen minutes later, Leen, surrounded with hot water bottles and in dry clothes, is in the farmer’s bedstead. Exhausted, he falls asleep.

(To be continued)

(Slightly adapted)

A LESSON FROM NOAH

One of the best known of all the stories in the Bible is that of Noah and the Ark. Every girl and boy, who attends chapel or the Sabbath school, knows about the animals going two by two into the ark, and then the dreadful flood that came.

Sadly, most people today mock at the story of Noah and the flood. They say: “How ridiculous!” But never forget, the Lord Jesus believed in Noah and the flood, and spoke most solemnly about it. You can read what He said in Matthew chapter 24, verses 37 to 39. (Have you ever noticed? Most of the Old Testament stories that people mock at, the Lord Jesus Himself mentioned as true!)

There are important things we need to learn from “Noah and the Ark.” It is one of the saddest, most solemn parts of the Bible – not to be smiled at or treated lightly. (We are sure

Satan is behind some of the ridiculous pictures we see in children's books of "Mr. Noah"! Satan would blind their eyes – and ours.)

1. GOD PUNISHES SIN.

God's promise to drown the world and His fulfilment of that promise, are a very clear illustration of the doctrine of divine wrath – that God hates sin and He will punish sin. God is not mocked. The whole world perished except for eight people.

2. THERE WAS ONLY ONE REFUGE.

In love and mercy to Noah and his family, God provided a way of escape – the ark. *It was the only way of escape.* A man might swim to the top of the highest mountain, but it was of no avail. Only in the ark was there safety; it was God's appointed refuge.

It reminds us of the Lord Jesus, the only refuge for sinners taught their need to flee from the wrath of God.

"A refuge for sinners the gospel makes known;
'Tis found in the merits of Jesus alone."

Have you noticed that God did not say: "*Go* into the ark"? He said: "*Come* thou and all thy house into the ark." He Himself was there already!

3. ALL IN THE ARK WERE SAFE.

What a beautiful word that is: "And the LORD shut him in"! Throughout the months of that terrible flood, not one in the ark perished. But never forget, not one outside the ark escaped.

"The ark, the ark, and it alone,
Was safety in the flood,
So Jesus and no other name,
Saves sinners by His blood."

B.A. Ramsbottom

"When God is about to perform any great work, He generally permits some great opposition to it."

John Newton

READING MUSIC

I wonder if any of the young people who read the *Friendly Companion* are learning to play a musical instrument, maybe a recorder, violin, or perhaps the piano? If so, then you can read music. To many people, written music is like a foreign language. I heard of a man once who thought all the black crotchets and quavers on the printed page should be played only on the black notes on the piano keyboard! For those who can read music, this idea is highly amusing!

But does not this show us a great Bible truth, a truth which Job of old declared: "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" Job 11. 7. For, to read music we must be taught, and to understand the things of God we must be taught, too. But the great problem is: firstly, we must have the desire to be taught. Secondly, it is beyond the power of man to teach the heart God's truth; so the great point is, have we seen anything of the holiness of God and that we are but worms before Him? Have we felt that greatest of all burdens, that we are hell-deserving sinners? There have been those of the Lord's people who have known of these convicting things very early in their lives, and there are others with just the opposite experience. It is said that there was a man when young, who heard George Whitfield preach in England. In later years, the man emigrated to America, and it was not until he was one hundred years old that those Bible truths, as preached by Whitfield, were by God's grace brought back to his memory, and made a blessing unto salvation to him.

Now when we start to learn to read music, we start very simply: perhaps with just one octave of notes, of which to learn the names. As the weeks progress, so we learn more and more of this vast subject. For the encouragement of those who are young in the faith, I would say it is the same with the knowledge of the Lord Jesus. Did not the Lord Jesus say in Mark 4. 28: "First the *blade*, then the *ear*, after that the *full corn in the ear*."? We have, too, God's promise to His people

in Philippians 1. 6: "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

I know that many of us struggle very hard to read music and to play well. The Christian life is the same, but with one great difference: from the youngest to the eldest, it is God's work to teach and to keep each one whose hope is alone in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Contributed

BIBLE WORDS/WORDS OF SCRIPTURE (V)

Church

If you were to ask most people what the church is, they would probably point you to a large, old building with a steeple, as can be found in most villages and towns. You may sometimes hear the word used to describe a denomination, such as the Church of England. Some use it as a general term to describe several denominations; or someone may say that they "go to church." If we examine the Word of God carefully, we shall find that the word "church" never refers to a building, or to a denomination or denominations, or to a place to go.

"Church" is a New Testament word. It comes from a Greek word "ecclesia" and it really means a people who are called and gathered. Although the word "church" is not found in the Old Testament, there are similar terms used. For example, Psalm 22. 22 says: "I will declare Thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee." The Apostle quotes this in Hebrews 2. 12 but uses the word "church" instead of "congregation," meaning the brethren gathered together. So the only right use of the word "church" is to refer to a called and gathered people.

In the Bible, the word "church" is used in two ways: firstly, and most importantly, it means all those people whom God the Father has loved from eternity, for whom Christ died, and whom the Holy Spirit quickens and teaches. "Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it." He says, "I will build My

church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” One by one, each and every member of the church of Christ shall be called by divine grace. They shall be gathered to spend a never-ending eternity with Christ in glory, “even as many” (no more and no less) “as the Lord our God shall call.” They are called by grace from darkness to light, and they are called out, no longer to walk in the ways of the world and all vain religion: “Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord.”

The second way the word “church” is used in the Bible, is to describe a gathering of the Lord’s people in a particular place. So we find Paul writing “unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints” and “unto the churches of Galatia,” for example. Again, we see that this is a gathering together of people that are called. Sadly and solemnly, there were some that were joined to the churches who were not called and gathered by God. We can read, for instance, of Ananias and Sapphira, and Demas. It is good to meet with the Lord’s people and attend a place where the truth is preached, but this of itself does not mean that we are called and gathered by God. Even if we have been baptised and have our name on the church roll, this does not necessarily mean that we are a member of the church of Christ. Jesus said that there shall be *many* who have made a profession, to whom He shall say: “I never knew you.” How searching! We must personally be born again and called by the Holy Spirit if we are to be amongst the Lord’s gathered people, and “put among the children.”

The church of Christ are the most blessed people on earth. They are saved with an everlasting salvation, and they shall be gathered with the redeemed souls already in heaven. May our earnest prayer be:

“With them numbered may I be,
Now and through eternity.”

J. Humphries.

Contributed

BEES

If you have a certain space, as a room, to fill up with closets, or little cells, all of the same size and shape, there are only three figures which will answer, and enable you to fill the room without losing any space between the cells; they must either be squares, or figures of three equal sides, or figures of six equal sides. With any other figures whatsoever, space would be lost between the cells. This is evident upon considering the matter; and it is proved by mathematical reasoning.

The six-sided figure is by far the most convenient of those three shapes, because its corners are flatter, and any round body placed in it has therefore more space, less room being lost in the corners. The figure, too, is the strongest of the three; any pressure from without or from within will hurt it least, as it has something of the strength of an arch. A round figure would be still stronger, but then room would be lost between the circles, whereas with the six-sided figure none is lost.

Now, it is a most remarkable fact, that *bees* build their cells exactly in this shape, and thereby save both room and materials beyond what they could save if they built in any other shape whatsoever. They build in the very best possible shape for their purpose, which is to save all the room and all the wax they can.

So far, as to the shape of the walls of each cell: but the roof and the floor, or top and bottom, are built on equally true principles. It is proved by mathematicians that, to give the greatest strength and save the most room, the roof and floor must be made of three square planes meeting in a point; and they have further proved by a demonstration belonging to the highest parts of algebra, that there is one particular angle or inclination of those planes to each other where they meet, which makes a greater saving of materials and of work than any other inclination whatever could possibly do. Now the *bees* actually make the tops and bottoms of their cells of three planes meeting in a point; and the inclinations or angles at

which they meet are precisely those found out by the mathematician to be the best possible for saving wax and work.

It is scarcely less singular, that the breadth of all bees' cells are everywhere precisely the same, the drone, or male cells, being five-eighteenths and the worker or female cells, thirteen-sixtieths of an inch in breadth, and this in all countries and times.

Who would dream of the *bee* knowing the highest branch of the mathematics? This little insect works with a truth and correctness which is perfect and according to the principles at which man has arrived, only after ages of slow improvement in the most difficult branch of the most difficult science. But the mighty and all-wise Creator, who made both the insect and the mathematician, gives ability to the mathematician, but the bee is given an amazing instinct which works without the need for reason or mathematics. God has a knowledge that completely surpasses all the ideas and calculations of the wisest human being.

*"Two Discourses in Science," Lord Brougham.
(Slightly adapted)*

THE PRAYER MEETING

What is the use of a prayer meeting? There are many uses. Believers are encouraged and strengthened; the cause of God is maintained; the truth of God is watered after it is sown; and prosperity is rained down through the opened windows of heaven, according to the Lord's promise.

In the beginning of the year 1799, the godly Thomas Charles of Bala, lost a thumb through frostbite. Alarming symptoms arose, and his friends feared that his life was in danger. A special prayer meeting was appointed. Fervent supplications were offered to God on his behalf and one person in particular, an old man, was much noticed for his very importunate prayer. Referring to the fifteen years added to Hezekiah's life, he entreated the Lord to spare Mr. Charles' life at least fifteen years. He repeated the following words with such importunity as greatly affected all present: "Fifteen years

more, O Lord! We beseech Thee to add fifteen years more to the life of Thy servant. And wilt Thou not, oh our God, give fifteen years more, for the sake of Thy church and Thy cause?"

The prayers of the loving people were heard, and Mr. Charles set to work again with renewed vigour. He often said he must be diligent, as the fifteen years would soon be up.

As this period drew near to its close, he frequently named it in conversation; and about a year before his death, he spoke freely and fully to the poor man who in 1799 had so fervently asked God to prolong his life. He often expressed a desire to live to see his Welsh Bible printed: "Then I will be content," he said, "to lie my head upon my pillow and die." He did live to see it completed; and the last words he ever wrote were: "It is finished," in reference to that. And, what is remarkable, he died within a week of the close of fifteen years from the date of the poor man's prayer.

It was during this term of fifteen years that Mr. Charles did the most important work of his life – labour that bears fruit all over the world to the present day. He wrote several books, organised Sunday schools throughout Wales, translated the Bible into Welsh, and was instrumental, with others, in the establishment of the Bible Society. It was through him that Wales was supplied with the Word of God; and many distant lands have blessed the name of Thomas Charles. Who can tell the full results of that fervent prayer of a simple old Welsh Christian? This, remember, was at a *prayer meeting*.

Cbeering Words September 1986

QUESTION: Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?

ANSWER: The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ who, being the Lord of life and glory, became man, and so was, and continues to be, God and Man in two distinct natures but one Person for ever.

Genesis 3. 15; Matthew 1. 21, 23; John 1. 14; 1 Timothy 2. 5 & 3. 16; Hebrews 1. 1-9 and 2. 9 and 13. 8.

*BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES***CHRIST IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS****The Bride The Lamb's wife**

In the above Scripture, we have recorded the first marriage, a sacred ordinance: "instituted of God in the time of man's innocency, signifying the mystical union between Christ and His Church." We must always remember that marriage was instituted by God to reveal a very sacred precious truth. The holy God of heaven: Father, Son and Holy Ghost, covenanted to redeem the church. In the decrees of that covenant, we read: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Galatians 4. 4-5). He became our near Kinsmen, our elder Brother.

The Holy Spirit gives us some sacred instruction in Ephesians 5. 23-33, as to how the marriage covenant represents the sacred union between Christ and the church: "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the church: and He is the Saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5. 23-27).

The Lord Jesus says to His bride: "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). Then in the Book of the Revelation, we have revealed to us the final state of the bride and the fulfilling of these words. In chapter

21 verse 9: "Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." Also: "... Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints" (Revelation 19. 6-8). In Psalm 45 we have the bride of Christ revealed as washed and clothed: washed in the blood of Christ, clothed in the righteousness of Christ: "The King's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto Thee. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the King's palace" (Psalm 45. 13-15).

The Lord speaks to His bride, His church, in the Holy Scriptures in the Book of Jeremiah "... for I am married unto you..." (Jeremiah 3. 14); in the Book of Isaiah: "For thy Maker is thine Husband; the LORD of hosts is His name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall He be called" (Isaiah 54. 5) and in the Book of Hosea: "And I will betroth thee unto Me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto Me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto Me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD" (Hosea 2. 19-20). Then in the Song of Solomon, Christ speaks of His spouse as He looks upon her clothed in His righteousness, washed in His precious blood, free from all sin: "Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee" (Song of Solomon 4. 7).

J.R. Rutt

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about THE LIFE OF SAMUEL. 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). Remember to give your

name and address and to write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

1. What does the name Samuel mean? (1 Samuel 1. 20)
2. What testimony did his mother, Hannah, bear concerning him when he was born? (1 Samuel 1. 27)
3. What name did Samuel give to the stone set up between Mizpeh and Shen. What does the name mean? (1 Samuel 7. 12)
4. On one occasion Samuel said: "How can I go?" What had the LORD commanded him to do? (1 Samuel 16. 2)
5. To whom did Samuel say, "When thou wast little in thine own sight..."? (1 Samuel 15. 17)
6. In 1 Samuel 3, what was the difference between Samuel's religion in verse 7 and in verse 21?
7. Samuel "cried unto the LORD for Israel; and the LORD heard him." How did the LORD answer Samuel's prayer? (1 Samuel 7)
8. On one occasion Samuel was displeased. Why, and what did he do? (1 Samuel 8)
9. The LORD was also displeased. What did He do in answer to Samuel's prayer to show His displeasure? (1 Samuel 12)
10. Whose name is linked with Samuel in the Book of Jeremiah, as being one who also had to plead with God on behalf of His people?

ANSWERS TO APRIL QUESTIONS

1. "Whited sepulchres."
2. The Gibeonites.
3. David.
4. Give alms, pray, fast.
5. Jeroboam's wife.
6. Saul had not slain all the animals, nor the king of the Amalakites as God had commanded. (1 Samuel 15. 8-9)
7. Ahab coveted Naboth's vineyard and had broken the tenth commandment. (Deuteronomy 5. 21)
8. Death, as Ehud stabbed the King of Moab. (Judges 3. 21-22).
9. Judas Iscariot. (John 6. 70-71)
10. Saul (1 Samuel 28. 8); Ahab (1 Kings 22. 30).

Contributed

SCRIPTURAL WISHES

Daniel's wisdom may I know,
Stephen's faith and spirit, too;
John's divine communion feel,
Moses' meekness, Martha's zeal.
May I with unwearied Paul,
Win the day and conquer all:
Mary's love may I possess,
Lydia's tender-heartedness.
Peter's ardent spirit feel,
And, like him, to Christ appeal;
Like young Timothy, may I
Every sinful passion fly.
Job's long patience may I know;
David's deep devotion, too;
Samuel's pious, filial care;
Mine be Jacob's wrestling prayer.
May Isaiah's hallowed fire
All my fervent heart inspire;
Joseph's purity impart;
Isaac's meditative heart.
Abraham's friendship, how sublime!
Might I call that blessing mine.
More than all, may I pursue
The lovely pattern Jesus drew:
And in my life and conduct show
How He conversed and lived below,
And follow close the suffering Lord
And may His image be restored.

Selected

The Friendly Companion



“And none can keep alive his own soul.”
(Psalm 22. 29)

June 2008

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All correspondence to be sent to the Editor.

Annual Subscriptions inc. postage:

U.K.	U.S.A. & Canada	Australia	Europe (Netherlands)
£11.00	\$31	A\$38	€27.00

All correspondence concerning subscriptions should be
addressed to Mr. H. Mercer, 8 Fairleigh Rise, Kington Langley,
Chippenham, Wilts. SN15 5QF.

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

Perhaps of all the animals mentioned in the Bible, none is better known than the sheep. The most well known chapter in the Scriptures is Psalm 23, although the question has to be asked: how many of us know the Shepherd?

Amongst many lessons which can be found in this short Psalm, there are seven which seem to stand out:

1. The Shepherd is present in every verse.
2. The sheep follow the Shepherd wherever He leads them.
3. In the first three verses, the sheep talk *of* the Shepherd, but from verse four, when He is most needed, the sheep talk *to* the Shepherd.
4. The shadow in verse four cannot hurt the sheep, any more than the shadow of a dog can bite.
5. The presence of the Shepherd is greater than the presence of the enemies of the sheep.
6. All of the flock reach the house of the LORD, to dwell there for ever. Not an hoof is left behind.
7. The personal key to the whole Psalm is the fourth word: "*my*." To be given the faith to say that, is like entering the door into the sheepfold and joining the flock.

Some years ago, a little girl was reciting Psalm 23 before the congregation at a Sunday School Anniversary service. She was very nervous and misquoted the very first verse. Instead of saying: "*The LORD is my Shepherd, I shall not want*," she mistakenly said: "*The LORD is my Shepherd, that's all I want*." To several in the congregation the unintended mistake was a sweet lesson to them.

May each of our readers be graciously concerned to know the key to the Psalm for themselves. Then it will not only be truly said: "*I shall not want*," but also it will be said: "*That's all I want*."

With every best wish from your sincere friend and Editor.

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

The magnificent water trough in our picture this month is to be found at Whipsnade Zoo in Bedfordshire. On it are engraved two texts: **“O LORD, Thou preservest man and beast”** and **“With Thee is the fountain of life.”** Both of these texts are to be found in one of the psalms. Do you know which one?

It is difficult for those of us who live in very wet countries where there is plenty of rain, to fully appreciate how precious water is in those parts of the world where rainfall is very scarce. We should always remember that it is God who provides the necessary climate for the continuance of man on the face of this earth.

Did you know that you can live much longer without food than you can without water? Do you remember who it is that cried: “I thirst,” not long before He died?

In the Bible, the Holy Spirit is likened to water in several places. This reminds us how vital it is for us to have the Holy Spirit in our hearts, for our souls to live. The Lord Jesus said: “If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water.”

The trough in the picture has been filled with earth and has plants in it, but when used for providing drinking water for animals, a trough must often be refilled. So we cannot keep alive our own souls: they need to be continually refilled, like a trough. So the two texts on the sides are not only true for the keeping alive of man and beast, but they also have a message for those who fear God. He alone can keep alive the souls of His people and He does it by the gift of His Holy Spirit.

HOW COULD NOAH CARE FOR ALL THE ANIMALS?

Have you ever wondered how Noah and his family could have looked after so many animals while they were in the ark for a year?

In some parts of the world, farmers need to house their animals inside for many months during the winter, which is

similar to Noah's task. People in those countries have solved the problem in various ways.

One type of stable or sheepfold in the Netherlands is called a Potstal. In such a structure there are large, tall, stone supports at the base of each wooden column, of which there are many to support the weight of the roof. The purpose of using the sufficiently tall stone supports is to allow the animal waste to build up during the winter without causing the wooden columns to rot away, due to prolonged contact with the waste over the years. Both wood and stone were readily available building materials to Noah and he and his family had many years to skilfully and intelligently prepare the ark, owing to the goodness and kindness of God's specific and unerring directions, which Noah scrupulously obeyed.

The farmer, or Noah, continuously adds straw on top of the existing layer when it becomes soiled by animal waste. By the end of the winter, the layer "bedding" has grown as much as half a metre (one and a half feet). However, the environment continues to remain clean and sweet smelling. Similar stables also house cows and horses.

Postals are still popular today with environmentally friendly farms. The farmer often keeps the clean straw above the animals, in lofts, saving space and labour.

Another kind of stable is the Grupstal, which is also still used. There, all the animals face towards the wall and are fed on that side. The waste falls into the long line of gutters running down the centre of the building from end to end. This type of stable is easy to clean and requires less straw. If Noah had used a stable like this, he could have discharged the waste into the flood waters and used water to flush the stable clean. It is also easy to feed the animals in a Grupstal by simply throwing the food into the "food gutter" constructed under the heads of the animals all facing the same way towards the outer walls of the structure.

Creation Magazine December 2007/February 2008 (Precis)

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**GOD REMEMBERED NOAH**

Rain poured down from the sky and springs of water gushed up from the ground. For forty days and nights it continued without stopping. The whole earth was covered with water; even the high hills and mountains were covered.

The earth had become corrupt and filled with violence through the wickedness of man. God said that He would destroy man with a flood. *"But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD."* Before the flood came, God told him to build an ark. Noah and his family (eight persons) were shut safe inside the ark. Two (male and female) of every kind of animal, bird, and creeping thing were kept alive with them in the ark. Every living thing on the earth died in the flood; *"Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark."*

How fearful they must have been as the anger of God was poured out upon the earth! Yet they were safe inside the ark as it floated upon the waters. *"And God remembered Noah"*. He caused the rain to stop and made a wind pass over the earth to dry up the waters. After being in the ark for a whole year, God spoke unto Noah, saying: *"Go forth of the ark, ... "*

QUESTIONS:

1. For how many days and nights did the rain continue?
2. Who found grace in the eyes of the LORD?
3. Where were they kept safe?

Please 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. Fruit.
2. A lamb.
3. By faith. *(Contributed)*

*“ ... in
wrath
remember
mercy.”
Habakkuk
3. 2.*

BIBLE LESSONS**THE EYES OF THE BLIND OPENED**

Because Jairus was a ruler of the synagogue, he was very well known and much in the public eye. When Jesus raised his daughter to life again, the news spread rapidly through the city and regions round about. Everywhere people were talking about the wonderful miracle.

As Jesus left the house of Jairus, He made His way through the streets of Capernaum toward the house He would lodge in. Two men began to follow after Him, crying unto Him and saying: *"Thou Son of David, have mercy on us."* What was their sickness or complaint? Sadly, they were both blind. Although they could not see Jesus, they had heard of Him. It is likely that they had heard what He did to Jairus' daughter, and they believed He could cure their blindness. Although naturally blind, they were blessed with spiritual sight and understanding. They believed that Jesus was the long promised Messiah.

Their cry must have pleased the Lord Jesus, yet strangely, He did not stop or even acknowledge them. They kept crying out the same words, but Jesus kept walking. Finally, He arrived at the house where He would stay, and entered in. What about the two blind men? Would Jesus just forget them? Did He not say: *"ASK, and it shall be given you"*? What a trial of their faith!

The blind men were persuaded that Jesus could open their eyes. Somehow they managed to enter the house. What a wonder! The two blind men came to where Jesus was. Finally Jesus spoke to them: *"Believe ye that I am able to do this?"* How the question stirred their hearts! Although their bodily eyes were darkened, the eyes of their understanding were full of light. They believed on Jesus, in His power, His mercy, and even His willingness. They answered with all their heart: *"Yea, Lord."*

Still the Lord put them to the test. As He touched their eyes, He said: *"According to your faith be it unto you."* What a test!

Was their faith real? Was it true, God given faith? Immediately their eyes were opened and they saw Jesus first of all.

As the two men left the house, another poor afflicted man was brought in. It was just like your doctor's surgery, one after another came for help. For this reason Jesus is known as the heavenly Physician. This man was possessed with a devil. The devil had stopped his mouth so he could no longer talk with his friends. Jesus commanded the devil to leave the poor man, just as He had done for the mad Gadarene. When the devil departed, the man's tongue was loosed and he spake. We are not told what he said, but we may believe that, like the two blind men, he was pleased to tell of the mercy and power of Jesus.

The multitudes were filled with wonder and awe, saying: "*It was never so seen in Israel.*" The Pharisees watched helplessly while Jesus performed the miracles. Their hearts were full of enmity, while the people sang His praise. They tried to cast doubt upon everything Jesus had done. They were raging mad against Him. They boldly dared to say: "*He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils.*" They meant to say that Jesus was a servant of the devil. The Bible tells us that He cast devils out by the power of God.

You can read about this in Matthew chapter 9 verses 26 to 35.

QUESTIONS:

1. What did the blind men call Jesus?
2. What sight were they blessed with?
3. Who did they believe Jesus was?
4. Who did the Pharisees say He cast out devils through? (5 words)
5. What does the Bible say He cast them out by? (4 words)

Please 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. Troublest thou the Master.
2. Be not afraid, only believe.
3. Sleep.
4. Jairus and his wife; Peter, James, and John.
5. Walked.

G.L. TenBroeke

A BOY FROM STAVENISSE**Chapter 6: To The Fair**

It is spring. The long severe winter is past. The trees have bright green buds. Everything in nature receives a new colour and a new look.

Leen has been quite ill. He had pneumonia from which he recovered rather slowly. Now the sun is beginning to shine again and Mother sees to it that he is outside as much as possible. He also goes to school again. He is quieter than ever.

"I am worried about Leen," Mother says one day. Father stretches his legs. Rest feels good after a day of hard work in the field. Mother is darning socks at the table. "Worried about Leen? You never get complaints from the headmaster anymore, do you?"

Mother shakes her head. "No, that I don't. But still he is so different from the other children of his age. He is often troubled about dying and hell. I often hear him praying aloud in his room or on the haystack. He always speaks about dying unconverted, not having a new heart and that he does not love the Lord."

Father sits up with a jerk. "Wait a minute. That is not child's talk, is it? Has it not passed yet, or did it come back again after he was in the hole in the ice? He probably hears about death at the fellowship meeting at my mother's house."

Mother hesitates. Leen does visit his grandmother often. Now that his grandfather died last month, the child goes there still more often. Converted people from the village and from the surrounding area go there. Mother knows from Grandmother that Leen loves joining in. With shining eyes, which clearly show his longing, he can quietly listen the entire evening. "Maybe he does not improve because he listens to those old people," she says more to herself than to her husband.

Father continues: "Such a young child should not lay awake about matters such as death and eternity, yet. Then things go

wrong in his little head. We should see to it that he gets more joy in his little life.”

“Yes,” says Mother, “but how? He absolutely does not want to play and mess around with the other boys, let alone get into mischief. And I notice that they tease him. That is kind of his own fault, for he does not want to join in. They think he is an odd boy.”

Father does not know what to say to this. Such a young child! How is it possible? That child is more concerned about being unconverted, than he. And he is much older. Father does not worry himself about eternity very much. His mother thinks so differently from what he does. He does not want to raise his children this way. To always think about death and hell would make a person mad. Is it not his mother’s fault that his child has become the way he is? Leen should be raised much more cheerfully. He cannot forbid it, the boy loves going to his grandmother. Father does not dare to forbid it, either, for he also loves Grandmother very much.

Pondering, he stares outside. Slowly a plan forms in his head. “Then we have to see to it that he gets happy things in his life. What do you think about taking him along to the fair next week?”

Mother thinks it is a risky plan. The fair? “Do not let your mother hear about it! You were never allowed to go there as a child.”

“No, certainly not. If you went to the fair, your punishment would be that you would go to hell.” Father smiles. He thinks easier about this now. “Going to the fair, for once, would not cause me to lie awake,” he says. “You should not make such an issue about everything. God surely will understand that a child like that should have some fun once in a while.”

Mother worries. Her boy is so very sensitive. Why does he love going to his grandmother? Do we speak too little about the Lord at home? Does he feel his father’s indifference? Mother doubts that the fair will help. Does her boy seek that kind of

happiness? Will it not become all the worse inside him?"

Father thinks they should try it. "What if it helps our sad little boy? You are very worried about Leen's distress. Something has to happen."

"Let us try it then. Please do not say anything about it when you visit your mother. She would have a fit."

Father pulls up his shoulder. "She is turning him into an old worrier." She cannot blame us if we want to cheer him up, can she?"

(To be continued)

(Slightly adapted)

A LESSON FROM SAMUEL

Samuel is one of the lovely characters of the Word of God. You remember that he was known as "the seer." What is a seer? Well, it is another name for a prophet; but really a seer is "someone who sees." And Samuel did see – he saw God. That word belongs to Samuel: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

But not only did Samuel see. He also heard. And the best-known story of Samuel is the one of how he heard the voice of God and at first thought it was Eli speaking to him.

You remember the story well, don't you? Samuel was serving God in the temple. His mother had "lent him to the Lord." He had to help the aged high priest, Eli. We do not know how old Samuel was at this time, but the ancient Jews said he was twelve.

Well, I am not going to tell you the story but try to tell you what we can learn from it.

1. GOD SPEAKS

In Old Testament times, God spoke in all kinds of ways. You can think of some of them: dreams, visions, by the prophets, through the ceremonies, with an audible voice. In the Lord Jesus He has "spoken unto us by His Son."

But God still speaks. He speaks to us in His Word, the Bible. He still speaks personally, as He did to Samuel. You may be

reading God's Word, or listening to the minister, or seeking God in prayer, or even walking down the street – and some portion of Scripture is very powerfully impressed on your heart. It is God speaking to you. Or you may hear God's voice in something which happens – a death or a disappointment.

Some girls and boys say: "How do I know it is God speaking? It might be Satan, or just my imagination, or just something flashing into my mind." Well, if God speaks, you will know it *by the effect*. It will remain with you. It will humble you. Your spirit will be graciously affected.

2. SOMETIMES GOD SPEAKS SOLEMN THINGS

It was a terribly solemn message God sent to Samuel. He had to tell old Eli of the terrible things which were coming upon him and his family.

Do not think that if God speaks to you, it will always be joy. Sometimes it will make you tremble – when God shows you what you are, or corrects you.

3. NONE ARE TOO YOUNG TO HEAR GOD'S VOICE

Samuel was only a boy, but God spoke to him. (And solemnly, Eli was an aged man, and God did *not* speak to him – at least, not at this time!) None is too young to hear God's voice.

4. WE CAN ASK GOD TO SPEAK TO US

Samuel did. Eli told him to do so. He prayed: "Speak; for thy servant heareth." May we ask God to speak, and may we listen.

That is a good prayer (prayed to the Lord Jesus, and asking Him to speak to us personally): "SAY UNTO MY SOUL, I AM THY SALVATION."

"O give me Samuel's ear,
The open ear, O Lord,
Alive and quick to hear
Each whisper of Thy Word;
Like him to answer at Thy call,
And to obey Thee first of all."

B.A. Ramsbottom

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

Do you know where your heart is? Put your hand to your chest and see if you can feel it beating. Did you put your hand to the left side of your chest? Many people think that the heart is on the left side of your chest but it is actually almost exactly in the middle, between your two lungs. It tips to the left at the bottom which is why we can feel it more in the left side of our chest.

If you want to know how big your heart is, then make a fist. A child's heart is about the size of its fist. An adult woman's heart will weigh about eight ounces (200 grams). A man's will weigh about ten ounces (250 grams).

Your heart is a large muscle with a very important job – to pump blood around your body. Every part of your body needs oxygen to make it work and your blood supplies this oxygen around your body. Your heart is the busy pump, pushing the blood around your body, taking back the used blood and getting it ready to pump around your body again, over and over.

The heart is divided into four parts called chambers. There are two chambers at the top of the heart and two at the bottom. The top chambers are called the *left* and *right atria*. If you are only talking about one of them it is called an *atrium*. The bottom chambers are called the *left* and *right ventricles*.

Each time your heart beats it does so in two stages. First of all the blood from the left and right atria is pumped into the left and right ventricles (from the top two chambers to the bottom two). The blood is then pumped out of the heart from these two chambers.

The right side of the heart collects blood that has already been around the body. Because this blood has been used, it is low in oxygen, so it is sent to the lungs to get some more oxygen. Once the blood has oxygen, it is sent back into the heart, to the left atrium this time, and is then sent off around the body once more, out of the left ventricle.

The used blood comes into the right atrium, down to the right ventricle, to the lungs to be refreshed, back to the heart

to the left atrium, down to the left ventricle, out around the whole of your body all in about twenty seconds!

The blood that is carried away from your heart is taken along tubes called your *arteries* and the blood that is taken back to your heart is taken along tubes called your *veins*. In one day your blood will travel about 12,000 miles!

Your pulse is the number of times your heart beats in a minute. This will depend on your age. A newborn baby will have a pulse of about 130 beats a minute; a 3-6 year old will have a pulse of about 100; an 8 year old about 90 and a 12 year old 85. An adult pulse can be anything between 60-100.

Your heart will beat about 100,000 times in a day. It will beat about 35 million times in a year.

If you had a pump that was used for many years without being looked after, it would start to clog up and stop working properly. The same is true of your heart. If you do not do any exercise and eat the wrong sorts of foods, then the tubes in your heart will start to clog up when you get older. This will put more pressure on your heart and make it more likely to stop working. This is why it is very important to look after your heart. To do so, you must eat healthy foods and get plenty of exercise.

The Explorer November 2006

When the Word of God speaks about the heart, it most often refers to the spiritual part of our being. If we should take care of the health of our physical heart we should be even more concerned about the health of our spiritual heart. By nature it is incapable of good and is clogged up with sin, unbelief and all that God's Word condemns. We need a new heart if we are to be spiritually healthy. King Saul had another heart given him, but it was not one renewed by grace. His actions showed that his heart was not right with God. David was a man after God's own heart. He had a new heart in which the Spirit of God reigned, although he had a lot of trouble with his old heart, too! The following verses show us what importance David gave to his heart:

"The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart...."
Psalm 34. 18.

"The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide." Psalm 37. 31.

"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm 51. 10.

"My heart is fixed...." Psalm 57. 7.

"Your heart shall live that seek God." Psalm 69. 32.

"Blessed are they that ... seek Him with the whole heart."
Psalm 119. 2.

"Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee." Psalm 119. 11.

"Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Psalm 139. 23, 24.

May we seek and be given such an heart as David had.

Editor

BIBLE WORDS/WORDS OF SCRIPTURE (VI)

Covenant

We read of many covenants in the Bible. God made a covenant with Noah after the flood. He made a covenant with David. We read of a "covenant of peace," and an "everlasting covenant." What is a covenant?

A covenant is a promise. It is a fixed agreement between two or more people who agree to do those things they have promised. There is a purpose for the promise. For example, someone may promise, or covenant, with a charity to give a sum of money each year. They sign a document as an evidence of the covenant.

The covenants in the Bible are also promises. Some promises have conditions and others have no conditions. The covenant to Noah and all of mankind was that God would not flood the world again. There were no conditions that man has to keep in order for that covenant to continue, and it will be

kept “while the earth remaineth.” The covenant God made with David was a promise that an heir of David’s would always be on the throne of Israel, but there was a condition. God said: “If thy children will keep My covenant and My testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon thy throne for evermore.” David’s sons did not keep the covenant, and so the earthly kings did not continue. (The word is fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of David, whose kingdom shall never end.)

The holy law of God is also referred to as a covenant. It is a promise of life, but only if that law is fully satisfied. None of us can possibly keep it. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. All who are under this covenant must perish, “because they continued not” in it.

But there is a better covenant, “established upon better promises,” which is known as the covenant of grace. This is a covenant which the Lord made and secured; man had no part in it. God keeps this covenant, and that means it is absolutely certain. 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, and He will bring them to glory. He also works grace in their hearts, saying: “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.”

This covenant is eternal. It was made before time began. It is ordered in all things and sure. It will stand for ever, even after this world passes away, so the Lord’s people are safe for all eternity.

May we be brought to know by experience the blessings of this covenant, through the covenant love of Christ, and the salvation He has secured.

Contributed

THE BLACKSMITH

I wonder if any of you have seen a blacksmith at work? Do you know what work a blacksmith does? In Isaiah 44. 12 and Isaiah 54. 16, we read something of the nature of the blacksmith's work. Indeed, it was hot work in the heat of the forge and dirty from the smoke of the fire.

Years ago, every village and town had a blacksmith. He was a very important man in the community, for not only did he make and fit new metal plates to horses' feet (we call them horseshoes) but the blacksmith made lots of things of metal that the people needed, such as gates and fences, hooks and brackets. In the villages he would repair the broken farm implements for the farmers.

Now let us read Isaiah 41. 7: "So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smootheth with the hammer him that smote the anvil, saying, It is ready for the soldering; and he fastened it with nails, that it should not be moved." This speaks of such a person who joined pieces of metal together, although perhaps not quite in the same way as we are speaking about. Sometimes the blacksmith had to join two pieces of iron together and to do this he would heat up the two pieces in a very hot fire until the metal was almost white hot, then lay them on the anvil and hammer them together so the two pieces of metal became one: we would call it "welded" together. When the two pieces were joined in such a manner, you could not see where they were joined, nor indeed could it be broken again into two pieces.

To see this done would be a source of great enjoyment to the children who would watch the blacksmith at work: for the blacksmith would make lots of sparks and noise to the delight of the watching children. Isaiah chapter 41 in some ways is a very sad chapter for it speaks of the people making an idol. The nations round about Israel had witnessed how God had undertaken for Jacob's family when He brought them out of Egypt; how God provided for them and settled them in the land of promise. This demonstrated God's great goodness and

mercy to the people of Israel, yet this meant nothing to those nations round about. They continued, as verse 7 tells us, in making vain and useless idols. The carpenter cut and shaped the wood to make the body of the idol, the goldsmith made up the gold plates ready for the workmen to join together, just as our blacksmith might have joined two pieces of metal together for his customer. Then it was all put together.

I do hope that my readers will be able to read the verses that follow verse 7, for in them God speaks through the prophet Isaiah wonderful words of encouragement: words to encourage God's ancient people, not to look to the false gods of this world, but to God alone for all needed help.

So what does all this mean for us? It must, I think, be a warning to all of us, to see that it is so easy for us to look away from the Lord Jesus Christ for all needed help when times of difficulty arise; when we perhaps come to a crossroads in life; when those times of decision-making come in school life regarding what subjects to take. For many of the Lord's people, Proverbs 3. 5-6, trusting the Lord to direct their paths, has been made their prayer in times when they have sought to know God's leading, and, praise God, many will say that God did hear their prayer. May the Lord help us not to look to any other, however attractive our own wisdom may seem. (I am sure those workmen in verse 7 made a very good job of their idol.) I know that even the youngest who read the *Friendly Companion* have from time to time those things that concern them, when they want to know the right way: then may grace be given to look to the Lord Jesus Christ for all needed help.

If you have a metalwork lesson at school, it may involve soldering and brazing, or even welding. Remember the smith in the Scriptures, and be not like them who make idols. For the last verse in chapter 41 says of the idols: "Behold they are all vanity; their works are nothing: their molten images are wind and confusion."

Contributed

“OUR LIFE’S MINUTEST CIRCUMSTANCE”

Sometimes we may be inclined to think that miracles, conspicuous answers to prayer, and other remarkable works of God, occurred only in Biblical times, or at least many years ago. However, the incident to which this short article refers, occurred in March 2008.

A man and his wife with some young children, necessarily took turns in going to chapel on Lord’s Day evenings, calling on the way to pick up an old lady who wished to attend. On this occasion it was the wife, Louise, who was to call. However, during the afternoon, the old lady telephoned to say that she would be unable to go out that evening. She was, in fact, in some distress. This was partly because her sight, for which she had had recent treatment, had suddenly become much poorer, so that she was almost blind, but more particularly because she was weak and very hungry. She had been unable to eat all day, as she had lost her dentures, and could find nothing in the house soft enough for her to eat. There was, in fact, some tinned food that would have been suitable, but being nearly blind, she was unable to read the labels on the tins to see what was in them. Louise, therefore, went to her house to take her some soup, and to look for the teeth.

Of course, she began by looking in all the more likely places, and then started to look at others less likely, meanwhile praying to the Lord for direction in the search. After a time, when Louise was near to giving up the search, she had a strong impression in her mind: “Look UNDER the mattress.” She had already searched under the bed, although she had hardly supposed that the teeth would be in such a highly improbable place, but nevertheless felt obliged to tell the old lady she would look again. Lifting the mattress, she found the teeth on the floor under the middle of the bed. The bed had a slatted base, and underneath the bed all sorts of bags and other items had been stuffed. This meant that Louise had been unable to see the very middle of the bed, where the teeth were, without actually lifting the mattress. The old lady had no idea how the dentures had

come to such an inaccessible place. Truly, "Our life's minutest circumstance is subject to His eye," and still the Lord regards prayer that concerns smaller matters as well as greater matters.

D.H.

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES

CHRIST IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS

The seed of the woman

We have the solemn record of the fall of man into sin in the third chapter of Genesis. God made man upright, but sadly he did not remain upright: he sinned against God and rebelled against His righteous government. Through his sin he came under the awful curse of God. God cursed Satan: "And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life" (Genesis 3. 14). God cursed the woman: "Unto the woman He said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (Genesis 3. 16). God cursed Adam: "And unto Adam He said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Genesis 3. 17-19).

We see also in this passage how God gave a most sacred promise: He opened a door of hope when He cursed Satan: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her Seed; It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel" (Genesis 3:15).

The Messiah would be a Man of the Seed of Eve; Christ through His perfect obedience to the law would make His seed

(the church) righteous; by His suffering and death He would deliver her from her sin as her Substitute: her Redeemer paying the ransom price for her sin. By His resurrection from death He destroyed death. "Forasmuch then as the children (His children, given to Him by His Father: sometimes called a seed) are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Hebrews 2. 14). Then we read of Christ: "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3. 8). Thus we see the fulfilling of this sacred promise. From the time when Cain murdered his brother Abel, this enmity has been on the earth. If we are one of God's children we will be hated by the world, the same as the Lord Jesus Christ was. "For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you" (1 John 3. 11-13).

J.R. Rutt

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about TREES. Younger children need only do five questions. Please give references for questions 7 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. Which tree in the Garden of Eden did God forbid Adam to eat the fruit of? (Genesis 2. 17)
2. Which tree did Solomon use extensively in the building of the first temple in Jerusalem? (1 Kings 5. 5-6)
3. Which tree withered away when Jesus cursed it? (Matthew 21. 19-20)
4. Who was hanged when his hair became entangled in the

- branches of an oak tree? (2 Samuel 18. 9)
5. Which city in Israel was known as the “city of palm trees”? (2 Chronicles 28. 15)
 6. Which “tree” is prized for its abundant fruit, but its wood is of no value otherwise? (Ezekiel 15)
 7. “The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven.” Who did the tree represent? (Daniel 4)
 8. Of which three trees does Isaiah speak as being used to “beautify the place of My sanctuary”? (Isaiah 60)
 9. Which tree was planted in the Garden of Eden, but the way to it was barred by flaming swords when Adam fell? (Genesis 3)
 10. Two similar verses speak about a tree planted by a river. Who is likened to such a tree in each case? (Psalm 1, Jeremiah 17)

ANSWERS TO MAY QUESTIONS

1. “Asked of the LORD.”
2. “For this child I prayed, and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of Him.”
3. Ebenezer. “The stone of help” or “Hitherto hath the LORD helped us.”
4. The LORD had commanded Samuel to anoint one of the sons of Jesse as king.
5. Saul.
6. The LORD had revealed Himself to Samuel.
7. The LORD discomfited the Philistines, who had come to battle against the Israelites, by a great thunder. (1 Samuel 7. 10)
8. The children of Israel had asked for a king to reign over them. Samuel prayed unto the LORD. (1 Samuel 8. 6)
9. The LORD sent thunder and rain upon the Israelites in the time of wheat harvest. (1 Samuel 12. 17-18)
10. Moses. (Jeremiah 15. 1)

Contributed

THE BOOK OF CREATION

The book of nature open lies
 With much instruction stored;
 But till the LORD anoints our eyes
 We cannot read a word.

Philosophers have pored in vain,
And guessed, from age to age;
For reason's eye could ne'er attain
To understand a page.

Though to each star they give a name,
Its size and motions teach:
The truths which all the stars proclaim,
Their wisdom cannot reach.

With skill to measure earth and sea,
And weigh the subtle air:
They cannot, LORD, discover Thee
Though present everywhere.

The knowledge of the saints excels
The wisdom of the schools;
To them his secrets GOD reveals,
Though men account them fools.

To them the sun and stars on high,
The flowers that paint the field,
And all the artless birds that fly,
Divine instruction yield.

The creatures on their senses press,
At witnesses to prove
Their Saviour's power, and faithfulness,
His providence and love.

Thus may we study nature's book
To make us wise indeed!
And pity those who only look
At what they cannot read?

J. Newton

The Friendly Companion



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

July 2008

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All correspondence to be sent to the Editor.

Annual Subscriptions inc. postage:

U.K.	U.S.A. & Canada	Australia	Europe (Netherlands)
£11.00	\$31	A\$38	€27.00

All correspondence concerning subscriptions should be addressed to Mr. H. Mercer, 8 Fairleigh Rise, Kington Langley, Chippenham, Wilts. SN15 5QF.

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

Some of you will know that our chapel in Bournemouth has been sold and our friends there are meeting elsewhere. Before they left their much-loved chapel, they had a lot of clearing out to do. One of the things that came to light was a set of rules for the Sunday School which had been very prosperous in the early years of the chapel.

Each child had to be in his or her place by the last verse of the first hymn if he or she was to have a good attendance mark! If any were absent for four Sundays running then they were to be visited in their home to find the cause.

However the rule which struck me most was this:

"All children are to wash their faces and hands before they come to the Sunday School."

I wonder who inspected the hands and faces each week and what happened if a dirty face or pair of hands appeared!

Some of the hearers of the Lord Jesus spent a lot of time washing their hands. In fact they spent so much time washing their hands that they forgot that it was even more important to have a clean heart before God! This, no washing of hands in water could accomplish.

So why does the Word of God say in Psalm 24. 4, that only those who have clean hands will enter heaven?

In that Psalm you will notice that clean hands and a pure heart are put together. If our heart is right then it will be our desire that our hands be engaged in those things which are pleasing to God.

How wrong were Eve's, and then Adam's hands when they touched and then ate the forbidden fruit. How wrong were Jacob's hands when he pretended they were Esau's by covering them with goat's hair.

But how right were Joseph's hands when he fled from his mistress who tempted him to do evil. How right was the hand of the woman who touched the hem of Jesus' garment and was healed.

The only One whose hands were always clean is the Lord Jesus Christ. They were never engaged unkindly, unjustly or uncleanly. Yet we sometimes sing:

“And those kind hands which did such good
They nailed them to a cross of wood.”

Wonderfully, the precious blood that flowed from the wounded hands of Jesus is that which alone cleanses our hands and makes them clean in God's sight. Those who know this blessed truth will also sing:

“Make me to walk in Thy commands;
‘Tis a delightful road;
Nor let my head, or heart, or hands,
Offend against my God.”

With every best wish from your sincere friend and Editor.

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

This year marks the centenary of the opening of our chapel in Manchester, fondly known by many in the denomination as “Rochdale Road Chapel.” This replaced the chapel in which William Gadsby laboured so abundantly, although the pulpit is the same as his.

What sacred memories there are of some of the Manchester pastors! William Gadsby himself, whose favourite expression: “Honours crown His immortal brow,” characterised his Christ-exalting ministry; Alexander Barrie Taylor, of whom it was said that to hear him announce hymn 481 on a Lord's Day morning was a sermon in itself:

“Descend from heaven, immortal Dove,
Stoop down and take us on Thy wings,
And mount and bear us far above
The reach of these inferior things.”

Like so many of our chapels, the numbers are sadly depleted, but there is still a little remnant who desire the same

gospel that their forefathers loved and preached. One most pleasant feature of the present chapel is that the acoustics for singing are so good. A personal memory of the late Mrs. Dorothy Cannon starting hymn 993 to the tune "Carr Hall" in 1978, remains indelibly fixed in one's memory. It was the words of that sacred hymn which did such good, but the gracious and hearty singing of those words were the pictures of silver that contained the apples of gold.

May the Lord bless and encourage the friends who remain and may the truths so ably preached with God's help by men such as William Gadsby, A. B. Taylor and G. Whitbread, be preached and upheld within the walls of "Rochdale Road."

SALVATION!

In the late 1920's, a young lad went with his parents to one of the Bristol Channel seaside resorts. Standing on the edge of the pier, he went too close and fell into the deep water beneath. He went under, and came up twice, and then sank for the third time, knowing that it was said that a drowning person rarely came to the surface again after the third time. It seemed that his young life was to be cut short. As he sank beneath the water with this terrifying thought, an unseen force lifted him up out of the water and set him on the pier, water dripping from him. An old gentleman had seen him go under the water, and had let down his walking stick into the water and hooked the drowning lad by his collar and thus pulled him out.

This lad, P.M. Kilmister, grew up to be a preacher and he related this incident in his life as an illustration of what salvation is. The deliverance from death was entirely through the kindness of the old gentleman, so the deliverance from eternal death is entirely the work of free and sovereign grace. An unseen power, grace, lifts the perishing sinner from a deserved death and places him on the Rock of ages, Christ Jesus the Lord.

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**ABRAM OBEYS GOD**

After the flood, the world became filled with people again. But they soon forgot about God and began to worship the sun, moon, stars, and other things. Not all were left to go on living in sinful ways. God appeared to a man named Abram, saying: *"Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee."*

Abram was called to leave his home, his relatives, and his country. He did not ask why he must leave or where he must go. By faith Abram obeyed God. He took Sarai his wife and *"departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him."*

God led Abram far away into the land of Canaan and said: *"Unto thy seed will I give this land"*. There, Abram built an altar unto the LORD and worshipped Him. Out of all the people in the world, God chose Abram and set him apart. He promised to bless Abram and make of him a great nation. Out of his family would come the promised Saviour.

QUESTIONS:

1. What did Abram do by faith?
2. Into which land was he led?
3. What did he build there?

Please 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. Forty.
2. Noah.
3. Inside the ark.

Contributed

*“By faith
Abraham ...
obeyed; and
he went out,
not knowing
whither
he went.”
Hebrews 11. 8.*

BIBLE LESSONS

JESUS FEEDS A GREAT MULTITUDE

Jesus had told His disciples that He would make them "*fishers of men.*" Now He sent them out two by two into the cities of Judah to preach the gospel. He gave them power to perform miracles. Many sick people were cured, and others had devils cast out of them.

When the disciples returned to the Lord, they began to tell Him all they had done and what they had taught. Jesus knew how busy they had been, so He said: "*Come ye ... apart into a desert place, and rest a while.*" They hardly had time to eat their meals.

They boarded a little ship and sailed to the northern tip of the Sea of Galilee. However, multitudes of people came out of the cities and followed on foot. When they came ashore, this multitude greeted them. Jesus was moved with compassion. He saw them as sheep having no shepherd to guide and protect them. Jesus spoke to them about the kingdom of God. How eagerly they listened!

The hours quickly passed away and evening drew on. His disciples reminded Him that it was a desert place. They thought He should be sending the people away so they could go and buy food.

Jesus answered them: "*They need not depart; give ye them to eat.*" Did they hear right? Did Jesus tell them to feed the multitude? He even said to Philip: "*Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?*" Philip looked at the great multitude. There were five thousand men, besides women and children. He reasoned that a large sum of money would not be sufficient to buy enough bread for all of them.

What a test of their faith! Did they really believe that Jesus could do everything? Andrew noticed a little boy among the multitude who was carrying five loaves of bread and two little fishes. But he quickly pointed out that they were not enough to feed so many. The disciples were at a loss what to do. The Bible tells us that Jesus "*knew what He would do.*" It is still

the same today. So often His followers cannot understand what the Lord is doing, and they need much grace to trust in that word: "*He ... knew what He would do.*"

Jesus told the disciples to have the multitude sit down in groups of fifties and hundreds. But what were they to sit on in the desert? The Bible tells us there was much green grass there. Was not that a wonder?

If you have ever been among a multitude of people, you know how noisy it can be. Yet now it became very quiet, and the eyes of the people were upon Jesus. They watched as He took the five loaves of bread and two fishes. Lifting up His eyes to heaven, He gave thanks and blessed them. How different from you and I. We must ask God to bless our food; He commanded the blessing upon it. After giving thanks, Jesus began to break the bread and fishes. He gave the broken pieces to the disciples, and they passed them out to the people.

The people must have been very hungry, as it had been a long time since they had anything to eat. Yet, they were all filled. Not one of them went away hungry.

When the people had finished eating, Jesus commanded the disciples to: "*Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.*" When all the pieces of bread and fishes were gathered up, they filled twelve baskets. Perhaps it was so each disciple could have one.

You can read about this in Matthew 14, Mark 6, Luke 9, and John 6.

QUESTIONS:

1. How many men were in the multitude?
2. How many loaves of bread and fishes were there?
3. What did the people sit on?
4. What did Jesus do before he broke the bread and fishes?
5. How many baskets were gathered up?

Please 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. Thou Son of David.
2. Spiritual sight.
3. The Messiah.
4. The prince of the devils.
5. The power of God.

G.L. TenBroeke

MORAL VALUES WENT OUT WHEN THE BIBLE WENT OUT

About fifty years ago, I turned my back on religion as I was foolishly under the impression that scientists could resolve all problems. It took me another thirty-five years to realise that I had made a mistake: in fact, as a member of the constituency Labour Party I encouraged the removal of religious education from schools. However, when we said that we did not want God taught in our schools, God left.

We then asked for school Bibles to be removed, to be largely restricted to special studies, and they were. We now have a society which has few, or even no, moral values, and there is no respect for people or property. We have developed the idea that people are not responsible for their actions (it is due to their upbringing; it is someone else's fault).

We are not allowed to chastise our own children: therefore they do not know right from wrong: then we wonder why we have children murdering one another or committing suicide.

We are indoctrinated in the falsehood of evolution as formulated by Darwin, yet many of the fossils found have actually been rearranged so that they fit in with the theory. Scientists are now trying to develop human/non-human embryos. They may well allow a genie to get out of the bottle which they cannot get back in: a bit like nuclear weapons.

It is on record that Darwin himself was worried and concerned that people had created a religion out of his theory, which is not what he intended. It is also on record in a number of places that Darwin was a committed Christian in later life, and regretted publishing the theory.

*This letter appeared in a local newspaper recently,
written by M.F. Fawdrey*

A BOY FROM STAVENISSE**Chapter 7: Fleeing From The Fair**

They do not talk about it much. Leen is their oldest child. Leen is allowed to go out with his father and mother while the girls have to go to bed. On the appointed evening, they get him to put on his coat and they walk into the village.

“Are you not glad you can go out with your father and mother? We are going to make this into a happy evening,” Father says cheerfully. He holds on to the boy firmly and looks down at him kindly.

Leen’s lip trembles. He hears the music from the fair in the distance. They would not want to ...? His heart trembles. Yes, they turn the corner of the last street and arrive at the entrance to the fair. Leen cringes and struggles to free his hand. But Father and Mother are determined to get all those awful thoughts of God and hell out of his little head. Cheerful music, jokes, sugar candy.... Crying and unwilling, the boy walks around the fair between his parents.

“There,” says his father, “and now we are going to do something exciting. We are going on the big wheel.”

Leen screams in fear. It seems as if he is in the hole in the ice again. The devil wants to pull him down, into the dark depths. The cold of sin makes him afraid. He twists like a snake to free his hand. Father wants to step on to the big wheel. His hand briefly relaxes its grip: just very briefly.

Leen sees his chance and runs away: away from the music. Away from the fair where the devil is boss: where the devil has the people in his power.

Here no one can be found that loves the Lord. People that know God and love Him cannot be found at the fair.

He sees laughing faces around him: cursing and mocking people. They are having fun and do not think of their death. Here they think they are really alive and they are celebrating: a feast without God: happiness that is not true happiness, because there is nothing of the Lord in it.

Leen flees into the polder, fearing that God will immediately

come from heaven with His judgment. He keeps walking until he cannot anymore. Weeping pitifully, he falls into a dry ditch near the road. There he begs the Lord for forgiveness. There he begs that the righteous God will not punish his parents for their wrongful deeds. Nearby, on the road, stands Grandma's house. Leen sobs with fear.

This is how Grandma finds him. She bends forward and lovingly strokes his hair. "Leen, Leen, what happened?"

The sobbing stops. Leen recognises her and crawls out of the ditch at once. He throws himself into her arms. "Oh, Grandma, terrible, the fair. Father and Mother are there yet, and it is terrible. I will never see them again for I saw the ground opening up, just like with Korah, Dathan and Abiram."

The boy is not to be comforted. He is afraid of the fair. It is only when he sees his parents again that he calms down somewhat. The Lord has still spared them. The Lord has not yet punished them for their sins.

Father and Mother allow him to stay with Grandma for a while, so that he can calm down. She makes him a cup of chocolate milk and then he snuggles up close to her. Grandpa's chair is wide enough for both of them.

"Grandma?"

"Yes."

"Does the Lord sometimes speak by way of a dream?"

Grandma looks into his large eyes. She ponders deeply. "I think He speaks to us by His Word, that is, by the Bible." She waits for his answer.

They remain quiet for a long time. He holds the cup of chocolate milk, but forgets to drink. "Yes, but is it never from the Lord when you dream?"

"They used to say that dreams are deception," says Grandma. "And in the Bible it says that God speaks by His Word. If the Lord wants to tell you something, He will not do this in your dream. What did you dream?" She lovingly lets her chin rest on his hair. Leen says nothing. Grandma waits

patiently, but when he remains silent, she asks him again.

Leen breathes rapidly. "I dreamed...." He has to cry. "I dreamed that I can never get a new heart," he blurts out.

Grandma is shocked. "Oh, no," she says decidedly. "No, that is from the devil. The Lord says it much differently in the Bible. 'Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not.' It says that you must seek the Lord early. Keep on praying and do not allow yourself to be confused. The devil is a liar." She speaks as if she is angry at the devil. He is teasing the child. But Grandma explains to the boy that there is a way to be saved. And that it is never too late as long as you are alive. "You do not know how long you will live. This is why you must seek Him with all your might and without ceasing."

The distress in his mind subsides somewhat. He is glad that he has talked to Grandma about it.

(To be continued)

(Slightly adapted)

BIBLE WORDS/WORDS OF SCRIPTURE (VII)

Impute

We do not hear the word "impute" much in ordinary conversation, but it is a word we read several times in the Bible, and you will hear ministers speaking of the imputed righteousness of Christ. What does "impute" mean? It is a difficult word to explain with a short simple definition. It is most often used formally or in law, and it means to treat someone or something as having a particular characteristic. Perhaps the following examples will help you to understand the word.

We read the word "impute" in 1 Samuel 22. 15. When David was being pursued by King Saul, Doeg the Edomite told Saul that he had seen Ahimelech give food and Goliath's sword to David. Saul accused Ahimelech of conspiring against Saul. In his reply, Ahimelech said: "Let not the king impute any thing unto his servant, nor to all the house of my father: for thy servant knew nothing of all this, less or more." He meant, do

not treat me as a traitor or assume that I am against you.

In the United Kingdom, when companies pay a dividend out of their profits to their shareholders, there is a tax credit which goes with the dividend - it is called an imputed tax credit. That means that in law the dividend is treated as though an amount of tax has already been paid on it. The shareholder who receives the dividend is treated as though he paid the tax, even though in fact he did not pay it.

We read in Psalm 32. 2: "Blessed in the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity." This speaks of those who the Lord treats as having no iniquity. How can a holy, sin-hating God treat a sinner as having no iniquity? It is because God sent His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus, into the world, and "hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin." All the sins of all the Lord's people were laid on Him, and He was punished instead. He obeyed the holy law of God, proving that He had no sin. He was obedient unto death, the death due under the righteous law of God, so that His people might be made the righteousness of God in Him. As well as not imputing iniquity to His people, righteousness is imputed to them. That is, they are treated in God's sight as righteous because of the obedience of the Lord Jesus.

Faith is given to each of the Lord's people to see their salvation in the Lord Jesus alone. This is true of the Lord's people in the Old Testament times who looked forward to when Jesus should come. We read that Abraham believed God and "it was imputed unto him for righteousness." He saw by faith that Jesus would come and give Himself as a sacrifice. "Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

May the Lord grant us the blessing of imputed righteousness and that He may not impute iniquity to us.

Contributed

A REMARKABLE RELATIONSHIP

The Adonis Blue Butterfly and the Yellow Meadow Ant

Close to the southern side of Salisbury Plain in Wiltshire, lies Parsonage Down National Nature Reserve and Coombe Bissett Nature Reserve, two reserves dedicated to protecting and conserving some of the rare native species of plants, insects, birds and mammals in England.

On these reserves can be found, amongst other things, the burnt tip, bee and green-wing orchid, the marble white butterfly, the hobby and the grey partridge, all living alongside stoats, brown hares and roe deer.

Amongst the most threatened of wildlife here, is the Adonis Blue butterfly. Since 1950 it has declined by 90%, mainly due to the loss of its habitat: this beautiful butterfly lives and feeds off a single plant, the horseshoe vetch, which itself only survives on the short turf of the chalk down land. The female of this butterfly lays her eggs singly, twice a year in May and August on the underside of the horseshoe vetch leaf.

Here begins a remarkable relationship that God has created with the Yellow Meadow ant. Naturally you may think that the ants would use the butterfly eggs as a food source, but that is not the case. As the temperature rises in spring, the eggs laid hatch into larvae or caterpillar-like creatures, and begin to feed on their host plant: at this point the yellow ants begin to adopt the larvae and tend to them, protecting them from wasps and other predators. In return, the Adonis Blue secretes sugary nectar from its special “honey” glands for the ants to feed on.

As the butterfly larvae develop, they are taken by the meadow ants into the shelter of their anthills that they have formed over many years on the Down. Here the ants continue to attend to the larvae until they develop into pupae or chrysalises: at this point the May-born eggs then mature into full adult butterflies and spend the summer themselves laying eggs for the second brood, to enable the species to continue its life cycle. These August-born eggs then hatch and over-winter as chrysalises in the same anthills until the following spring

when they themselves develop into adult butterflies to begin another year of survival, if God permit.

The question arises: as the Adonis Blue butterfly gives its sugary nectar to the Yellow Meadow ant in return for protection, provision and safe dwelling, should not the children of God give something in return for the protection, grace and mercy they receive through Jesus Christ in this life and for the provision of a safe eternal dwelling hereafter?

May then our desire be that expressed by Anne Steele in her hymn:

“What glad return can I impart
For favours so divine?
O take my all, this worthless heart,
And make it wholly thine.” (Gadsbys 95)

S.D.H.

DOORS

Recently, I had to go to a nearby town to buy some catches for some long windows. They were of the type which slide up and down. The shop I went to only sold catches and locks and knobs. There was enough variety to satisfy the needs of most people.

I would think that men have had doors and catches since earliest times. You will remember that God shut Noah in the ark.

In the Bible there is a wonderful book called the Song of Solomon. Some men have thought that its theme is only King Solomon's love for his wife, but many of the Lord's people see in this book the love of the Lord Jesus for His people: a people which we refer to as the church; and the church's desire to know Him “whom my soul loveth” (Song of Solomon 1. 7). In chapter 5 verses 4 and 5, we have reference to a door catch. It seems as if this door could be opened from the outside, for the Beloved (the Lord Jesus) put in His hand by the hole in the door to move the catch. The one on the inside then feels great

love to the One who has come to her. I wonder, my readers, do you love to read and hear about the Lord Jesus Christ? Even the eldest Christian man or woman has those times when the Lord Jesus seems far away, but when by the work of the Holy Spirit, He comes, then all is well. They love to feel Him with them. The Lord Jesus often comes to His people through the reading of the Scriptures.

We are thinking about doors, and in John 10. 9. the Lord Jesus refers to Himself as the Door. You remember that in Bible times, at night the shepherd would himself lie down in the doorway of the fold: thus becoming the door. In John 10 there are things said which even the youngest will be able to understand. If we look at this chapter, we find the Lord Jesus had told the parable of the sheepfold. Verse 6 tells us that the disciples did not understand what Jesus was saying to them. But how gracious was the Lord's explanation to His disciples.

It is the same for all the sheep. They must all come to God through the Lord Jesus. Satan and the vain-thinking of this world, give many a false way to God. One hundred years ago, men talked about the "larger hope." The meaning of this expression was that God was not as strict as some made out, and He would overlook all those small sins and misdemeanours: all would find heaven at last. What a false and bad door to go through. No! For every poor and needy sinner, the Lord Jesus is the only Door. It is because of the blood shed on Calvary's tree that we can be forgiven. Maybe we could say that God-given faith is the opening catch to this precious Door, which opens for forgiveness and eternal life to come: opened by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Contributed

EDITOR'S POSTBAG

Would those who answer the questions please ensure that they have the correct postage for the envelope size, as the Editor has to pay a surcharge otherwise!

Editor

A LESSON FROM THE SEA OF GALILEE

We feel that we must bring before you that wonderful occasion – the Lord Jesus stilling the storm. How many children, even in their very earliest years, have learned to sing:

“A little ship was on the sea,
It was a pretty sight:
It sailed along so pleasantly,
And all was calm and bright”!

You know the story well. The disciples of Jesus entered a ship on the Sea of Galilee. He Himself was with them. Suddenly a great storm arose. (Storms are common on the Sea of Galilee.) So fierce was it that the waves came over the top and filled the ship with water.

The disciples were terrified (though they should not have been, having the Lord Jesus with them). Jesus Himself was asleep on a pillow. (It would have been the steersman’s cushion.) Awakened by the disciples’ cries, He majestically rose, and commanded the wind and sea to be quiet. And they obeyed.

What are the lessons we are to learn?

1. JESUS IS TRULY MAN AND TRULY GOD.

He was a real Man. He knew what it was to be tired, to be weary. He knew what it was to fall asleep.

But He was true Almighty God; and He showed it in the miracle He performed.

2. THE VALUE OF PRAYER.

The howling wind and the pounding waves did not awaken the Lord Jesus – but the prayers of His disciples did!

But these were poor prayers. The disciples suggested they were going to perish. (How could they “with Christ in the vessel”?) They even suggested that the Lord did not care. But the Lord answers poor prayers, prayers with so much sin and unbelief mixed with them – for His own name’s sake.

There was the one vital ingredient present: they cast themselves completely upon Him in their helplessness.

3. THE POWER OF GOD.

It was divine power which the Lord Jesus displayed. All creatures obey His command – whether lions, or ravens, or the wind, or the sea. “He arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still ... *and there was a great calm.*”

Usually when a storm ceases on the Sea of Galilee, the sea is still very choppy for perhaps one hour afterwards. But not so here! It was immediately calm.

It is no wonder that the disciples exclaimed: “What manner of Man is this?” They learned lessons they had never learned before.

It is often in the storm that we learn those lessons which are so vital.

B.A. Ramsbottom

OUR FRIENDS

“And it came to pass in those days, that the Philistines gathered their armies together for warfare, to fight with Israel. And Achish said unto David, Know thou assuredly, that thou shalt go out with me to battle, thou and thy men. And David said to Achish, Surely thou shalt know what thy servant can do. And Achish said to David, Therefore will I make thee keeper of mine head for ever.” (1 Samuel 28. 1, 2.)

My young friends, perhaps you can identify with the above circumstances in David's life. What had happened? Because of persecution and unbelief, David had sought the friendship of the Philistines. Achish had afforded him friendship, protection, and a place to live, all of which are necessary and precious things in our lives. David, the man after God's own heart, had dwelt among the Philistines (a type of the world) for sixteen months. But David had now been confronted with a sore dilemma: a situation that caused him great distress. Achish was ready to go to war with Israel and had asked David to go along.

What should David do? To deny Achish's request would forfeit his friendship, reveal great ingratitude, bring reproach

upon himself, and put himself in great danger. He would stand alone. On the other hand, going with Achish would mean fighting against his own people: fighting against the Lord's anointed, and would surely bring David further under the displeasure of the Lord. What a difficult situation. How wretched David must have felt. David gave an ambiguous answer to Achish, perhaps hoping that somehow he would be delivered out of his perplexity.

Achish had to travel about eighty or ninety miles to the battlefield in the valley of Jezreel. In our thoughts we see David follow with his men. How miserable and afraid he must have been; how his conscience must have spoken: how he would have wished to be delivered, and yet he had no freedom to declare what he stood for. (And remember, David was a child of the Lord.)

Perhaps we can identify with David's plight. Your friends (are they really true friends?) come to your house, or call and ask: "Are you coming along?" Or you may be with worldly friends, or alas, even some friends from the church, and someone makes a suggestion: "Let us go there," or "Let us do this." You and your friends know it is very wrong. But you have no freedom to speak up, even though your conscience may be accusing. What if my parents find out? What will they think? How disappointed they would be. How disappointed you are with yourself. Yet the words will not come: it seems as if your lips are sealed. And so you go along just as David did. Perhaps even as you do so, you have an impression of Genesis 16. 13: "Thou, God seest me."

Young people, our friends are important. Our friends can have a profound influence on our lives. Having friends who respect the Lord's testimonies is critical. May it be, as with Psalm 119. 63: "I am a companion of all them that fear Thee, and of them that keep Thy precepts." May it be granted by grace to be your portion what Jesus declared in John 15. 14: "Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." And

in verse 15 of the same chapter: "But I have called you friends." Young people, who are your friends? Above all, may we receive by the work of the Holy Spirit a true need, and a saving knowledge of Jesus, the Friend of publicans and sinners. Then we shall have a safe Guide through this life to eternity. May this be our daily request at the throne of grace.

Insight Into

A padre (a military chaplain) was recently speaking to soldiers on parade before they went into combat in Iraq. He was heard to make this comment: "Believe me, there are no unbelievers on the battle field." After he had gone, there was a conversation amongst a group of sergeants in a tent. One of them said: "I do not believe in a God." A younger soldier heard him say it and asked him whether he had prayed when he was in a battle zone recently? The sergeant turned on his heel and went out. The young soldier said: "I knew that he had prayed!"

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES

CHRIST IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS

Naked Clothing

After Adam and Eve fell, they felt naked and guilty and ashamed: that is the effect of sin. So we read that they turned to their own works to try and cover themselves: man always does this left to himself. "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard Thy voice in the garden,

and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself" (Genesis 3. 7-10).

Oh, the awful consequences of sin! Now the wonderful thing is that God did not leave them to their own works. "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them" (Genesis 3. 21). This was an act of grace. The word grace means: "the free unmerited favour of God." God clothed them with animal skins. Those animals had to be killed: their blood was shed. This points us to Jesus Christ: "Without shedding of blood is no remission." The Lord Jesus suffered, bled and died for His people. This pointed Adam and Eve to the only way of salvation: I believe the Lord revealed it unto both of them. Has it been revealed to us?

"Of all the creatures God has made,
There is but man alone
That stands in need to be arrayed
In coverings not his own." (J. Hart)

J.R. Rutt

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about the words "HOW LONG?" asked as a question. Younger children need only do five questions. Please give references for questions 6 to 10 and send your answers to the Editor (see page 146 for the address). Remember to give your name and address and write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

1. What was the solemn question asked by God of Pharaoh? (Exodus 10. 3)
2. What was the mistaken question which Eli asked Hannah? (1 Samuel 1. 14)
3. Which question is asked of an idle person? (Proverbs 6. 9)
4. "How long will this people provoke Me? and how long will it be ere they believe Me?" Of whom did God ask this? (Numbers 14. 11)
5. What question did God ask Samuel, when he was grieving

- over one whom God had rejected? (1 Samuel 16. 1)
6. What important question did Barzillai ask, which none of us can answer? (2 Samuel 19)
 7. What question did Elijah ask the children of Israel on Mount Carmel? (1 Kings 18)
 8. At the healing of the lunatic, how many times did Jesus ask the question, "How long?" (Mark 9)
 9. Which question was asked by an angel, and received an encouraging answer? (Zechariah 1)
 10. In which Psalm does David ask the question, "How long?" four times in the first two verses?

ANSWERS TO JUNE QUESTIONS

1. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
2. Cedar tree.
3. Fig tree.
4. Absalom.
5. Jericho.
6. Vine.
7. Nebuchadnezzar. (Daniel 4. 11)
8. Fir, pine and box trees. (Isaiah 60. 13)
9. The tree of life. (Genesis 3. 24)
10. "The man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." (Psalm 1. 1-3). "The man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is." (Jeremiah 17. 7)

Contributed

"BORROW NOT A FEW" (2 Kings 4. 3.)

When deep in debt the widow came

Elisha's aid to call,

"What hast thou in thy house?" he asked,

"A pot of oil is all!"

"Go, borrow empty vessels then,

Go, borrow not a few!"

Her faith now shows its quality

By vessels ranged in view.

“Now pour the oil!” and all are filled
Before the oil is stayed.
Supply is measured by her faith,
And all her debts are paid.

And when we seek God’s heavenly aid,
Our faith is tested still.

“Bring empty vessels, not a few,
With My supplies I’ll fill.”

’Tis empty vessels thou must bring,
Not partly filled with “I,”
Or others’ aid. Be sure thou must
Alone on Him rely.

Repenting sinner, never fear,
Though great thy sins may be,
The Saviour full atonement made;
His mercy is for thee.

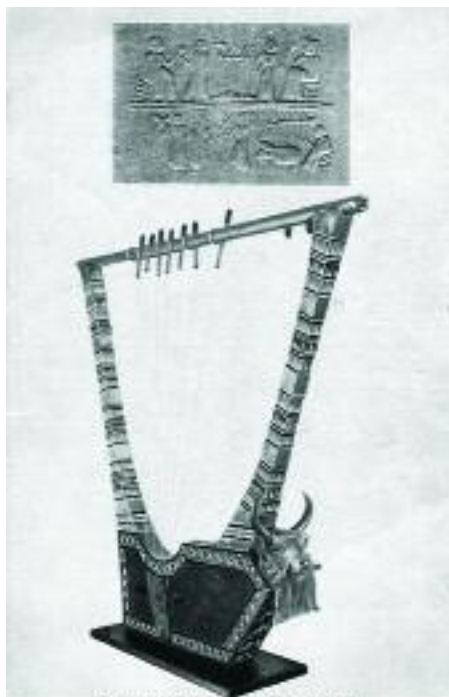
“My grace you never can exhaust,
My love’s a constant spring.
Forgiveness flows forever free;
Your empty vessels bring.

“My riches are unsearchable,
Faith ever shall succeed
My blessing to secure, I will
Supply your every need.

“I bid you open wide your mouth,
And promise it to fill:
Bring empty vessels, not a few!”
Is His direction, still.

Anon

The Friendly Companion



THE GOLD CYLINDER SEAL and LYRE
from the Royal Treasury of the Chaldeans

“As well the singers as the players on instruments
shall be there: all my springs are in Thee.”
(Psalm 87. 7)

August 2008

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All correspondence to be sent to the Editor.

Annual Subscriptions inc. postage:

U.K.	U.S.A. & Canada	Australia	Europe (Netherlands)
£11.00	\$31	A\$38	€27.00

All correspondence concerning subscriptions should be addressed to Mr. H. Mercer, 8 Fairleigh Rise, Kington Langley, Chippenham, Wilts. SN15 5QF.

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

Most of us have next-door neighbours who see us coming and going from our houses and to whom we would say: "Hello," and whom we would help if they were in any need. You all know the story of the Good Samaritan who was a true neighbour to the man who fell among thieves. Actually he did not live next door to the man but he came to where the man was and acted the true neighbour to him. Of course, the Lord Jesus Christ is the true neighbour to those who, like the man who fell among thieves, find that they have been wounded by sin and there is none to help.

Did you know that in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, we read of a man called Justus whose house was joined to the synagogue in Corinth? Justus was a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ and so it could not have been easy having for his neighbours, the Jews who worshipped in the synagogue and who hated the name of Jesus and His followers. However Justus did not remain silent about what he believed, for he openly received Paul into his house. The remarkable outcome was that his next-door neighbour, the chief ruler of the synagogue, also believed and all who lived in his house, and they were baptized.

I wonder how many of us are good neighbours in the way that Justus was? He may not have been "a ready talker" but he was "a humble walker" and his life was a sermon to those who lived near him.

Those who desire to fear God should take notice of what one good man said:

"We are living a gospel, a chapter each day,
In the things which we do, and the things which we say.
Men hear what we say, and they watch what we do.
Say, what is the gospel according to you?"

"So let our words and acts express,
The holy gospel we profess"

May we seek that grace so to live in this increasingly dark world, that those with whom we have to do may take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus.

With best wishes from your sincere friend and Editor.

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

On our front cover this month you will see a picture of a harp which was found some years ago at Ur of the Chaldees. This was, of course, the birthplace of Abraham, and the place from which he was called by God to go to the land of Canaan which was promised to him and his successors, as their land. The harp is thought to have been buried for over 4,000 years and thus it is probably amongst the oldest musical instruments in existence. The harp was somewhat damaged but has been skilfully restored to its original beauty.

At the same time and place of this discovery by archaeologists, a cylinder seal of gold was also found. The name of the ruler mentioned is thought to have reigned in Ur before Abraham was born. The seal was found in a perfect state of preservation.

Both of these artefacts were made in the period after the flood and remind us of the advanced culture of that generation.

It tells us also that from earliest times the harp has been an instrument used to create music. In Genesis 4 we read of Jubal, who preceded Noah, who was the father of all those who play the harp and the organ. The most famous harpist of the Bible is, of course, David, whose skilful use of its strings, quietened the melancholy King Saul in his day.

We read of those in the Book of the Revelation who in heaven play the harp to the glory of God in that place of pure worship, where all is done in the spirit of holiness to glorify God. It will be our mercy if one day we are found amongst the ransomed throng of whom it said: "As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there."

HAVE YOU BEEN BAPTISED?

This was the question posed to us by a nine-year-old girl, the occasion being a visit from our local school in Clifton, Bedfordshire, by a class of third and fourth-year students.

Following the use of the school facilities for the Gospel Standard Annual Meetings, we received a request from the school secretary, pointing out that two classes were studying the symbol of water used in various religions, particularly as used in baptism by Baptist Churches, and asking if we would be prepared for the children to visit the chapel. The answer, of course, was: "Yes," and arrangements were made for visits to take place on two Thursday afternoons in May.

The baptistery was filled, and the children were given a tour of the chapel, gallery and schoolroom, also the small committee room where a range of Trinitarian Bible Society Bibles was on display. On each of the two days, the visit consisted of some thirty children, two teachers and two parents. These were then seated around the pool and a short address given as to the Scriptural examples of believer's baptism and why we follow the pattern as set out in the New Testament, also pointing out our use of the term "Strict," and the meaning of this relating to "Strict Communion." Many questions were asked and much interest was taken by both the children and teachers.

The visits ended with each child being given a copy of the New Testament and Psalms, together with a list of references from Scripture regarding baptism, and how we attempt to follow the Scriptural pattern as set forth in the New Testament. A photograph of each occasion was taken, and a copy given to the school.

We pray that the Word of God may be used for the good of these children, and may be remembered by them for years to come.

D. Lawson

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**LOT'S CHOICE**

Abram's nephew came with him into the land of Canaan. His name was Lot. God blessed Abram with large herds of cattle and sheep. Lot had flocks and herds of his own. Soon there was not enough grass for all their animals to eat. The servants of Abram and Lot began to quarrel for the best land.

Abram did not want trouble between them. He said they must separate and go different ways. Very kindly, he gave Lot the first choice of where to go. Lot saw that it was nice and green near the Jordan River. There would be plenty of grass and water for his animals. *"Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; ... and pitched his tent toward Sodom."*

Lot did not ask God to help him make a wise choice. He chose the way that seemed right. *"But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly."* By living near them, much trouble came upon Lot and his family.

QUESTIONS:

1. What did Abram say they must do?
2. Who was given the first choice?
3. Did he ask God to help him make a wise choice?

Please 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. Obeyed God. | 2. Canaan. | 3. An altar. |
| <i>Contributed</i> | | |

*“There is a way
which seemeth
right unto a
man, but the
end thereof
are the ways
of death.”*
Proverbs 14. 12.

BIBLE LESSONS**JESUS WALKS UPON THE STORMY SEA**

After all the people had eaten and the twelve baskets were filled with the fragments, the people began to talk of making Jesus their King. With such a King, they would not need to worry about their daily meals. Even the disciples were caught up with all the emotion, thinking their Master would be King instead of Cæsar. Everyone was so excited!

However, Jesus knew their ambition was only of the flesh. Before it went any further, He commanded the disciples to get into the ship and go to the other side. How reluctant the disciples were to leave! The Bible tells us that Jesus constrained them to get into the ship. It was even more disappointing that Jesus did not go with them.

Jesus then sent the multitudes to their homes and went up into a mountain to pray. No doubt, He was praying for His disciples, for they were about to enter a great storm that would test their faith.

Soon after they left the shore, a great wind began to blow. The waves beat over the ship. How hard it was to make any progress! To make matters worse, night came upon them. John tells us in his gospel: "*...it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them.*" It is always like that for the Lord's people. Everything seems dark when they cannot feel that Jesus is with them.

Hour after hour went by, and they were nowhere near the other side. The boat could not move forward against the howling winds and crashing waves. What a long and dreadful night it was! They felt so fearful and alone.

Although it was dark and Jesus was up in the mountain, He still saw them. What a wonder! Mark tells us in his gospel: "*He saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them.*"

In the fourth watch of the night (the last watch before day dawns), the disciples saw Someone walking upon the water. They cried out in fear, thinking it must be a spirit, for no human being could walk on the water. Over the tumult of the wind and waves, the disciples heard a familiar voice saying: "*Be*

of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid."

Peter called out to Him: *"Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water. And He (Jesus) said, Come."* Without delay, Peter climbed out of the ship and began to walk on the water towards Jesus. What strong faith he had in that word of Jesus: *"COME."* The other disciples must have watched in amazement as Peter made his way to Jesus on the water. But suddenly Peter began to sink. What happened? Sadly, Peter looked away from Jesus to the howling wind and waves and became afraid. Surely now he would perish. NO, that is impossible! God-given faith will look again unto Jesus. He cried out: *"Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand, and caught him."* With what kind words He reproved Peter! *"O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"*

As soon as Jesus and Peter were come into the ship, another miracle took place. At that very moment, the wind ceased and the sea was calm. The disciples marvelled at the power of Jesus over the wind and waves. They came and bowed before Him, saying: *"Of a truth, Thou art the Son of God."*

You can read about this in Matthew chapter 14 verses 22 to 36, Mark chapter 6 verses 45 to 56, and John chapter 6 verses 16 to 21.

QUESTIONS:

1. What did John say added to their distress in the darkness? (6 words)
2. In what watch of the night did Jesus come to them?
3. Who asked to walk on the water to come to Jesus?
4. Why did he begin to sink? (five words)
5. Who did the disciples say Jesus was?

Please 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. Five thousand.
2. Five loaves of bread and two little fishes.
3. Grass.
4. Gave thanks and blessed them.
5. Twelve.

G.L. TenBroeke

A BOY FROM STAVENISSE**Chapter 8: A Curser**

“Leen,” says Mother, “you are eight years old already. You could go and pick up potatoes for me. The farmers have harvested them already. The villagers are allowed to have all the potatoes that were left behind. See, here is a bag. Just put them in there.”

Leen puts on his clogs and leaves the yard. They moved last year. They now live in a little house at the Molendijk. People call it “on the beach.” It is nice living in Molendijk.

Mother lays her washing out to dry on the little piece of lawn behind the house. She looks at Leen. “Do you know where to go?” “Yes, Mother, I saw the men working yesterday. There are still plenty of potatoes lying on the field. I am going to pick up a lot for you.” He really feels like it.

With a smile, Mother watches him go. Now her boy looks somewhat happier. He always looks so quiet. Mother does not understand him. How can an eight-year-old child worry so much about God and death? She herself is not bothered by that. Her mother-in-law does understand the child, but she is so strange herself. She is always talking with other people about religion.... No, Mother likes it better when her boy looks happy.

Leen loves working for Mother. Father has no time to pick up potatoes. Sientje has just turned five and the younger sister, Johanna, is only four yet. Little brother Cornelis can only cry. He is always hungry, thinks Leen.

He walks briskly and arrives at the field in about fifteen minutes. He immediately sees that there are more children picking up potatoes. He knows them from school. They are girls that enjoy teasing Leen. When they see him, they whisper and giggle together. Leen acts as if he does not notice. After gathering industriously for a while, his bag is almost full. It is going well.

While they are gathering, the girls have come nearby. Suddenly one sticks out her foot and trips up Leen. Another girl quickly grabs Leen's bag of potatoes. They laugh as they throw all the potatoes into a ditch. While they are having fun,

Leen bends forward to fish the bag and the potatoes out of the water. The girls do not know when to stop. They do not know that the devil is inciting them against the boy. Suddenly they take off Leen's clogs and run away with them.

There Leen stands in his socks on the wet field. He has not said a word all this time. Sorrow is as a lump in his throat. Not a sound can come out. But when he is standing in his socks and sees them running away with his clogs, it is too much.

Leen becomes angry. Very angry! He clenches his hands into fists. Oh, if he can get a hold of those girls ... he will let them feel how strong he is. They wave his clogs at him provocatively. Leen growls, Leen curses! He curses and is immediately terribly shocked thereby, also of the thought that comes into his head. "No revilers (blasphemers) shall inherit the kingdom of God." Now it is too late for him. Now he thinks he can never come into heaven. He has asked to go to hell. It becomes very dark in his heart.

Satan stirs him up even more. "Too late, my boy, now it is done with you. You have cursed God and now you can never be converted anymore. Just jump forward into that ditch. They will think that you drowned while looking for your clogs. Jump, now you cannot be saved anymore anyway."

Leen is at his wit's end. He has cursed. He turns towards the ditch and looks at the black water. He will do it; it is too late anyway. He slowly bends forward.

But the Lord is much mightier than the devil. The Lord is almighty. He does not want Leen to perish, because the Lord has destined him for something else. The Lord wants to use this boy in His service. Leen is powerfully restrained by an invisible hand. The Lord lets Leen feel that blasphemers indeed cannot come into heaven. But the Lord powerfully gives Leen the comfort that a blasphemer can still be converted. Even a murderer on the cross can be saved. Leen becomes wonderfully quiet. The miserable feeling disappears from his heart. The girls have long disappeared. They have

thrown his clogs onto the field. Leen falls on his knees beside the ditch and folds his hands. The Lord hears his prayer.

That Sunday Leen goes to church with Grandma. He does not want to go to the church where he was taken as an infant, and where his parents belong. He feels at home in Grandma's church. It is nice for Grandma that she has the boy with her. Grandpa died two years ago. It is good that people who love the Lord often come to her home. They often talk about Him. They also sing Psalms and the hymns by Groenewegen. Leen is often present, for he loves the fellowship meetings of God's people.

This morning he hears something very extraordinary in church. The elder is reading to them from the Bible. Leen is sitting up straight to listen. He is frightened by what the man is reading. "... nor revilers ... shall inherit the kingdom of God." "Do you not see?" thinks Leen, "there it is. The Lord has this read for me." He again feels just as dark within as at the side of the ditch. That is where he has cursed.

The elder reads on. What does Leen hear now? "And such were some of you: but ye are washed" It becomes joyful and wonderfully light in his soul. Hope! He, a reviler and curser, can still be converted. The Lord Jesus can also wash away his sins as if he has never done them. He could sing, because he now believes that he can be saved! At the same time he could cry from sorrow and regret because of his sins.

Leen quietly goes his way. The distressing feeling about his unconverted heart subsides a little. The devil makes him believe that all will be well with him. He was only four when the Lord spoke to him. And now he was already a little converted, was he not? Now he could be at ease, all will be well. The devil tells him that the Lord will not let such dear children perish. Leen forgets his worst uneasiness and believes the devil. He still does not know the Lord Jesus. The devil really does not want Leen to come to know the Lord Jesus, the

Saviour. Then he will have to lose Leen as his slave. He lulls the boy to sleep.

(To be continued)

(Slightly adapted)

A LESSON FROM ADAM AND EVE

In our well-known Bible stories we have not yet mentioned the very first: Adam and Eve.

You remember how God created them and how they lived in a beautiful garden. They were sinless and good. They were very happy. God told them they could eat anything – except the fruit from one tree.

Then a wicked snake tempted them (it was Satan, the devil) and they disobeyed God. They ate the fruit of the tree. They sinned.

1. **THIS IS A TRUE STORY.** Never forget that! People will tell you it is a fable, or a legend, or something like that. But remember, it is true, whatever anyone says.

2. **THIS IS A TERRIBLE STORY.** When Adam and Eve ate the fruit that God had forbidden, sin entered into the world. And sin is the cause of all the sadness, all the pain and all the misery. We sing:

“O thou hideous monster, sin,
What a curse hast thou brought in!”

But more than that, death entered the world. Adam had sinned, and though he lived 930 years, yet at last he died. We too must die. “Sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” Unless grace prevent, the end is eternal death – hell.

3. **THIS IS THE STORY OF THE FALL.** We speak of it as “the Adam fall.” A little girl was once asked: “Where did Adam fall from?” She answered: “From good to bad.”

We all fell in Adam. We are born as fallen, sinful creatures. “In Adam all die.”

4. **THIS IS THE STORY OF GOD’S ANGER.** What happened to

Adam and Eve? They were driven from the beautiful garden, never again to enter. They were no longer sinless, innocent. They were sinners in God's sight, rebels against Him, unclean. So are we. They could not please God by anything they tried to do. Neither can we. "God is angry with the wicked every day."

5. THERE IS HOPE IN THIS STORY. What a mercy that God provided a way of salvation!

First, there was a promise. God, speaking to the serpent said: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel." This is a promise of the Saviour, the Lord Jesus.

Second, God clothed Adam and Eve with coats of skins. They were naked and ashamed. Their fig-leaf covering could not hide their sin and shame. God made a coat for them. There was a sacrifice, blood was shed, and then, only then, they could be covered. "Without shedding of blood is no remission."

May you girls and boys learn to sing:

"I see my fig-leaf righteousness
Can ne'er Thy broken law redress;
Yet in Thy gospel plan I see
There's hope of pardon e'en for me."

It is said that in the West Indies grows a most beautiful tree. Lovely fruit just like apples grows on it and there is a sweet fragrance. But take a bite of the fruit, and it is almost certain death. Natives used to dip their arrows in the juice of this fruit so that they would poison their enemies if they wounded them. What a picture of sin!

However, it is said that close to this dreadfully poisonous tree grows a tree with white wood, similar to a fig tree: if the juice of this is applied immediately, then it is a perfect remedy. Bless God there is a remedy!

Divine teaching in the heart is in showing us the malady and the remedy: the malady in sin, in self: the remedy in Christ.

B.A. Ramsbottom

A BIRD-BOX AND A TREE

Letter to an atheist

Dear “Open-minded Atheist,”

You ask me how I could possibly believe in a Creator given that certain high-profile scientists say that no Creator was necessary? Well, let us take a simple example. If you see a bird-box nailed to a tree – where did it come from?

Of course you would say that somebody must have made it, but how do you know that? After all, you did not see anyone making it, so how do you *know* the bird-box had a maker?

(I am being quite serious – like you, I also realise the bird-box must have been made by someone – but I would like you to ponder how it was that you came to that conclusion.)

Here is how I would answer. Even though I did not see anybody making it, I can see that it has a degree of organisation and complexity which, though limited, is never seen to come about by natural processes. Someone must have made it, and attached it to the tree – probably for the purpose of attracting birds so that the maker or owner of the bird-box could enjoy their singing and admire them at close range.

And now, three questions:

1. Can that bird-box capture the sun’s energy and convert it into useful fuel? *Answer:* No.
2. Can that bird-box repair itself if part of it is broken off – for example, by strong winds in a storm? *Answer:* No.
3. Can that bird-box generate copies of itself, which in turn can produce further copies, which in turn can reproduce themselves, and so on? *Answer:* No.

And yet, the *tree*, to which the bird-box is attached, **can** do all of those things – yet you say that the tree had no Creator, that it is simply the product of time and chance? Where is the logic in that? When you consider just the ordered complexity of photosynthesis (capturing of the sun’s energy), man has not even yet fully *described* all that is going on in photosynthesis, let alone been able to *duplicate* it! If the bird-box had a designer (and it obviously did, as we both acknowledge) then

so too did the tree – and whoever designed the tree is obviously one *super-Intelligent Designer!*

Just as it is written in the Bible: “For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead” (Romans 1. 20).

Creation Magazine June/August 2008

LOST IN THE POST

It is very frustrating to be expecting something in the post which you have ordered and for it not to arrive. This happened to a person in South Asia who had been expecting a New Testament through the post but it never came. In his next letter to the friends who had promised to send it, he complained of its non-arrival.

He was told not to worry as perhaps the Lord was using this New Testament for someone else's good, but that they would immediately send him a replacement.

A few days later a remarkable letter was received from a postman to the friend who sent the Bible. This was what he wrote: “Some days ago I got a packet from you. I wanted to deliver it to the person whose name appeared on the packet, but such was the attraction of the packet, that very wrongfully I opened it and was delighted to find a New Testament which for the first time I was able to read for myself. I am so impressed by this holy Book: as I am reading this holy Book it is revealing the truths of Christianity, but I am so apologetic that I opened the packet intended for some other person. Please forgive me: I can give the Gospel back to the relevant person.”

Immediately a letter was sent to the postman telling him to keep the New Testament, and telling him that the proper person had now got their own New Testament. They commended him for reading the Bible, but also reminded him that the Gospel teaches us to do our duties honestly, and that to do otherwise, puts us in need of repentance and for God to forgive us of this sin.

The postman has now written several times to the friends who sent the New Testament and appears to be a true seeker after the truth.

Adapted from an article in “*Threshold*” by Anthea McNeil and sent by a reader of the *Friendly Companion*.

This incident reminds us of one or two lessons.

Firstly how good to hear of such a hunger and thirst after the truth. How does this compare with us who have our Bibles (we hope) so readily to hand?

Secondly how wonderful are God's ways in overruling a piece of lost post for the furtherance of His gospel!

EDITOR'S POSTBAG

First answers to the monthly questions have been received from ELIZABETH CHAPMAN.

I was recently asked the question as to how we may know that what we believe is the truth.

To answer the question, we need to remember three things.

Firstly, that the religion which is right is that which comes from God. So to know that what we believe is the truth, we need faith, which is God's gift. We read in Ephesians chapter 2 that faith is the gift of God. Whoever feels to need this great gift can ask God for it. May God help you to ask for it yourself.

Secondly, it is by experiencing God's presence and power in our lives that we may come to know and believe that He is the One true God. I knew a young teenager many years ago, who was tempted to believe that there is no God, and that the Bible is no different from other books like the Koran, etc. He was a very good artist. One day, he was given the task to paint a landscape. So he went out into the countryside and set up his easel and palette for his paints, and began to sketch and paint what he saw. Suddenly, it was as if a voice spoke to him: “Who made all these beautiful things you are seeing and drawing?” As he thought about how to answer, the same voice said: “God made all these

things.” From that moment, he knew who the true God is, and his life was changed. He became a seeker of the truth.

I read only recently of an Eskimo who had no Bible and no religion whatsoever, but as he was carving a canoe out of a log one day, this question came to him: “If I can carve out of this log a canoe, then who made the tree from which this wood came?” He began to think, and came to the conclusion that Someone must have done so: his canoe did not come by chance, neither could this tree. From this he was led to ask to know the great One who could create such things, and step-by-step he learned of God and the way to be saved.

Thirdly, when we know God, then we can see where other religions are wrong. Most importantly, they deny that Jesus Christ is God’s Son and that He is the only Way to God. Their way to God is no way at all. But those who know God, understand that they need Someone to stand between His holiness and them. That Someone is Jesus Christ who lived and died, and rose again, to be the Way to God; because there was none other good enough, nor is there any other way.

Two very short and excellent prayers were prayed by a young child many years ago, which brought the knowledge she needed of the truth into her heart. “Show me myself” and “Show me Thyself.” If that should be the prayer of your heart, then you will know the truth, and as Jesus said: “The truth shall make you free.”

PROMPT OBEDIENCE

What an example of obedience does the example of Abraham set us! After receiving the command to offer up Isaac, he rises early the next morning and proceeds on the journey of the greatest trial of his faith. Isaac, too, must have been an obedient lad to his father, because he allowed Abraham to lay him on the altar to be slain if needs be. It has been said of the angels in heaven, that they do God’s bidding immediately, without asking any questions!

BIBLE WORDS/WORDS OF SCRIPTURE (VIII)**Repent**

The word “repent” is a very important one. Repentance is something that we must know if we are to be saved. Without it, we shall be lost. John the Baptist preached “repentance for the remission of sins.” The Lord Jesus Himself, when speaking of those who were killed when the tower in Siloam fell, said: “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” He ordained His apostles and told them that “repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations.” So repentance is absolutely necessary to salvation.

What then is repentance? It does not just mean to be sorry, or to regret what we have done, although that will always be felt if we have repentance. You will remember that Esau, King Saul and Judas all regretted what they had done, but they did not have repentance. Esau even sought it carefully with tears.

Repentance really means a complete change of heart and mind. It means a complete turning around so that you now face and go in the opposite direction. It means that you really think differently. Those things you loved before, you now hate. Those things you hated before, you now love. Repentance is called “repentance toward God.” We are born with enmity against God, but to repent means that we turn to Him and away from the world and sin.

So how does someone repent? Can we do it ourselves, as some suggest? John Berridge tells us:

“Some tell me I must change my heart,
And undertake the Saviour’s part;
A proud and fruitless strife!
I might as soon the seasons change,
Or make the clouds in order range,
Or raise the dead to life.”

No, but there is One who gives repentance. The Lord Jesus Christ is exalted to give repentance. When the Lord gives repentance, there will be a sorrow for sin. This is not when we

feel sorry because our sin has been discovered. No, we shall feel the holiness of the law of God and we shall pray with David: "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned." The conscience, taught by the Holy Spirit, will grieve for sinning against God, and will know that God would be just and holy if He were to condemn us to eternal punishment. The heart then is truly broken and contrite.

But God has said that He will not despise a broken and a contrite heart. Not only does the Lord give repentance, but He is also exalted to give remission (or forgiveness) of sins. He does not give repentance without also giving forgiveness. We may have to wait for forgiveness, but it will come if we are given repentance. If we are given this blessing, we shall find that repentance is not bitter, but sweet.

The Lord's people do not only repent when the Lord first deals with them. They are given a new spirit which is tender in the fear of God. They will love the things of God and desire to walk with Him, separate from the world and its pleasures. There will be continual mourning over sin and after Him. Whilst we are on this earth, we will sin. If we are the Lord's, He will not allow us to continue in sinful ways, and will reprove us. We may be reprov'd through the faithful preaching of the gospel. Paul had to write to the church at Corinth because of several sins. It was given the grace to heed that reproof, and repented. Paul says in his second epistle, that they "sorrowed to repentance": they "were made sorry after a godly manner For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of." May this essential gift of repentance be given to us. *Contributed*

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES

CHRIST IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS

Noah's Ark

We have a most precious word in Genesis chapter 6 after God saw the terrible wickedness of man: the effects of the fall. Although in verse 7 we read: "And the LORD said, I will destroy

man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth Me that I have made them" (Genesis 6. 7); we then read something very sacred: "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD" (Genesis 6. 8). Noah was loved with an everlasting love in that eternal covenant of grace. Not because he was any better than other men, but God loved him, because He would: that is grace. Because of that grace of God we read: "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith" (Hebrews 11. 7). If all flesh had died in the flood there would have been no Jesus Christ of the seed of the woman, so we bless God for the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. That grace found Noah the same as it found the Apostle Paul, "... it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me" (Galatians 1. 15-16).

Now because God was going to destroy all flesh, He commanded Noah to build an ark of gopher wood and seal it with pitch to make it waterproof. Then, at the appointed time Noah was to enter with his immediate family into the ark to preserve them in that great and terrible flood which would cover all the mountains and destroy man and beast. Now this ark was a refuge, a place of safety, and it is a figure of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Safety, the Refuge of His children. "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. 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. 30-31). Just as the Lord called Noah by His grace, He then called Noah into the ark: "And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before Me in this generation" (Genesis 7. 1).

Noah was found righteous by faith in Jesus Christ. When the

LORD had called him and his family into the ark we read: "And the LORD shut him in." In all these things: 'the LORD called him in' and "the LORD shut him in," we see God's free grace. It is so in the gospel, the Lord by His Spirit calls His children into Christ and in those eternal decrees of salvation in the covenant of grace, they are eternally shut in. The Lord Jesus said: "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6. 37).

Also speaking of the eternal security of His people, He said: "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand" (John 10. 27-29).

My dear young friends, the great and vital thing is to be found in Christ. The Word of God instructs us: "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3. 10-14).

J.R. Rutt

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about THE DELIVERANCE OF ISRAEL FROM EGYPT. Younger children need only do five questions. Please give references for questions 6 to 10 and 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.

1. Where was Moses when God commanded him to bring the children of Israel out of Egypt? (Exodus 3. 1-4)
2. Moses objected that he was not eloquent. What did the LORD answer him? (Exodus 4. 11-12)
3. What did Aaron's rod become when he cast it down before Pharaoh? (Exodus 7. 10)
4. What did Moses take with him when the children of Israel were sent out of Egypt? (Exodus 13. 19)
5. When the children of Israel killed the Passover lamb, what had they to do with the blood? (Exodus 12. 7)
6. In one of the plagues, what did the Egyptians who "feared the word of the LORD" do? (Exodus 9)
7. Write out the words of mock repentance which Pharaoh used after one of the plagues? (Exodus 9)
8. The Egyptian magicians opposed Moses by trying to bring about the same plagues. In which plague were they powerless and had to say: "This is the finger of God"? (Exodus 8)
9. How did the LORD lead the children of Israel through the wilderness? (Exodus 13)
10. In which Psalm are the plagues that came upon the Egyptians recounted?

ANSWERS TO JULY QUESTIONS

1. How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before Me?
2. How long wilt thou be drunken?
3. How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?
4. Moses, concerning the children of Israel.
5. How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel?
6. How long have I to live? (2 Samuel 19. 34)
7. How long halt ye between two opinions? (1 Kings 18. 21)
8. Three. (Mark 9. 19, 21)
9. "O LORD of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years? (Zechariah 1. 12)
10. Psalm 13.

Contributed

**OF THE INCOMPARABLE TREASURE OF THE HOLY
SCRIPTURES**

(From 1708 Reprint of the Authorised Version)

Here is the spring where water flows,
To quench the heat of sin:
Here is the tree where truth doth grow,
To lead our lives therein:
Here is the judge that stints the strife,
When men's devices fail:
Here is the bread that feeds the life,
That death cannot assail.
The tidings of salvation dear,
Comes to our ears from hence:
The fortress of our faith is here,
And shield of our defence.
Then be not as the hog that hath
A pearl as his desire,
And takes more pleasure in the trough
And wallowing in the mire.
Read not this Book in any case
But with a single eye,
Read not but first desire God's grace
To understand thereby;
Pray still in faith with this respect,
To fructify therein,
That knowledge may bring this effect,
To mortify thy sin.
Then happy thou in all thy life,
Whatso to thee befalls,
Yea, double happy thou shalt be
When God by death thee calls.

The Friendly Companion



“... Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed
like one of these.”
(Luke 12. 27)

September 2008

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All correspondence to be sent to the Editor.

Annual Subscriptions inc. postage:

U.K.	U.S.A. & Canada	Australia	Europe (Netherlands)
£11.00	\$31	A\$38	€27.00

All correspondence concerning subscriptions should be addressed to Mr. H. Mercer, 8 Fairleigh Rise, Kingston Langley, Chippenham, Wilts. SN15 5QF.

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

A few months ago, two New Zealand pilots ran out of fuel in mid-air whilst flying a micro-light aircraft. Not being without some religious convictions, they both prayed for God's help in bringing them down to earth safely. Through God's mercy, their urgent prayer was answered. When, to their relief, their micro-light plane came to a standstill, they were amazed to find that it stopped right along side a twenty-foot notice which displayed the words: **"JESUS IS LORD"**!

Had it been a right thing to do they could have written underneath the words: **"TRIED AND PROVED."** We would hope that this solemn experience caused these two pilots to ask that important question: "Where would I have been had I not come down safely?"

Several years ago, a godly lady was travelling to the United States of America, with her husband who had been asked to preach to God's people in that part of the world. Although she had flown before, she had never taken such a long journey in an aeroplane, and was rather apprehensive. However, a few days before they were due to travel, the words of Psalm 121, often called "The Travellers' Psalm," were read in her hearing. When it came to the words: "He shall preserve thy soul," her faith was blessedly strengthened believing that if God took care of her soul, then she could leave the needs of her body to His wise care. Like the three Hebrews who were threatened with the fiery-furnace, she knew that God could take care of her body and deliver her from any harm; but if it should be His will that this should be otherwise, then she knew it would be well with her soul. Through God's mercy she returned safely to England having **TRIED AND PROVED** that **JESUS IS LORD**.

"One thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

With best wishes from your sincere friend and Editor

FRONT COVER PICTURE

The beautiful daisies, called *osteospermum*, shown on our front cover, illustrate a very attractive natural phenomenon and an important spiritual lesson for those who fear God.

One of the attractive features of the daisy is that when the sun goes in, or at nightfall, the petals close up, and when the sun shines on them, they open up just like the ones in the picture. Probably this is one way of protecting the pollen, especially from frosts. No doubt, the bees instinctively come out when the sun shines, to take advantage of the opened petals and exposed pollen.

These daisies teach us another lesson, namely that God's children need the light and the warmth of the Sun of Righteousness to shine upon their hearts in order for them to open up to the light of God's truth and show their love for Him as their God.

This was what happened to Lydia of whom we read: "Whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul." Before Paul came to the riverside her heart was like a closed-up daisy: not showing its full colours. She did fear God. She was a praying woman, but she had not experienced the love of Christ in her heart. When the beams of the gospel shone into her heart that light opened it up and enabled her to receive the Lord Jesus Christ, and love and affection followed, and she was not ashamed to own her Lord and Saviour. She could look on Paul's words to the Colossians with a clear conscience: "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him."

QUESTION: How did Christ, the Lord of life and glory, become man?

ANSWER: Christ, the Lord of life and glory, became man by taking upon Him the nature of His people, being conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary (by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost) and born of her, yet without sin.

*Isaiah 7. 14; Matthew 1. 20-23; Luke 1. 31-35; John 1. 14;
Galatians 4. 4; Philippians 2. 6-8; Hebrews 2. 14-18.*

WHERE DID ALL THE WATER GO?

According to the Bible, water covered the whole world during Noah's flood. Have you ever wondered where it has all gone?

Even if the glaciers and ice caps melted, the oceans would only rise some 70 metres (230 feet), yet Mt. Everest rises 8,848 metres (29,029 feet) above sea level.

It may surprise you to learn that we do not need any more water to cover the earth. There is already enough.

The reason water does not envelop the globe now, is that the earth's surface is uneven. The ocean basins sit low, and the continents sit high. Some mountains are especially high, and some ocean trenches are very deep, but these extremes do not account for a large percentage of the earth's surface.

If the earth's surface was even, then there is enough water in the oceans to cover the globe to a depth of about 3 kilometres.

This suggests that during the flood, the ocean floor moved vertically, relative to the continents, something mentioned in Psalm 104. 8.

In the first half, the pre-flood ocean basins rose and the pre-flood continents eroded down, until water covered everything.

That does not mean the earth's surface would have to be completely even. The ocean basins would have only had to rise *enough* for the water to cover everything.

Then, in the second half of the flood, other parts of the earth's crust sank. The water flowed off our continents into new ocean basins. Movement of the earth's crust at this time also pushed up new mountain ranges, including the one that is home to Mt. Everest.

So where did all the water go? It is in the ocean.

Creation Magazine (June/August 2008)

The God who planned salvation for the sinner, must produce it in the sinner.

Krause

*FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES***HAGAR IS FOUND**

Hagar was Sarai's maid. After being treated unkindly by Sarai, Hagar had run away. *"And the angel of the LORD found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness."* He called her by name and asked where she had come from and where she was trying to go.

How surprised Hagar was! She did not know that the eyes of the LORD were always upon her, even in this far off place. *"And she called the name of the LORD that spake unto her, Thou God seest me."*

The angel of the LORD had a special message for Hagar. He said that she must return to Sarai and obey her. He also told Hagar that she would have a son and should call his name Ishmael: *"because the LORD hath heard thy affliction."*

QUESTIONS:

1. What had Hagar done after being treated harshly?
2. Who found Hagar?
3. What did she call the name of the LORD? (4 words)

Please 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. Separate.
2. Lot.
3. No.

Contributed

*“The eyes
of the
LORD are
in every
place ...”*

*Proverbs
15. 3.*

BIBLE LESSONS**THE TRUE BREAD FROM HEAVEN**

Many of those whom Jesus had sent away after feeding them with the five loaves and two fishes, returned the following day to look for Him. As they looked across the Sea of Galilee, they could see the ship His disciples had taken. They knew that He did not get into the ship with His disciples, so they thought He must still be on this side of the sea. Yet, after much searching, they could not find Him. Where could He have gone? Do you remember? During the stormy night Jesus had walked on the waves to the ship the disciples were in.

While the people searched for Jesus, other boats arrived. They decided to board them and go to the other side. Then they went into the city of Capernaum seeking Jesus. How happy they were when they found Him!

They asked Jesus when He had come there, since He had not entered the ship with His disciples. Jesus did not answer their curiosity. Instead, He told them the real reason they sought Him. *"Ye seek Me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled."* All they really wanted was another meal. They had no need of Him as a Saviour. They only wanted a King who could multiply their daily bread.

Again Jesus said unto them: *"Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you."* Just as Jesus had said to the woman at Jacob's well: *"Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again"*, so natural bread would never satisfy them for long.

The real reason Jesus had performed the miracle was to teach them to believe on Him. However, they did not want to believe on Him. They asked Him to show them a sign that they might believe: a sign to show that He was the Son of God.

They began to belittle the great miracle Jesus had performed the previous evening, by comparing it to their fathers in the wilderness. They reminded the Lord that their fathers ate

manna every day for forty years. They were telling Jesus that Moses was greater than Himself.

Jesus answered them: *"Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven." "I am the Bread of Life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst."* He further said: *"Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you."*

The Jews reasoned among themselves: *"How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?"* What a question! Surely He did not mean they could eat His flesh like a piece of bread. The Lord meant something else. To become bread for His people, His body must be broken. How could this be? He would die upon the cross and His blood would be shed. He would bear the sin of His people. He would also suffer under the WRATH of GOD, His Father. Those people who believe on Him, by faith, receive this truth as bread for their souls.

The people did not like such preaching. The Bible tells us that many went back and walked no more with Him. After they had all left Him, Jesus turned to the twelve disciples and asked: *"Will ye also go away?"* How searching the question! Finally, Peter answered on behalf of the rest: *"Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."*

You can read about this in John chapter 6 verses 22 to 68.

QUESTIONS:

1. Who did they think was greater than Jesus?
2. What did Jesus say His Father gave? (5 words)
3. What must be broken to become bread for His people?
4. What did the people do after such preaching? (8 words)
5. What did Peter say that Jesus had? (5 words)

Please 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.

G.L. TenBroeke

ANSWERS TO AUGUST QUESTIONS

1. Jesus was not come to them.
2. The fourth watch or the last watch before dawn.
3. Peter.
4. He looked away from Jesus.
5. The Son of God.

A BOY FROM STAVENISSE**Chapter 9: In The Willow Tree**

When Leen is eleven years old, he again becomes uneasy. Does he actually have a new heart? Oh no. He knows better. What if he would have to die tomorrow? Would it then turn out well with him? His old distress returns.

One time when he is sitting in church the minister says: "Sinner, you are damnable before God from your birth."

Leen is shocked. That is for him. Those words enter his heart like arrows. It is the first time that Leen sees that he is a sinner: that it is sin which has made a separation between God and him. Oh, those sins. He sees them one by one before him. At four years, stealing a piece of waffle. Five years, not being nice to his sisters. Six years, not doing his best at school. Seven years, lying to his father. Eight years ... so it goes on. Sins, sins, sins. He is dead in trespasses and sins.

The Lord shows him that He is holy. The Lord cannot wink at Leen's sins. Holy is the Lord. How can the Lord have anything to do with such a sinful boy? When in bed at night, the Lord shows him that he not only committed all those sins, but that he himself is sin. The Lord must punish him for this because it is his own fault. The Lord has not created man sinful. Man himself wanted to become sinful and left God. Man chose the devil. What an insult to God the Creator.

Leen begins to understand that he can do nothing to God's honour. There are only wicked thoughts in his head. Leen becomes afraid of sin and afraid of death. He tells no one about this. He is ashamed and thinks there is not a child on earth as wicked as he.

At one time he cannot stand it in the house. Mother is busy

and his sisters want him to play with them. Leen cannot play. He has to cry all the time and he does not want them to see this. He flees outside.

There are a few willow trees along the narrow farm path. Old and crooked, they keep watch near the silent ditch along the path. Leen has discovered that one of the trees is hollow inside. That has become his private place. He loves being there when he wants to be completely alone with the Lord. He hastily crawls into the empty belly of the old willow tree. He sobs aloud and prays to the Lord for help.

A quarter of an hour later, three men approach. These men are on the way to another village, Sint Maartensdijk. They talk about all kinds of things together and are in no hurry. When they come close to the row of willow trees, one of them stops the other two. His keen ears had caught an extraordinary sound. He bends forward, holding his finger to his lips. He listens. He tiptoes to the willow trees from which he hears a little voice. The others follow him. The three big men silently listen to the prayer of a child. He is hidden deep inside the tree. They cannot see the boy. But they do understand him. There were times when they too have groaned and prayed in such a way. But this is only a child.

The Lord comforts Leen there in that willow tree. He may then believe that the Lord knows about him. He could cry with relief. The Lord sees him and also wants to listen to children.

When he crawls out of the tree, he is amazed to see the men. They silently stand on the path and look somewhat embarrassed. Leen is filled with joy because the Lord has let him feel that He exists. He impulsively tells this to those strange men. "Do you know how good the Lord is? Oh, I would like to always belong to Him and never do any wicked things anymore."

Later, when he is walking home, he becomes sad. "My, how I bragged to those strange men. They will believe I have a new heart," he thinks. He is ashamed. It is not true. He does know that the Lord is a God who wants to listen to children and who

makes it light in our wicked heart. Yes, that he knows, but he cannot die, for his sins are not forgiven. He must come to know the Lord Jesus before that. He comes home and immediately goes to his secret spot again. He begins pleading for conversion. This is only possible when he learns to know the Lord Jesus.

The men also continued on their way. "It is quite something, such a boy," says the youngest. All three are a little quiet because of it.

"You know," the second one says thoughtfully, "such a boy is troubled because he has a sinful heart. You can notice that he is seeking peace with God. Now the Lord has pointed him in a certain direction: 'That way, my boy, that way, that is where you will find Christ and only then can it become right between you and Me.'"

"Oh yes, he needs the Lord Jesus as His Saviour. Maybe he is closer to Him that he knows himself," says the second man.

"We have to pray for him," the first one says again, "and that is why we will go to Samarina in a little while. She needs to know this."

When they arrive in the village, they go to the little store owned by Samoelina Hartog. She is a widow called Samarina by the villagers. She is a woman who has learned very much from the Lord.

When they have told everything, Samarina nods. She points to her heart. "That child already has a place here," she says simply. "It cannot be otherwise but that we are talking about the same boy I saw entering church sometime ago. With power, the Lord let me feel that I have to wrestle in prayer for this boy. Let us pray that he may be delivered from evil. Let us ask the Lord if He will convert this child."

Leen does not know that a few people are praying for him that same evening, that he may soon learn to know Christ.

(To be continued)

(Slightly adapted)

A LESSON FROM PAUL

The Apostle Paul! I wonder if some of you are saying: "You have been mentioning all the well-known stories in the Bible, but what about Paul?"

Well, Paul is one of the best-known (and loved) characters in Scripture and the story of his conversion (as Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus) is one of the best-known stories.

Here is this man, Saul, on his way to Damascus to persecute the people of God. Suddenly a bright light shines from heaven, and he falls to the ground and hears a voice: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" All he can say is: "Who art Thou, Lord?" Later, blind, he is led into the city and there delivered and baptised.

What do we see in Saul's conversion?

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

There were a number of people with Saul, all bent on the same cruel errand; but *one*, and one only, was savingly converted to God. Why Saul? He was the ringleader in persecuting God's people.

THE MERCY OF GOD

At a later date, Paul, writing of this wonderful event, described it in this way: "But I obtained mercy." Though so sinful, God was merciful to him and forgave him.

THE POWER OF GOD

How great that power that could change a persecuting Saul into the great apostle of the Gentiles!

No doubt, the saints at Damascus were crying to God for deliverance. I wonder if any of them ever dreamed of the way in which God would do it – by changing the heart of the leader of those who would bind and imprison them.

When Stephen was martyred, it was a grievous blow to the early church. But so great is our God that He raised up another in the place of Stephen, even from among those who assisted at Stephen's martyrdom.

We have a very interesting point in the Lord's own description of Saul of Tarsus. He said: "Behold, he prayeth!"

And this to convince Ananias that Saul's conversion was real and that he really was a child of God. There is something to ponder here. Have you ever thought of all the things God might have said to prove the reality of Saul's religion? – 'There never has been a man with a clearer conversion, Ananias'; 'He was struck down to the earth by a light from heaven'; 'Ananias, he heard My voice and looked up into heaven and saw Me.' But the Lord did not say any of these things. He said: "Behold, he prayeth," – the true mark of a Holy Ghost conversion.

On Joseph Hart's memorial obelisk in Bunhill Fields are the words:

"O bring no price! God's grace is free
To Paul, to Magdalene, to me!"

B.A. Ramsbottom

THE UNKNOWN PREACHER

Dr. Owen, who is often spoken of as our greatest English theologian, in his early days lacked the sweet assurance that he was a child of God. This went on for about five years and he suffered from great depression.

In this state he resolved to go and hear the renowned Dr. Calamy, an eminent Puritan minister (no doubt best known as the one under whom "Poor Joseph" was blessed). Perhaps he would receive some good in listening to Dr. Calamy's preaching.

To his intense disappointment, Dr. Calamy was not there. A stranger appeared in the pulpit and preached from Matthew 8. 26: "And He saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then He arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm." Under that sermon, John Owen felt the love of God shed abroad in his heart and enjoyed the assurance that he was a child of God.

The strange thing is that, despite many efforts, he was never able to find out who the preacher was.

Selected

BIBLE WORDS/WORDS OF SCRIPTURE (IX)**Propitiation**

We find the word “propitiation” three times in the Bible: in Romans 3. 25; 1 John 2. 2 and 1 John 4. 10. I do not expect you will hear the word spoken generally. Very occasionally you might come across the word “propitious” which comes from the same root.

The first part of the word “propitiation” (called a preposition) is “pro.” That means “for” or “towards.” The next part of the word is “piti,” such as in pitiful, and “piti” means “pity or mercy.” So together this means “pity or mercy towards.” “Propitious” means “merciful,” and “propitiation” means “the place where there is mercy.”

Can you think of the place in the Old Testament where there was mercy towards God’s people? Yes, the mercy seat, which was the name that God gave to the cover (or lid) of the ark of the covenant. The mercy seat was given on Mount Sinai. God had given His holy law, and commanded all to keep it. The law is holy and good, and those that break that law are guilty of death.

None can keep that law, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. In much mercy, after the giving of the ten commandments, God showed a picture of the only way in which that holy law is kept. It was placed in the ark of the covenant, which kept it. (The ark of the covenant is a type of the Lord Jesus.) There was a lid to that ark which covered the law. The lid was called the mercy seat. God said: “And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.”

The mercy seat was where the blood of the sacrifice was to be sprinkled by the High Priest. This showed the sacrifice the Lord Jesus would make. And since God is well-pleased with the sacrifice of His dear Son on behalf of His people, He shows

His mercy to them. He accepts them because of what Jesus has done.

The Lord Jesus is the mercy seat in the gospel. It is He who has made one sacrifice for sin. He is the way by which sinners can approach to God; otherwise they would be consumed. His is the name they plead. There is no other way by which sinners can commune with a holy God, and "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." This is why prayers should always be asked "for Jesus' sake."

May we each know the Lord Jesus to be the propitiation for our sins, our mercy seat.

Contributed

BAROMETERS

One thing that affects people wherever they live is the weather. Do you hear the weather forecast, or perhaps in your home, do you have a barometer? Barometers come in all different shapes and sizes, but they all work on the same principle of registering air pressure: that is the atmosphere around us. This air pressure creates a great force on our world, and those of you who are older may have been taught about this at school: one of the wonders of God's creation.

There are usually three types of barometer. One is called aneroid: it is activated by air pressure working on a very sensitive concertina-shaped box, which moves with the rise and fall of the air pressure, which in turn is connected by levers to a dial. The next is just a glass tube in which mercury rises and falls against a plate marked off giving a reading as to whether pressure is high or low. The next is mercury which operates a hand which moves backwards and forwards across a dial plate, as does the aneroid one.

Yes, we use barometers to foretell the weather by studying the pressure. If the pressure is high – fine weather: if it is low – wet or windy weather.

People of the world are very curious about the future in many ways. We live in perilous times: many people's hearts fail them for fear. We have the rise in our days of the popularity of horoscopes; card reading and many other inventions of the devil. Indeed, as we read our Bible carefully, we see it has always been so. It was a great sin in the time of the exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt. Israel learned many bad things in Egypt, and if you read about the Lord giving the Law to Moses, there are many laws against the sin of witchcraft, as it is called, so this must be a warning to us. Yes, find out, if you want to, what the weather could be (but remember, it is God who rules the weather) but to look and dabble in such things as fortune telling and all the accompanying evil: avoid at all times.

But to end on a more worthy theme: we have been speaking about the rise and fall of mercury. We use the same, of course, in thermometers, but this time in a sealed tube, so that it records the temperature. There was among the Gospel Standard churches 150 years ago, a well-known minister called J.C. Philpot. His writings are still read and loved today by God's people, and I trust that you older ones might start to read them, for I feel they are easy to follow and read. In a well-known sermon preached in 1837 entitled: "Winter Afore Harvest," he remarks that when a sharp trial comes, faith falls just like the mercury in a thermometer or barometer. To quote Mr. Philpot: "The quantity of the mercury in the *bulb* never varies, but it rises or falls in the *tube*, according to the weight of air, or heat of the day. Thus faith, though it abides in the heart without loss or diminution, yet rises or sinks in the feelings, as the weather is fair or foul, or as the sun shows or hides itself."

Yes, even for the youngest and weakest believer, real grace cannot be lost. This is the believer's hope: not our hold on God but His hold on His people. May we indeed be "numbered with them now and in eternity."

Contributed

HOW LONG WERE THE CREATION DAYS?

Some scholars say the creation days were not twenty-four-hour days, but long periods of years. We offer some reasons why this is false:

1. The only day which has an evening and morning, is a twenty-four-hour day.
2. The seventh day of this first week was a twenty-four-hour day. Moses says so in Exodus 20. 10, 11; 31. 17. If the seventh day was a twenty-four-hour day, then certainly the other six must have been twenty-four-hour days, also.
3. The period lighted by the sun was a twenty-four-hour day (Genesis 1. 5, 14 and 18).
4. The word used for “day” in Genesis 1. 5 was a period of light followed by a period of darkness called the night. The twenty-four-hour day is the only such period known to man.
5. In all the Bible, the word “day” is never used of an indefinite period of time when connected with a numeral. Genesis 8. 3; Numbers 13. 25; Jonah 1. 17; Exodus 20. 11.
6. The objection is raised that there could have been no twenty-four-hour day without the sun, and the sun did not appear until the fourth day. Wrong again – the twenty-four-hour day is made by the revolution of the earth upon its axis. This was from the very first day.
7. The days of Genesis 1 were twenty-four-hour days because Genesis 1. 14 plainly says that they were the kind of days that made seasons and years.
8. The fact that the Bible says that Adam lived 930 years is proof that the days of Genesis 1 were twenty-four-hour days, because that is the only kind of days that make years.

The Baptist Examiner

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES

CHRIST IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS

Abraham and his seed

When we come to the life of Abram in Genesis 11, we have a narrowing down of the original promise to Adam and Eve: “thy

seed.” Now we have a promise to Abram: “And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” (Genesis 12: 2-3). Christ would come through the seed of Abram. Hence from this point the Old Testament follows the lineage of Abram, later called Abraham (Genesis 17. 5), Isaac and Jacob; then the children of Jacob: (Jacob was renamed by God, Israel); and after this the nation of Israel as they emerged from Egyptian bondage.

Then the promise narrows to the tribe of Judah: “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be” (Genesis 49. 10). The sceptre spoken of here is the royal sceptre of King Jesus: another revelation of Christ in Genesis. We read of this sceptre in Psalm 45: “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of Thy kingdom is a right sceptre” (Psalm 45. 6).

Then the Holy Scripture narrows down the promise of the seed of the woman in King David: “For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever: Thy faithfulness shalt Thou establish in the very heavens. I have made a covenant with My chosen, I have sworn unto David My servant, thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah” (Psalm 89. 2-4). This seed is Christ. Also, “The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; He will not turn from it; of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne” (Psalm 132. 11). Subsequently, Christ is referred to in the Scriptures as the Son of David. The virgin Mary was of the seed of David.

Think of that word spoken by the Lord Jesus to the Apostle John in the Revelation: “I Jesus have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the Bright and Morning Star” (Revelation 22. 16). In this word we see that great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh. The word manifest

means revealed. As the eternal divine Son of God from all eternity, He was David's Root. David drew all his strength and wisdom from Him. In that holy human nature which the Son of God assumed in the womb of the virgin Mary, who was of the seed of David, He was David's offspring. The Holy Scriptures refer to Christ as "the Son of God," also "the Son of Man." The first directs us to His divine nature, the second to His human nature. In this one glorious Person of Jesus Christ we have, "very God and very Man."

Abraham and Isaac

The promised seed of Abram by Sarai was Isaac. The Lord then changed their names to Sarah and Abraham. They were both in their old age and it seemed an impossible thing, but with God nothing is impossible. They waited twenty-five years for this promise to be fulfilled. Now in Genesis 22 we read how God tested, or tried, the faith of His servant Abraham: "And He said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of" (Genesis 22. 2). What a trial: his precious son whom he had waited so long for. Now in this we find a most beautiful figure of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Before you read this, read through the 22nd chapter of Genesis.)

There are two ways of looking at this narrative as a figure of Christ.

Firstly, we see Abraham and Isaac travelling together to mount Moriah for Isaac to be sacrificed by Abraham. In this we see the eternal Father and the eternal Son as they pass through the corridors of eternity until they arrive at the hill called Calvary. There the eternal Son who was manifest in the flesh, offers His own perfect holy human nature as a sin-atoning sacrifice unto His eternal Father. In this glorious sacrifice at the cross of Calvary the church, the bride of Christ, is redeemed from all sin.

Secondly, we see Abraham binding his only son, the seed of promise, and laying him on the altar to offer him as a sacrifice.

As Abraham raises the knife to slay his son, God calls from heaven and stops him from slaying his son. Then, remarkably: "And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son" (Genesis 22. 13). Now in Isaac laying bound on the altar, we see a figure of the church of God, the bride of Christ, bound under the holy law of God, under its solemn and awful curse. In the ram caught in the thicket, we see a beautiful figure of our Lord Jesus Christ as the substitute for His people. Isaac was loosed from his bonds and death and the ram taken and slain in his place. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Hebrews 9. 28).

J. R. Rutt

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about BIBLE COMPARISONS. Younger children need only do five questions. Please give references for questions 6 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 "is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field"? (Matthew 13. 31)
2. Who is "like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock"? (Luke 6. 47-48)
3. What is like "apples of gold in pictures of silver"? (Proverbs 25. 11)
4. What was "like a weaver's beam"? (1 Samuel 17. 7)
5. "Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea." What was it like? (1 Kings 18. 44)
6. Of which day was it said, "And there was no day like that before it or after it"? (Joshua 10)
7. Who had David seen "spreading himself like a green bay tree"? (Psalm 37)

8. What did God promise would be “as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore”? (Genesis 22)
9. What is likened to a fire and a hammer? (Jeremiah 23)
10. From Isaiah 40 and 46 find and write out two verses that declare the incomparable nature of God.

ANSWERS TO AUGUST QUESTIONS

1. By the burning bush at Horeb.
2. “Who hath made man’s mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.”
3. A serpent or snake.
4. The bones of Joseph.
5. They had to “take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses.” (Exodus 12. 7)
6. They made their servants and their cattle flee into their houses. (Exodus 9. 20)
7. “I have sinned this time; the LORD is righteous, and I and my people are wicked.” (Exodus 9. 27)
8. The plague of lice. (Exodus 8. 19)
9. By a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. (Exodus 13. 21)
10. Psalm 105.

Contributed

LIST OF NAMES

The following young people have answered questions during the months January to June 2008. The total number is 293, for which we would thank God.

Maia and Harry Aldridge; Tom Aldridge; Anthony Ashby; Naomi Aston.

Alasdair Bailey; Sarah Ball; Joseph, Mary and Samuel Banfield; Josiah Barker; Benjamin and William Bos; Abigail, Daniel, Joanna and Nathan Broome; Jonathan and Nicolas Burton; Sophie Buss.

Bethany, Elizabeth and Victoria Chapman; Mark Chapman; Christopher and Nathan Christie; Matthew and Sarah Cooper; Lucy, Ruth and Samuel Cooper; Alice, Charlotte and William Cottingham; Annie, Lucy and Miriam Cottingham; Michael Cottingham; Emma and Jessica Cottingham; Joanna and Samuel Cottingham; Philip Cottingham; Zach Cottingham; Abigail, Hannah, James and Sarah Crowter; Annabel, Elsie and Kate Crowter.

Esther and Louise Dadswell; Henry, Joanna, Jonathan, Mariene, Nicholas and Peter De Vogel.

Bethan Field; Esther, Naomi and Rebekah Field; Benjamin and Oliver Funnell.
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YE ARE NOT YOUR OWN

Jesus, Saviour, fill my heart
With nothing else but Thee;
Now Thy saving power exert
And more than conquer me:
Each intruding rival kill,
That hinders or obstructs Thy reign;
All Thy glorious might reveal
And make me pure within.

Through my soul in mercy shine,
Thine Holy Spirit give;
Let Him witness, Lord, with mine,
That I in Jesus live;
Set me free from Satan's load,
The gift of liberty dispense,
In my heart O shed abroad
Thy quickening influence.

Let the gifts bestowed on me
Be to Thy praise alone:
Lord, the talents lent by Thee
Are Thine and not my own:
May I in Thy service spend
All the graces Thou hast given:
Taken up, when time shall end,
To live and reign in heaven.

Toplady (Written at the age of fourteen)
(The Gospel Standard 1938)

The Friendly Companion



“What hast thou in the house?”
(2 Kings 4. 2)

October 2008

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All correspondence to be sent to the Editor.

Annual Subscriptions inc. postage:

U.K.	U.S.A. & Canada	Australia	Europe (Netherlands)
£11.00	\$31	A\$38	€27.00

All correspondence concerning subscriptions should be
addressed to Mr. H. Mercer, 8 Fairleigh Rise, Kington Langley,
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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

This month is October, the tenth month of the year. You might wonder why October, which means eighth month, is nevertheless the tenth! The reason is that the calendar has undergone various changes over its history, one of which moved October from the eighth to the tenth month. Perhaps one of our readers knows how this came about?

The number *eight* is quite significant in the Word of God. For example, eight persons were in the ark which out-rode the deluge as recorded in Genesis.

One of our hymns says:

*"When Noah, with his favoured few,
Was ordered to embark,
Eight human souls, a little crew,
Entered on board his ark.*

*Though every part he might secure
With bar, or bolt, or pin,
To make the preservation sure,
Jehovah shut him in."*

J. Hart

Then we read several times after the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ of the term "after eight days." This meant one week later from the day of His resurrection. When counting days, the Jews always counted the day they were in, so the eighth day would be one week later. Particularly the Lord set apart what we call the Lord's Day to be the Christian Sabbath, the day of rest and worship.

Then we read of a man named Enoch whom Jude called, "the seventh from Adam." Enoch was the man who walked with God and then God took him to heaven without dying. Enoch had a son, whom we could say is the eighth from Adam. This son was called Methuselah. This simply means "when he dies, the waters will come." Although he lived to 969 years, eventually Methuselah died and that year the flood came. No

doubt, Enoch, who walked with God, learned of God's secret purposes, which those who do not walk with God cannot receive. His was a lonely path because it would seem that none believed his warnings. But all those years later, Noah, by faith, believing that the flood was imminent, at God's command built his ark to save his family.

So as we pass through this month may we remember these important lessons from God's holy Word and not be like the unbelieving generations at the time of Enoch and Noah. May we seek the same precious faith that Enoch and Noah had to believe what God said.

I wonder if any of you can find anything else in the Bible about the number eight?

With best wishes from your sincere friend and Editor

"MOVED WITH FEAR"

A poor man from a country thousands of miles away from England, was working in his garden one day when he felt a strange shaking in the ground. As he watched the place where he felt the tremor, he was reminded that many years before, he had seen the same thing. Then it was followed by a dreadful earthquake which left many dead and many others homeless.

He decided that the best thing to do was to move right away from the area. So he packed all his belongings up, and took his family away; but warned his neighbours and friends. All they could do was laugh at him as they saw his loaded cart and family slowly move away. They really thought that he was mad: just as Noah's friends must have thought Noah was out of his mind!

Only a few days later, a terrible earthquake struck the village, and not one escaped.

The only family which was safe, was that of the man who understood the warning and gave heed to it.

What a lesson for us each!

"Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not." (Luke 12. 40)

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

The picture of the front page of an ancient Bible that you will see on our cover this month, comes from kind friends who saw it in a restaurant whilst on a visit to the Lake District. The Bible itself is to be found in an ancient spice cupboard as the following inscription tells:

THE CUPBOARD BIBLE

*Behind this wooden door
(which was originally an old spice cupboard)
lies an old Bible.*

*Legend has it that if the Bible were to be removed from the
building (which was built in 1610) dire consequences would befall
the Inn and whoever removed it.*

Of course we do not believe in superstition, but I hope we do believe that it is a great privilege to have the Word of God in our homes, not locked up in a cupboard as a museum piece, but as our daily companion and guide. Indeed it is even more important that we have it in our hearts, as a light to what is right and wrong. One thing is certain, that those who are so blessed will find that the Lord is their Keeper, especially of the soul, both in time and eternity.

QUESTION: What offices does Christ execute as the Redeemer of God's elect?

ANSWER: Christ, as the Redeemer of God's elect, executes the offices of a prophet, of a priest and of a king, both in His estate of humiliation and exaltation.

(Prophet) Luke 7. 16; John 1. 1, 14; 6. 14 & 13. 19;
Acts 3. 22-25 & 7. 37-38.

(Priest) Hebrews 2. 17-18; 3. 1; 4. 14-16; 5. 5-7;
7. 24-28 & 10. 19-22.

(King) Psalm 2. 6; 24. 7-10 & Psalm 45; Zechariah 9. 9;
Revelation 11. 15 & 19.16.

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**ESCAPE FROM SODOM**

The people of Sodom were very wicked. Because of their sin, the LORD said that He would destroy the city. Two angels were sent to Sodom. They warned Lot to take his wife and two daughters and flee from Sodom at once. But how slow he was! *"The LORD being merciful unto him,"* the angels took hold of Lot's hand and the hand of his wife and of his two daughters. They brought them out of the city, saying: *"Escape for thy life; look not behind thee ... lest thou be consumed."*

As they hurried away from Sodom, Lot's wife *"looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt."* The LORD caused fire and brimstone to rain down upon Sodom and Gomorrah and they were destroyed and all who lived there.

The awful destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was a warning of the LORD's wrath against sin. Yet, His great mercy was shown in saving Lot! We are told to: *"Remember Lot's wife."* She escaped from Sodom but perished when she disobeyed the LORD's command.

QUESTIONS:

1. Which four persons were brought out of Sodom?
2. Where were they told not to look?
3. Who did not obey?

Please 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. Run away.
2. The angel of the LORD.
3. Thou God seest me.

Contributed

*“Remember
Lot's
wife.”*

Luke 17. 32.

BIBLE LESSONS

THE SYROPHENICIAN WOMAN

Near to the land of Galilee was a very small country called Phoenicia. Two of the principal cities were Tyre and Sidon. The people who lived there were called "Gentiles" by the Jews. Living so near to the land of Israel, it was likely that they had heard reports of One, named Jesus, who worked such wonderful miracles.

Leaving the city of Capernaum, Jesus journeyed up to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. He quietly entered a house that He might not be noticed, but *"He could not be hid."* A certain woman came and cried out: *"Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David."* The Gospel of Mark tells us that she was a Greek, a Syrophenician by country, thus a despised Gentile. But how did she know that He was the Lord? Just as wonderful, she called Him, "the Son of David." Many in the land of Israel had heard and seen much more of Jesus than this woman had, but they never perceived that He was the Lord and the Son of David.

When the woman heard that Jesus had come to the borders of her land, she felt she must venture to Him with her burden. But what was her burden? She had a daughter who was grievously vexed with a devil. No doubt she had tried many things to obtain relief. The idol gods of her country could not help her, nor could the heathen priests of Tyre and Sidon. But she was sure that Jesus could help her.

How pleased He must have been to hear such words as "Lord," and "Son of David," but especially with her cry for mercy! It must have touched His sympathetic heart. Surely He would answer her without delay. However, the Bible tells us: *"He answered her not a word."* In the Psalms it says: *"Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me."* Yet, not a WORD from the Lord!

The disciples urged Jesus to send her away. She was drawing too much attention by her urgent cries. They felt no compassion for a Gentile woman. But would the Lord send her away? When He finally spoke, it almost seemed so. *"I am not sent but unto the*

lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Could she feel herself a sheep? No, indeed not! Was she of the house of Israel? No! What is left for her to do? She still hoped against hope. She came nearer *“and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, help me.”* It was such a simple petition, yet the Holy Ghost called it, “worship.”

Once more the Lord seemed to speak against her: *“It is not meet (right) to take the children’s bread, and to cast it to dogs.”* The Jews often called the Gentile people “dogs.” Was she too proud to be called a dog? Not at all: she answered Him: *“Truth, Lord.”* She agreed that she was like a dog, unclean and unworthy. *“Yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.”* She wanted only a crumb! When you sit down for a meal, you are not satisfied with a crumb of bread, are you? But this woman believed that a crumb from Jesus would satisfy her.

“Just a crumb of healing bread
With which the suffering Jews were fed,
Just a crumb, she asked, just one —
Would she a Gentile, be given none?”

The loving heart of the Saviour and His tender compassion could hold back no longer. He answered with such words of power: *“O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt.”* Now she quickly returned home, believing that her daughter was completely delivered from the power of the devil.

You can read about this in Matthew 15 verses 21 to 28 and Mark 7 verses 24 to 30.

QUESTIONS:

1. What two names did the woman call Jesus?
2. What did the disciples urge Jesus to do? (3 words)
3. To whom did Jesus say He was sent? (8 words)
4. How did she worship Him? (4 words)
5. What did she say the dogs eat of?

Please 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. Moses.
 2. The true bread from heaven.
 3. His body.
 4. Went back and walked no more with Him.
 5. The words of eternal life.
- G.L. Tenbroeke*

A BOY FROM STAVENISSE**Chapter 10: Free of Sin**

It is not going well with Leen. Father and Mother see it. The boy eats and sleeps poorly. The teacher at school notices that he does not pay much attention and always sits, dreaming. The teacher sometimes finds it difficult not to give the child a shaking, but the other teacher has said that he may never do this. They feel it: the Lord is working in this boy.

And the Lord certainly is working in Leen, for He has elected this child. The Lord has never left a supplicant to himself. When Leen no longer knows how it will end up and does not know where to turn, deliverance is there. Leen is sad because he has sinned against God: against God who is righteous. He must be punished for his sins. He is guilty and must pay: but how?

This is how Leen lives from one day to the next. Sometimes the Lord comforts him. Then he believes he can still be saved. The Lord keeps him from too great a sorrow. His longing for the Lord Jesus constantly becomes stronger. He can think of nothing else he would want to have except that One, the Lord Jesus.

It is his birthday, twelve years. He does not want a present from his father and mother, from his sisters and brother. There is but one thing he wants and they cannot give it to him. Nonetheless, he is happy with the book Grandmother bought him. He knows that she understands him without him having to say anything. Maybe the book will help him find Christ.

Three weeks go by, in which Leen feels he is the unhappiest boy in Stavenisse. He can almost not get a bite of food through his throat. He is more often at Grandmother's than at home. She does not ask him questions. She prays for him. Grandma feels that deliverance is very near.

That night Leen goes to bed. He almost does not dare to pray any more. He certainly cannot pray, as he ought. His prayers insult the Lord. Then the Lord comes. He first shows him that he is a sinful boy and God a just Judge.

"I must punish all your sins," says the Lord.

Leen trembles: he has no reply to this. He is certain that he will now be lost. And he agrees with the Lord. It is true what the Lord says. It does not take long. Then the Lord Jesus comes and embraces him in His wide-open arms.

"I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions," Christ speaks to him.

Leen has innumerable transgressions and sins!

"Yes, I was the One who bore the punishment for you, My child. I am willing to be your Surety. I suffered for you on the cross and have called out: 'It is finished!' You need not do anything to it yourself."

A Surety! If Someone wants to be Surety, Leen does not have to do anything himself any more. Then the Surety makes things right with the Judge.

Once and for all, the Lord now loosens the ropes binding Leen to the devil. Leen is freed and may know he is a child of God from now on. Leen does not have to perish, for the Lord safely and lovingly encloses him in His arms. Now Leen may finally know and love the Lord Jesus Christ with his whole heart. All his cares, misery, sins and longing disappear like snow melted by the sun. Great joy takes its place. He no longer needs to be afraid of God. No, He has punished His Son instead of Leen. God loves him and Leen may love God.

He speaks to Leen: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

It sounds so certain in his heart that he will never again doubt that it really was the Lord who spoke.

(To be continued)

(Slightly adapted)

A LESSON FROM ABRAHAM AND ISAAC

One of the remarkable Old Testament stories is that of Abraham and Isaac.

One day, God told Abraham to go to the land of Moriah and offer up his beloved Isaac as a sacrifice. What a trial this must have been!

1. Abraham had been brought away from ungodly people who practised human sacrifice.

2. Abraham had been given wonderful promises about those who should descend from Isaac – as many as the stars in the sky and the grains of sand on the seashore; and especially the Lord Jesus.

And Abraham obeyed. It is no wonder (is it?) that Abraham's faith is pointed out to us as a pattern. We are told in the New Testament that he believed that even if he slew Isaac, God could (and would) raise him from the dead.

We notice how Abraham said to the servants: "I and the lad will go yonder and worship, *and come again* to you."

But how dreadful it must have sounded to Abraham when Isaac asked: "Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"! It was a gracious answer: "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb."

You all know the story of how Isaac was bound on the altar. It has often been remarked that young, strong Isaac could have escaped from his aged father had he wished. And you remember the end: how, as Abraham lifted up the knife to kill Isaac, God stopped him, showed him a ram, and the ram was offered instead.

There are many lessons. Let us think of two.

1. THE DOCTRINE OF SUBSTITUTION.

Isaac is bound on the altar; Isaac is about to die. But the lamb takes Isaac's place. The lamb is killed instead of Isaac. The lamb dies; Isaac goes free. Substitution!

So with the dear Lord Jesus: He is His people's Substitute. (A substitute is one who takes another's place.) The dear Lamb of God dies at Calvary; His people go free. What love!

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

I think I have told you about the poor Negro. Under a deep sense of sin and guilt, he cried: “ME DIE.” As the gospel plan was unfolded to him his language was: “HE DIE, OR ME DIE.” Under the sweet assurance of faith he cried: “HE DIE, ME NO DIE.”

The godly Scottish divine, “Rabbi” Duncan, used to give this as a beautiful illustration of the doctrine of substitution, known in the soul.

2. THE LORD WILL PROVIDE.

Afterwards, Abraham called the name of the place Jehovah-Jireh – “the Lord sees” or “the Lord will provide.” What a precious text that was to our godly forefathers in days of poverty! And how true it is today, in providence and in grace!

Some of our chapels, in remembrance of this, are called “Jireh,” and often in older houses the little verse was on display, with JEHOVAH-JIREH as the title:

“Say not, my soul, from whence can God relieve thy care,
Remember that Omnipotence hath servants everywhere,
His method is sublime, His thoughts supremely kind;
God never is before His time and never is behind.”

In a New Testament sense it is: “My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

See hymn 513 (Gadsby’s) (“T and P” [tried and proved], as the old woman wrote).

B. A. Ramsbottom

EDITOR’S POSTBAG

First answers to the monthly questions have been received from PHEBE BURDEN; RACHEL and SUSANNA PACK.

(The printers apologise for the mistaken colour on the cover of the September magazine.)

GARDENING

Do you like gardening? Perhaps you help Mum or Dad carry out their various jobs in keeping the garden tidy.

In the spring and summer, we find there is much to do, particularly if we have a large garden. In my experience of gardening, one thing has always amazed me: perhaps you have noticed this too, how two plants can often grow together, looking just like one another.

Some years ago, we had raspberry canes, and it was quite amazing how little shoots would appear amongst the raspberry canes, looking just like young raspberry canes: but no, they turned out to be weeds. In our present garden we have some honeysuckle bushes, and earlier this year I saw some new growth coming up beside the old bushes. I was pleased to see this, for I wanted to extend the honeysuckle. However, this new growth, which appeared looking just like honeysuckle – the stem colour, leaf size and colour were just the same, but just recently, when tidying up the flower beds, I noticed this new growth among the honeysuckle was false. For although it looked the same, the little flowers which were forming were not honeysuckle, but a little blue flower. That new bush was not honeysuckle after all: it was a weed and had to be pulled up and destroyed.

This just proves what the Lord Jesus said in Matthew 7. 16: “Ye shall know them by their fruits.” The Bible also speaks in Matthew 13. 24, of the wheat and the tares. The tares looked just like the young wheat when first growing up: but when full-grown, proved to be nothing but weeds. Yes, the tares were just false look-a-likes.

How easy it is for us to look the part of God’s people. We wear our best clothes on the Lord’s Day; we dress just the same as everyone else at the services; we all read the same Bible; sing the same hymns, yet our hearts may not be right.

I could not tell if my so-called honeysuckle was genuine until I saw the flower; and so it is with men and women, boys and girls. But you say: “Who sees the fruit in our lives?” The

Lord's people are able to see as you grow up, and above all, it is the Lord God above who can see into our hearts, for it is the one thing needful to have our hearts changed and made right towards God. How important are the words of a hymn by John Newton that we sometimes sing:

“What think ye of Christ? is the test,
To try both your state and your scheme;
You cannot be right in the rest,
Unless you think rightly of Him.” *Gadsby's 1149*

It is the prayer of all who know you that the Lord Jesus Christ in His mercy will put a simple prayer into your hearts: “Show me myself that I am a sinner, and show me Thyself, the Friend of sinners: the One who shed His precious blood that sinners could be forgiven.

Contributed

THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED

It has been said by the ancient Jews, that when Solomon's temple was being built, there was a most unusual stone which did not seem to fit in anywhere in the glorious building which was being erected. So the builders threw it to one side and left it on a rubbish heap.

When, however, they had put all the other stones in their proper place they found they needed a head stone. Then they remembered the rejected stone! When they put it in its place it fitted exactly.

How true this story is we cannot tell now, but if it is, what an accurate picture it gives of the way in which the Lord Jesus was treated.

“The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner” (Psalm 118. 22).

B.A.R.

The better God is known, the more He is trusted. (Henry)

THE CHIEF OF SINNERS

The following story is told of Hector Macphail (1716-1774), one of the eminent ministers in the Highlands of Scotland. Perhaps the name is not familiar to English readers. He was the minister who spoke to the Highland kitchen maid (in the well-known story: "Lord, show me myself; Lord, show me Thyself.")

He was a godly minister, much used by the Lord, but was often in doubt whether he himself would reach heaven at last.

He dreamt that he was waiting, lonely and despairing, outside the walls of the New Jerusalem. Seeing the gate closed, and none near to help him, and none in sight to cry to for help, he had just lain down to die when he heard sounds as of a company approaching the city.

Venturing to look up from the dust where he lay, he recognised Noah, Abraham, and all the patriarchs. As they drew near, the gate flew open, a glorious company from within came forth to meet them and, in the midst of shouts of triumph, they entered. The gate again closed, and again he is left alone and hopeless.

But soon he hears the noise of another company approaching. As they pass, he recognises Moses, Aaron, Samuel, David and all the prophets: a glorious and numerous band. Again the gate is thrown open, "an abundant entrance" given, and again he is left outside, and feels more disconsolate than ever.

A third company is heard approaching, composed of the apostles and all the earliest Christians. They enter the city amidst rejoicing like the rest, and he, with less hope than ever, is still outside the gate.

A fourth company now appears. Luther and Knox are at the head of those who form it. They pass by like those who went before, are admitted into the city, and leave him alone and despairing without.

Quite close to him now comes a fifth company. He

recognises in it some of his friends and acquaintances who had died in the Lord: but though their shining skirts touch him as they pass, he could not venture to arise and join them.

Again, he sees the gate open and close; and now, at last, he lays himself quite down to die. But he hears the footsteps of a solitary pilgrim coming exactly to the place where he lies. Looking up, he recognises Manasseh (see 2 Chronicles 33. 11-13). Summoning all his strength, he takes hold of his skirt as he moves slowly towards the city, and, creeping on behind him he knows the gate has opened by the light of the city's glory shining on his face; and just as he thought he heard the sound of the gate closing behind him, he suddenly awoke.

The lesson of this dream was presented to him thereafter in the sweet words of Paul: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."

The account is from "Noted Ministers of the Northern Highlands." (Friendly Companion August 1985)

"YOUR GRACE"

A forester on a Scottish estate died and the widowed mother was fearful of being turned out of her home, so her young son said he would go to see the Lord of the Manor and make a plea to stay. His mother warned him not to forget to say, "Your grace," when greeting the gentleman.

When her son was ushered in to see the gentleman, he commenced by saying: "For what we are about to receive may the Lord make us truly thankful." On being questioned why he spoke thus, he answered: "Mother said: 'Do not forget to say "Your grace"'".

The Lord of the Manor smiled and said: "I would never turn a mother out of her home who taught her son to say his grace."

*Contributed
(Friendly Companion August 1985)*

BIBLE WORDS/WORDS OF SCRIPTURE (X)**Surety**

We read the word “surety” in the Bible a number of times. In some places it means something that is absolutely sure or certain. For example, long before Isaac was born, God told Abram: “Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years ...” (Genesis 15. 13). This word was fulfilled, even though it seemed impossible that Abram should have a son, let alone many descendants who should live in another land.

The word is more often used to describe a person. A surety is someone who agrees to be responsible for another person. Judah offered to be a surety for Benjamin when Jacob’s sons went to Egypt to buy corn for the second time. Jacob would not let Benjamin go at first, but the loving way Judah pleads: “Send the lad with me ... I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever” (Genesis 43. 8-9) seems to have persuaded Jacob to let Benjamin go.

A person who agrees to be a surety for someone, makes himself responsible for amounts that they owe. We had an example of this not long ago. The Northern Rock bank appeared to be in some difficulties and long queues formed outside their branches, as people with savings wanted their money back. It was not until the Government and the Bank of England said that they would guarantee money deposited with the Northern Rock, that savers stopped withdrawing their money. The Bank of England was being a surety for the Northern Rock.

Solomon, in the Proverbs, advises against being a surety unwisely. “He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it” (Proverbs 11. 15); that is, he shall suffer for it. This does not mean it is wrong to be a surety, and we find the Apostle Paul being a surety for Onesimus, the slave who had run away from Philemon. It seems that Onesimus may have wronged Philemon in some way. Perhaps he took something that was

not his, but we are not told specifically. After running away, Onesimus was called by grace under the ministry of Paul. So Paul sent Onesimus back to Philemon, saying: "Receive him as myself. If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account; I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it" (Philemon verses 17-19).

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Surety of His people, in a much greater way than Judah was surety for Benjamin or Paul was surety for Onesimus. Before time began, in eternal love, the Lord Jesus agreed with His Father to be the Surety for all that the Father gave Him. He became responsible for them and their safety, and agreed to pay the debt they would owe to God on account of their sin. The Lord's people deserved eternal separation from God for their sin, and Christ, as their Surety, paid the price fully in His sufferings on the cross at Calvary when His Father hid His face from Him. How great were those sufferings and how He smarted when He delivered His people from their sin!

David in Old Testament times looks forward by faith to the coming Redeemer and prays: "Be surety for Thy servant for good" (Psalm 119. 122). It is a good prayer: may we be taught to pray it rightly, feeling our need of such a Surety.

Contributed

"CONTINUE THOU"

Many years ago, in the 1700's, a preacher who felt he had very few gifts, and had preached for several years with no apparent success, was so depressed whilst preaching one Lord's Day afternoon, he determined that he would not preach that evening, although he had been engaged to do so.

The deacons and friends implored him to reconsider his decision, but he was adamant that he would preach no more.

Whilst this conversation was going on, there came a knock at the door, and there stood an old lady who said she had come on purpose to hear the minister preach, and that the Lord had told her what text he was to preach from. The minister, not a

little taken aback by this visitor, asked what the text was. She replied that she could not remember where the words were, but they were as follows: "Then I said, I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His name. But His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay."

This extraordinary intervention convinced the minister that he should at least preach once more and this would be his text (Jeremiah 20. 9). Through God's mercy, he received remarkable help that evening, and continued to preach with God's blessing for the rest of his days whilst strength lasted.

THE MUTILATED BIBLE

Some of our readers who live in the Netherlands will know that one of their former Prime Ministers was a famous man called Abraham Kuyper. He was also well-known as a theologian, that is, someone who professes to have studied and understood God's Word very deeply.

When he was a young man he became a minister of the gospel. However, he often told his congregation that some parts of the Bible were untrue and that other parts were unreliable. He was a good visitor of his people, however, and one day whilst in the home of one of his congregation he noticed a very thin, torn and ragged Bible. He asked the owner why God's Word was in such a poor condition.

The reply he heard was as follows: "Why, whenever you say a part of the Bible is not true, I cut it out; or when you say a chapter is unreliable, I get rid of that, too. This is what I have left."

Abraham was so upset that this was the result of his preaching, that he was a changed man from that day, and became one of the greatest defenders of the infallibility of the Holy Scriptures.

God's Word says: *"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"* (Revelation 22. 19).

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES**CHRIST IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS****Melchizedek**

Melchizedek suddenly appears in the life of Abram when he returned from the slaughter of the kings in Genesis chapter 14. He went to rescue his nephew Lot who had been taken prisoner.

It is interesting to note that in this chapter the name: "Hebrew" occurs for the first time: "And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew..." (Genesis 14. 13). This was because Abram dwelt at Hebron. "Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD" (Genesis 13:18).

"And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale. And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: and blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all" (Genesis 14. 17-20).

There is no doubt that Melchizedek was a real man, he was the priest of the most high God. Some writers have conjectured that he was the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I do not believe this to be so, but he is a beautiful type of Christ. Nothing was known of his parents or any brothers and sisters. He is a very mystical figure. Psalm 110 is a beautiful messianic psalm because it prophesies of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ (Christ means Messiah). I suggest that you now turn to Psalm 110 and read it through: it all speaks of Christ. I want to draw your attention to: "The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" (Ps 110. 4). Now the Apostle Paul, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, expounds on this prophetic promise. You will notice the difference in the spelling in the

New Testament: this is because the Old Testament was written in Hebrew and the New Testament was written in Greek.

“So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made an high priest; but He that said unto Him, Thou art My Son, to day have I begotten Thee. As He saith also in another place, Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared; though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; and being made perfect, He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him; called of God an High Priest after the order of Melchisedec” (Hebrews 5. 5-10).

Now he expounds to us the name Melchizedek: “Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually. Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils” (Hebrews 6. 20–7. 4).

In this passage of Scripture we have opened to us the meaning of the name Melchizedek. The Word of God shows how this name given to this obscure priest of the most high God, beautifully relates to the Lord Jesus Christ. Also, the Lord Jesus Christ, as a Man, was without father, as the Son of God, He was without mother. Indeed, He speaks to us in the Proverbs: “The LORD possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was” (Proverbs 8. 22-23). “Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus

the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb 4. 14-16).

J.R. Rutt

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about THE LIFE OF KING SAUL. 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. When Saul first met Samuel, what was he looking for and how long had they been lost? (1 Samuel 9. 20)
2. What did Samuel say that Saul had rejected, following his return from the battle with the Amalekites? (1 Samuel 15. 26)
3. Who put on Saul's armour, but said: "I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them"? (1 Samuel 17. 39)
4. What was the song that made Saul angry and jealous? (1 Samuel 18. 7-8)
5. "Tomorrow, by that time the sun be hot, ye shall have help." To whom did Saul and the people make this promise? (1 Samuel 11. 9)
6. What did David take from Saul while Saul was asleep? (1 Samuel 26)
7. Which sin of Saul brought judgment upon Israel many years after his death? (2 Samuel 21)
8. Why was David asked to come and play his harp before Saul? (1 Samuel 16)
9. The day before he died Saul said, "I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and ..." What other reasons did he give for his distress? (1 Samuel 28)
10. How many times do we read that the Spirit of the Lord, or God, came upon Saul, though never in a gracious way? (1 Samuel 10-19)

ANSWERS TO SEPTEMBER QUESTIONS

1. The kingdom of heaven.
2. "Whosoever cometh to Me, and heareth My sayings, and doeth them."
3. A word fitly spoken.
4. The staff of Goliath's spear.
5. A man's hand.
6. The day when the sun and moon stood still in the heaven. (Joshua 10. 13-14)
7. The wicked. (Psalm 37. 35)
8. Abraham's seed. (Gen 22. 17).
9. The Word of God. (Jeremiah 23. 29)
10. Isaiah 40. 18; 46. 5 or 9.

Contributed

THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST

Beneath the sacred throne of God

I saw a river rise,

The streams were peace and pardoning blood,

Descending from the skies.

Angelic minds cannot explore

This deep, unfathomed sea;

'Tis void of bottom, brim, or shore,

And lost in Deity.

I stood amazed, and wondered when,

Or why, this ocean rose,

That wafts salvation down to men,

His traitors and His foes.

That sacred flood, from Jesus' veins,

Was free to take away

A Mary's or Manasseh's stains,

Or sins more vile than they.

J. Kent

The Friendly Companion



“So teach us to number our days, that we may
apply our hearts unto wisdom.”
(Psalm 90. 12)

November 2008

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All correspondence to be sent to the Editor.

Annual Subscriptions inc. postage:

U.K.	U.S.A. & Canada	Australia	Europe (Netherlands)
£11.00	\$31	A\$38	€27.00

All correspondence concerning subscriptions should be addressed to Mr. H. Mercer, 8 Fairleigh Rise, Kington Langley, Chippenham, Wilts. SN15 5QF.

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(SEPTEMBER LIST OF NAMES: We are sorry that the name of RUTH PAYNE was inadvertently omitted, instead of Sarah's.)

OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

Dear Children and Young People,

I wonder how many of you have ever asked God to lead you and guide you in your life? If you read your Bible carefully you will see that when God's people did not ask for help, they invariably came into troubles which they would otherwise have avoided. If only Jacob and his mother, Rebecca, had asked God what to do when Isaac was about to bless Esau. Jacob would not have had a guilty conscience and Rebecca would not have had to live the rest of her days without Jacob at home.

In 1 Samuel 22 we read of David after he escaped from Gath; a place he would never have gone to, had he asked God's permission. Having learned the folly of his ways, he waited in Moab. He said: "Till I know what God will do for me."

David's example may be helpful to you who wait to know what is right to do.

Firstly, he admitted that he did not know what was going to happen next. This was humility. It is far better to be honest and admit we do not know, than to rush on proudly in ignorance.

Secondly, he had the grace of patience. He did not know how long that little word "till" meant. May God give us patience to wait for His time.

Thirdly, he was sure God would do something and he was confidently waiting for it! God had given him a promise about being king. When God promises us anything He is sure to do it!

Over many years David learned that this was the best way of walking in God's ways. May we, however young or old we are, seek to have David's God as our God and to be able to say as he did: "This God is our God for ever and ever: He will be our Guide even unto death."

With very best wishes from your sincere friend and Editor.

EDITOR'S POSTBAG

First answers to the monthly questions have been received from STEPHANIE SAUNDERS.

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

The beautiful arch and text on the front cover this month are to be found in Old Salem, North Carolina, which is a restored Moravian (a German sect) town located in the more modern city of Winston-Salem. Old Salem was established in the 1700's on land given to the settlers by Count Zinzendorf. The graveyard, to which this arch forms an imposing entrance, dates back to 1771, and is the Moravian graveyard called: "God's Acre."

Each of the tombstones is white marble and most have beautiful Scriptures engraved on them with the person's name and dates.

The Moravians had strong connections with George Whitefield and John Cennick: Whitefield's friend being one of their founders. He is well known for being the author of the much-loved hymn: "Children of the Heavenly King."

How many of those who are buried in this beautiful spot sleep in Jesus is known to God alone, as 1 Thessalonians 4. 14 says. But it is a sweet message to those who mourn the loss of gracious friends to realise that though their bodies lie "sleeping" in the grave awaiting the resurrection day, their souls are safe in the care of Jesus above enjoying His sacred presence.

A REMARKABLE CONVERSION

In the course of this year (1801), a Mrs. Davies, a member of a Mr. Bull's congregation, died, and made a very remarkable statement to him on her deathbed. Not long after his settlement at Newport, Mrs. Beatty, the wife of one of the principal persons in the congregation, was on a visit to Bath. While there, she hired a young girl, named Miss Saunders. This young person had imbibed free-will views; and understanding that Mrs. Beatty's minister was a Calvinist, she asked that she might be allowed to go to church, or else she wished to turn down the engagement altogether. Her mistress was unwilling to part with her, but told her that while she did not wish to control her in such a matter, she proposed that at all events she should first hear Mr. Bull, and then, if she did

not approve of his preaching, she might go to church.

With this understanding, she accompanied her mistress to Newport. But before she left Bath, she had a remarkable dream. She thought she was walking in a meadow by the banks of a river. It suddenly overflowed; the waters rose higher and higher, and she was without power to escape. Her destruction seemed inevitable, when suddenly, a tall figure stood at her side, having the appearance and wearing the dress of a minister. He directed her attention to certain stepping-stones she had not seen before, at the same time uttering these words: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee."

The feeling of joy at her deliverance awoke her. She came to Newport, and as she had promised, went to hear Mr. Bull; and great was her astonishment when she looked towards the pulpit and saw the very person standing there who had appeared to her in her dream. Indeed, she was so overcome that she was incapable of paying attention to the first part of the service. But, having somewhat recovered her composure of mind, she listened with a strange feeling of expectation for the text, and again she heard the words: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee."

She no longer objected to go to the meeting-house, for that sermon, preached under circumstances to her so striking, was the means of her conversion to God. She joined Mr. Bull's church, married a man named Davies, and after enduring many trials, became the victim of tuberculosis. On her dying bed, she related the above dream to my grandfather, telling him she never had found courage to mention it to him before.

No possible fancy on the part of the young woman, or any accidental coincidence between the circumstances of the dream and its remarkable fulfilment, can deny its truth. Besides which, the great result – the conversion of a soul to God – may be looked upon as a sufficient reason for such an intervention.

Memorials of W. Bull

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES

THE SET TIME

The LORD had promised Abraham that he would become a great nation and from his family would come the Saviour. Many years went by and still he had no child. Abraham and Sarah were now both very old. How impossible it seemed! Yet Abraham was *“strong in faith.”* He believed that what God had promised, *“He was able also to perform.”*

When Abraham was nearly one hundred years old, the LORD appeared to him again. He said that Sarah would have a son *“at this set time in the next year.”* Sarah laughed within herself, knowing that she was past the age of having children. But nothing is too hard for the LORD! *“At the set time of which God had spoken to him,”* the promise was fulfilled to Abraham. Sarah was given strength to have a son in her old age. His name was called Isaac.

The LORD never fails to keep His promises. Even when it seems impossible, His word will be performed at the set time.

QUESTIONS:

1. What was Abraham strong in?
2. When did the LORD fulfil His promise to Abraham? (4 words)
3. What was the name of the son given to Abraham and Sarah?

Please 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. Lot, his wife, and two daughters.
2. Behind.
3. Lot's wife.

Contributed

*“Is any
thing too
hard for
the LORD?”*

Genesis

18. 14.

BIBLE LESSONS**HEALING AND FEEDING**

When Jesus departed from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, He returned to Decapolis. On a former visit to this region, He had performed a great miracle by casting a legion of devils out of a man. Do you remember how they entered into swine that ran violently down into the sea and were drowned? Perhaps you also remember that the people asked Jesus to depart from their country.

As He entered Decapolis, a group of people approached Him. Would they tell Him to leave? No; not this time. They brought a poor man to Him, asking Jesus to put His hand upon him. What was wrong with the man? He could not hear, for he was deaf, and he could not speak. Perhaps you have seen people with the same affliction. They can only communicate through sign language.

We wonder what changed the hearts of the people in Decapolis? Perhaps it was due to the man whom Jesus had delivered from the Legion of devils. Jesus had told him to go and tell what great things the Lord had done for him. He had been obedient to the command of Jesus so that all the people marvelled at what Jesus had done for him.

They were sure that the great Prophet who had cast devils out of Legion could heal the deaf and dumb man. They were not disappointed. Jesus took the man aside from the multitude, so he would see no man but Jesus only. Jesus put His fingers into the ears of the deaf man and touched his tongue. He then looked up to heaven, perhaps to impress upon the deaf man that every mercy comes from above. We also read that Jesus sighed. His sympathizing heart was touched to see the dreadful effects of sin. Then He spoke the words: *"Be opened."* Immediately the deaf man heard with his ears and was able to speak plainly.

When the man returned to the people, they marvelled at the great deliverance Jesus had performed, saying: *"He hath done all things well."* Because the multitudes talked about His great miracles, more and more people came out to see Jesus and to

hear Him. They listened intently to His words, and the hours passed quickly away. Three whole days were spent listening and watching as He cured the lame, the blind, the deaf, and made the dumb to speak. What a wonderful thing! The Roman government did not force them to go and listen. Their Jewish leaders would never tell them to listen to Jesus, as they hated Him. Yet the people were mysteriously drawn to Him.

By the third day, the food they had brought with them would have run out. Jesus said to His disciples: *"I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with Me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting (hungry), lest they faint in the way."*

The disciples wondered where they could get enough bread to feed such a multitude in the wilderness. Jesus asked them: *"How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven, and a few little fishes."* Jesus commanded the multitude to sit on the ground and then took the loaves and fishes and gave thanks. He then broke the bread and gave to the disciples, and they distributed it among the multitude. The multitude was made up of four thousand men, beside women and children. After all had eaten and were filled, they took up seven baskets full of the broken pieces.

You can read about this in Matthew chapter 15 verses 32 to 39, Mark chapter 7 verses 31 to 37, and chapter 8 verses 1 to 9.
QUESTIONS:

1. What had the people asked Jesus to do on His former visit to Decapolis? (4 words)
2. What did they ask Jesus to do to the man who was deaf and dumb? (5 words)
3. What did the people say of Jesus after He healed the man? (6 words)
4. For how many days had the people continued listening to Jesus?
5. How many baskets full were taken up after the multitude had eaten?

Please 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. Lord and Son of David.
2. Send her away.
3. The lost sheep of the house of Israel.
4. Saying Lord help me.
5. Crumbs.

A BOY FROM STAVENISSE

Chapter 11: A Child Of God

Leen is in a hurry. He has to go home. He has to tell what has taken place. He first goes to Grandma. He stumbles inside through the mudroom, almost forgetting to take off his clogs, and drops on to his knees in front of her. He is twelve already, but he is not embarrassed before her. He hides his head on her lap and sobs.

She silently strokes his hair. Grandma waits patiently. She hears by his sobbing that he is not crying for just anything. Something has happened; she feels that it is something very extraordinary. While she is waiting for him to start talking, a voice softly begins to sing within her:

“Praise Jehovah for His love,
God of gods, enthroned above;
Praise the mighty King of kings,
Who alone doth wondrous things.”

Leen begins talking. He has to stop often. It seems as if he is listening to a voice that is telling him what to say. “I was so afraid. The Lord is the Judge. I deserve to be punished. Oh, my sins! It could never be good between that dear Lord and me! I did not want the Lord to be short of anything for ...” he has to weep again, “for I love Him so much. Then the Lord Jesus was there. He opened His arms wide. I was allowed to come; He bears my punishment and makes me free of sin. I do not feel my sins any more!”

Together, they silently weep with joy. He does not have to

say much to Grandma. She understands him so well and this makes everything all the more glorious.

"There is nothing that is of us, my boy," she says simply, "for even if you would pray and seek for your entire life, you are still not worthy that the Lord would answer. How long do we still sin against God? How long do we let the Lord wait? No, it is only of grace that He looks upon a sinner."

A boy is slowly walking through the streets of Sint Maartensdijk. He is on the way to the little store owned by Sammarina. Leen often heard his Grandma speak about this woman and now he would like to see her. She is a woman who fears the Lord! Well then, it is a matter, of course, that he also loves her. Still, he is somewhat fearful. That woman already knows the Lord much longer and better than he. There is the little house already. It has a door in the middle and a window on each side. Leen looks closer. It looks like someone is standing in the door opening. Yes, the door is open. A woman is on the lookout. She is holding her hand above her eyes and is looking in his direction. When he gets closer, he sees that she is laughing joyfully. She extends her hand to him. She looks so happy.

"Oh, my boy, you have come to tell me something."

Speechless, the boy looks down at her small stature. Was this woman expecting him? Did she feel that he was coming?

"Come on in," she says and she pulls him inside by his hand. She leads him to the back room.

Leen follows her with a pounding heart. Oh, he is not looking forward to talking with this woman. She might see right through him. Still, he longs to talk with a child of God.

"Just sit down at that table. Would you like to have a cup of tea? You come from Stavenisse, do you not?"

He nods silently. It seems as if he has lost his tongue. When the tea is standing in front of him, she begins talking. He now notices that she has a kind face. Her voice is soft and serious.

"My boy, I already know you a long time. I have struggled much for you in prayer. Just tell me what has happened."

Leen begins talking. He stutters a bit at first. It is not easy to talk about the great wonder in his life, in the right words. But it is what he loves to do most of all. After all, that is what he came for. Once he gets going, the words come easily. He tells about his great sorrow of having sinned against God. "I felt that He is good. I did nothing but sin. I sought for Him, but I could not find Him. I became increasingly wicked. I sought Him in the wrong way. I always wanted to improve myself by doing less sins, and so on."

He looks at her. Yes, she understands him. She nods that he should continue. "I saw how angry God is about sin, about my sins, and that it could never become right any more. Everything was lost."

He thinks about the past: how he almost could not get a bite of food down his throat any more. "Ah, the Lord saved me," he says with a soft voice. His eyes show a look of great amazement. "He truly saved me! Christ has come and freed me from the heavy burden of sin. I do not feel it any more. It is just like a bridge over a deep ravine. Christ is the Bridge. Through Him I may return unto God again."

Sammarina understands the boy. He is a child and he speaks like a child. But her exercised ear hears the beauty of true life.

"Now I may be His possession," he says with tears in his eyes.

With her wrinkled hand, she reaches across the table towards his hand. "I knew it. The past night my prayer for you stopped and I became so happy, so very happy. It was just as if I gave birth to a child. I had the same glorious joy. I believed that the Lord had delivered your soul from death. Ah, my boy, you surely are happy now. Now you are my little brother. We have the same Father. Cleave unto Him, also when it becomes difficult later on."

Leen cannot imagine that it will become difficult. Does he not have the Lord Jesus? There is no safer Refuge. No one can take that happiness away from him anymore.

(To be continued)

(Slightly adapted)

A LESSON FROM JESUS HIMSELF

One of the best-known and oft told stories of the Bible is “The Feeding of the Five Thousand.” Have you noticed that it appears in each of the four Gospels? You will remember the story well: the great multitude; nothing to eat; the little boy with his five loaves and two fishes; the wonderful miracle the Lord Jesus performed, multiplying the food so that there was enough and to spare.

What do we learn from it? What would the Lord teach us?

Well, the popular version is something like this. Here was just a little boy. He had only a small amount of ordinary food. But he was willing to give all he had to the Lord Jesus, and He worked wonders with it.

I do not altogether like this. It is too much “us doing our bit.” But I love to think of the miracles of Jesus.

1. THE MIRACLES ALL SHOW DIVINE POWER.

By His wonderful miracles, Jesus proved that He is true, Almighty God, for none but God could do such impossible things. “Behold I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there anything too hard for Me?”

The Lord Jesus asked the question: “WHENCE?” In other words: “Where can enough food come from for all these people?”

Philip tried his arithmetic. He worked out how much it would cost to feed them all! And they had no money.

Andrew looked around – and he did see the five loaves and two fishes; but all he could say was: “What are they among so many?”

But “*He Himself knew what He would do.*”

2. THE MIRACLES ARE MIRACLES OF KINDNESS AND COMPASSION.

The Lord Jesus could have done all kinds of wonderful things to show His almighty power. But He chose acts of kindness. (We do not forget the cursing of the barren fig tree, but this was just a plant.)

In the miracles we see the loving heart of the Lord Jesus.

How concerned He was for the weary, hungry multitude! He did not perform miracles to feed Himself when He was hungry (see Luke 4. 2-4) but He did for others.

3. THE MIRACLES ARE TYPICAL OF SPIRITUAL MIRACLES THE LORD JESUS PERFORMS TODAY.

Did He feed such a multitude? Then He is almighty to supply all the needs of all His people, however great.

Do their souls hunger under a sense of sin and guilt? Then He feeds them. "He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness." He Himself says: "I am the Bread of Life."

May we ever remember He is "this same Jesus."

B.A. Ramsbottom

BIRD BRAIN SUPER COMPUTER

A combined effort by a dozen European researchers (including biologists, physicists and statisticians) examined starlings in the skies above Rome to discover how they could stick together in flocks and move in unison, almost like a super-organism.

The Starling Project, as it was called, analysed the three-dimensional positions of several thousand individual birds on the wing. They concluded that each starling is continuously computing the positions of an average of six or seven of its neighbours, regardless of how far away they are. They described starlings as having a pre-programmed, numeric, object-tracking ability, which enables the flock to stop predators picking off stragglers.

"By interacting within a fixed number of individuals, the aggregation can be either dense or sparse, change shape, fluctuate and even split, yet maintain the same degree of cohesion."

The scientists concluded that starlings have brilliant bird brains and are much smarter than they had given them credit for.

National Academy of Sciences USA 29.01.08

BIBLE WORDS/WORDS OF SCRIPTURE (IX)**Iniquity and Transgression**

The Word of God uses a number of words to describe sins. You may wonder why this is. One reason is because we sin in so many different ways. Souls who are taught of God, know that their sins are very many. Two such words are “iniquity” and “transgression.”

Iniquity means “something which is not equal and does not measure up to the standard required.” Iniquity is that which is not equal to the holy law of God. It is found in this word: “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” Iniquity also means “that which is not just or righteous.” Our unrighteous ways, our iniquities, separate us from a holy God.

What does the word transgression mean? The beginning of the word, the preposition, “trans-” means “across.” When a word contains “-gress,” it means “going,” so “progress” means “going forward” and “congress” is “going together.” So transgression means “going across.” God in His holiness has given laws and statutes in His Word, and these are to be obeyed. These laws are, as it were, boundaries over which we should not cross. But when we break one of His commandments and do something forbidden, this is transgression.

If the Holy Spirit is our Teacher, He will show us that we are sinners. Each and every one whom He quickens, He convinces of sin. He teaches His people that they have broken the holy law of God. By the law is the knowledge of sin. Jesus said that when “He, [*the Spirit of truth*] is come, He will reprove [*convince*] the world of sin, and of righteousness and of judgment.” This convincing work of the Holy Spirit does not just happen once; it is a continual work in His people. By His teaching we shall know something of the number and greatness of our sins, and also that the law of God justly condemns sin. Sometimes the teaching is sudden, like with Saul of Tarsus who was cut down on the road to Damascus. In others the work is more gradual, but all of God’s people are brought to the same point to know that they have sinned against a holy God. “If thou, LORD, shouldest mark

iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" They will agree with the Apostle Paul when he says that: "in me, (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing." They find, too, that the law of God cannot deliver them, however much they try to keep it. The law can only condemn.

Blessed be God, He does not leave His people there to despair. The Holy Spirit also takes of the things of Jesus, and reveals them. He shows that there is salvation in the sacrifice made by Jesus. He gives the people of God to see by faith that the Lord Jesus 'was wounded for their transgressions, and He was bruised for their iniquities and that the Lord hath laid on Him their iniquity.'

In the gospel there is 'forgiveness with Him that He may be feared.' Sin-burdened souls are directed by the Holy Spirit to look to Jesus who is prophesied of in Exodus as being "merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."

Contributed

"HE WOULD HAVE LISTENED TO A CHILD"

I telephoned my daughter's school today to confirm what class she would be in, in the new school term. I was told that she would be in the shared year: the three and four-year class. I knew that this meant that she had been separated from her friend (she had prayed for a long time for a suitable friend, and we felt this girl was an answer to prayer). It now appeared she would be with several children who were very disruptive.

I felt very disappointed for her and I hoped that it would not make her angry that God had answered her prayer for a friend, only to take her away again. She was very upset when I broke the news to her, so we prayed together, asking God to help us to conform to His will and help her through the new school year. I said that as God had given her this new friend, that I was sure that it would work out well in the end, if we could only trust Him to work it all out.

I later telephoned the school to ask who else was in my daughter's class, hoping that there was a name who she would recognise as a nice person to make friends with. I spoke to the teacher whom I was told my daughter would be with, and he read out the list, and my daughter's name was not on it! He confirmed that she was with the all year-four class, and confirmed that she was with her friend! What a shock! We had not asked God to swap the classes around!

We thanked God together for working this out in such a wonderful way. To us adults it may seem like a small thing, but to the children these things can be very important. We feel so very unworthy for God to look down on us and answer our prayers for such a small matter. *Contributed*

REMEMBER THE LORD'S DAY

In a beautiful Swiss valley lived a farmer who neither feared God nor regarded man and who wished in everything to have his own way. One Sunday afternoon in harvest time, he had a large quantity of cut grain in his field. Observing the clouds gathering around the tops of the mountains and the spring becoming full of water, he called his servants, saying: "Let us go to the field, gather, and bind, for toward evening we shall have a storm." He was overheard by his grandmother, a good old lady of eighty years of age, who walked supported by two crutches. She approached her grandson with difficulty.

"John, John," she said, "do you consider? As far as I can remember, in my whole life I have never known a single ear of corn housed on the Lord's Day; and yet we have always been loaded with blessings. We have never wanted for anything. So far the year has been very dry, and if the grain gets a little wet, there is nothing in that very alarming. Besides, God who gives the grain, gives the rain also, and we must take things as He sends them. John, do not violate the rest of this holy day. I earnestly beseech you!"

At these words of the grandmother, all the servants came around her; the eldest understood the wisdom of her advice,

but the young treated it with ridicule and said one to another: "Old customs are out-of-date in our day, prejudices are abolished; and the world now is altogether altered."

"Grandmother," said the farmer, "it is quite indifferent to our God whether we spend the day in labour or in sleep, and He will be altogether as much pleased to see the grain in the corn loft, as to see it exposed to the rain. That which we get under shelter will nourish us, and nobody can tell what sort of weather it will be tomorrow."

"John, John, within doors and out of doors all things are at the Lord's disposal, and you do not know what may happen this evening. I entreat you for the love of God not to work today. I would much rather eat no bread for a whole year."

"Grandmother, doing a thing for one time is not a habit. Besides, it is not a wickedness to try to preserve one's harvest and to better one's circumstances."

"But, John," replied the good old lady. "God's commandments are always the same, and what will it profit you to have your grain in the barn, if you lose your soul?"

"Oh, do not be uneasy about that," exclaimed John. "And now boys, let us go to work: time and weather wait for no man."

"John, John," for the last time cried the lady: but alas, it was in vain, and while she was weeping and praying, John was housing his corn.

It might be said that all flew, both men and beasts, so great was the dispatch. A thousand sheaves were in the barn when the first drops of rain fell. John entered his house, followed by his people, and said with an air of triumph: "Now, Grandmother, all is secure; let the tempests roar; let the elements rage; it little concerns me. My harvest is under my roof."

"Yes, John," said the grandmother solemnly, "but above your roof spreads the Lord's roof."

While she was speaking, the room was suddenly illuminated, and fear was painted on every face. A tremendous clap of thunder made the house tremble on its foundation. "See!"

exclaimed the first who could speak, "the lightning has struck the barn!" All hurried out of doors. The building was in flames, and they saw through the roof the sheaves, which had only just been housed, burning.

The greatest consternation reigned among the men who but a moment before were so pleased. Everyone was dejected and incapable of acting. The aged grandmother alone preserved all her presence of mind. She prayed and incessantly repeated: "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Oh, Heavenly Father, let Thy will and not ours, be done." The barn, with all its contents, was entirely consumed. The farmer had said: "I have put my harvest under my roof," but he forgot what his grandmother said: "Above your roof is the Lord's roof."

Selected

BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES

CHRIST IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS

Jacob

We have two instances in the life of Jacob when the Lord Jesus Christ was revealed or appeared unto him. On both occasions Jacob was alone. This is often the case with the Lord's people in their sweetest seasons spiritually: they are alone.

The first occasion was when Jacob left home to seek a wife (Genesis chapter 28), from the family of Laban (his mother Rebekah's, brother). Jacob came to a place which afterwards would always be called Beth-el. "Beth," meaning "house," and "El," meaning "Jehovah." "The house of God." Jacob took a stone for his pillow and lay down to sleep, no doubt feeling lonely having just left his home and his parents. Then the Scriptures tell us: "And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread

abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of" (Genesis 28. 12-15).

Let us first notice a ladder with angels ascending and descending, the top of it in heaven, the bottom on earth: this is a beautiful description of Christ: "For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2. 5). This is what the ladder represents: the angels are heavenly messengers. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Hebrews 1. 14). The only way that God can have any gracious dealings with man is in and through the Person of His Son, Jesus Christ.

The second occasion, is when he is returning home twenty years later (Genesis chapter 32). His brother, Esau, was coming to meet him with four hundred men, obviously intent on destroying Jacob. Jacob sent his herds, wives, two women-servants and children before him to meet Esau. Then we read: "And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a Man with him until the breaking of the day. And when He saw that He prevailed not against him, He touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with Him. And He said, Let Me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me. And He said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And He said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. And Jacob asked Him, and said, Tell me, I pray Thee, Thy name. And He said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after My name? And He blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." (Genesis 32. 24-30).

This Man that wrestled with Jacob was none other than the Son of God in one of His appearances as a Man or an Angel in the Old Testament. We must first notice that the Man wrestled with Jacob, not the other way round. Jacob prevailed, so his name was changed to "Israel": "as a prince hast thou power with God and with men and hast prevailed." May we, like Jacob, be given this prevailing prayer with God. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and 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. 16-18). May we be encouraged to open our mouth wide unto God in Christ, and He has promised to fill it.

In the prophet Hosea we have a reference to this incident in Jacob's life which confirms to us that this Angel was the Angel of the everlasting covenant, the Lord Jesus Christ. "He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God: yea, he had power over the Angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto Him: he found Him in Bethel, and there He spake with us; even the LORD God of hosts; the LORD is his memorial" (Hosea 12. 3-5).

J.R. Rutt

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about WEeping AND MOURNING. 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). Remember to give your name and address and write the word ANSWERS on the envelope.

1. Which king said, "Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn as a dove"? (Isaiah 38. 9, 14)
2. What will "he that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed," do afterward? (Psalm 126. 6)
3. Who in the Old Testament was asked, "Why weepest thou"? and why was she crying? (1 Samuel 1. 8)

4. Who in the New Testament was asked, "Why weepest thou?" and what one word turned her sorrow into joy? (John 20. 15-16)
5. On one occasion we read, "Jesus wept." (John 11. 35) Where was Jesus at the time?
6. In Isaiah 61, what three things are appointed "unto them that mourn in Zion"?
7. Which king of Judah had a tender heart and wept before the Lord? (2 Chronicles 34)
8. We read of a woman "which was a sinner" who stood at Jesus' feet, behind Him, weeping. What words of comfort did Jesus speak to her? (Luke 7)
9. Solomon says, "A time to weep and a time to laugh." (Ecclesiastes 3. 4) Find two texts from Luke 6 that show which should come first, the weeping or the laughing.
10. At which two miracles did Jesus say, "Weep not"? (Luke 7 & 8)

ANSWERS TO OCTOBER QUESTIONS

1. The asses of his father, Kish. Three days.
2. The word of the LORD.
3. David.
4. "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands."
5. The men of Jabesh-gilead.
6. Saul's spear and a cruse of water. (1 Samuel 26. 12)
7. Saul's murder of the Gibeonites. (2 Samuel 21. 1)
8. The Spirit of the LORD had departed from Saul and an evil spirit from [permitted by] the LORD troubled him and it was thought that David's music would refresh Saul and he would be well. (1 Samuel 16. 14-16, 23)
9. "God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams." (1 Samuel 28. 15)
10. Three. (1 Samuel 10. 10; 11.6; 19. 23)

Contributed

THE SWEEP

Chimney sweeps are very rarely seen in our day, as central heating and more healthy fuels mean that chimneys do not get clogged up with soot as they did in Victorian days especially. Even when the Editor was a boy, in the 1950's, we

can remember our chimneys being swept and standing in the garden waiting for the brush to come up through the chimney! The mess that had to be cleared up inside if he was careless and the smell of soot made his visits to be remembered for several days after. In Victorian times a chimney sweep would employ a small boy to climb up the large chimneys of country houses and dislodge the soot. Many small boys choked to death in this dangerous occupation so it was banned by the turn of the year 1900.

Editor

The following lines were composed by a Chimney Sweep who knew the Lord, and were often repeated by him.

A Chimney Sweep, how black the skin,
But blacker far it is within.
The secret then the Sweep does know,
Though black as hell, as white as snow.

Water will wash and cleanse the skin,
But Oh! 'tis blood must cleanse within,
That blood that ran on Calvary's tree,
Though but a Sweep, 'twas shed for me.

While through the street, "'tis Sweep," I cry,
But oft within a heavy sigh,
A smutty Sweep, but O! within,
A den of unclean beasts is seen.

Though but a Sweep, I oft-times weep,
That Christ should own me as His sheep,
And on the cross should bleed and die,
For such a smutty Sweep as I.

What matters it, dear Lord, to me,
Though I a Chimney Sweep should be,
If through Thy blood I'm freed from all
The sins that issued from the fall?

A Chimney Sweep of low degree.
Yet loved by all the sacred Three;

Electing love, what tongue can tell,
Though loved of God, deserving hell.

I envy not the rich man's gold,
If I on Christ but lay my hold,
There's something more I seek to win,
'Tis Christ in me and I in Him.

Though but a Sweep, can I forget
The word that my dear Jesus spoke
When on the brink of hell I stood?
"I have redeemed thee by My blood."

"'Tis all of grace," the Sweep must say,
That he was led to Christ the Way.
If ever one has cause to bless,
Sure, 'tis the Sweep, through sovereign grace.

In by-gone days, with crimes so foul,
I've called damnation on my soul,
Then who has greater cause to say:
"'Tis Christ the Truth, the Life, the Way"?

Let none despise the smutty Sweep,
But rather with him let them weep.
That Christ should own me for a son,
And for my life lay down His own.

Though black without, 'tis worse within,
'Tis nothing but a mass of sin,
Yet after all, I'm white and fair,
More comely than the roses are.

Comely I am through God's dear Son,
He has on me His robes put on,
Which makes a Sweep, when led to see,
Oft-times to say: 'Why me, Why me?'

The Friendly Companion



A Manger at Megiddo in Israel

**“He humbled Himself.”
(Philippians 2. 8)**

December 2008

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All correspondence to be sent to the Editor.

Annual Subscriptions inc. postage:

U.K.	U.S.A. & Canada	Australia	Europe (Netherlands)
£11.50	\$32	A\$35	€25.00

All correspondence concerning subscriptions should be addressed to Mr. H. Mercer, 8 Fairleigh Rise, Kington Langley, Chippenham, Wilts. SN15 5QF.

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OUR MONTHLY MESSAGE

One of the many names the Lord Jesus had whilst here on earth was: "The King of the Jews."

You will all know who it was that asked the question: "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" Do you also know who it was that asked the question: "Art Thou the King of the Jews?"

The wise men, who asked the first question, knew by God's teaching that this was indeed the Son of God as well as the King of the Jews; whereas Pilate, who asked the second question, had not that same faith, although he was awed by Jesus' presence and respected Him.

There are four things which the Bible tells us about Jesus as King.

Firstly, that His kingdom is not of this world. So Herod need not have feared that the Babe in Bethlehem's manger had come to take his earthly throne.

Secondly, that King Jesus has a throne in two places: in heaven above, and then also in the hearts of His children here below.

Thirdly, that His subjects are all those in whose hearts He has a place. Sadly, by nature, the Devil has a kingly place in sinners' hearts. However, King Jesus comes to overturn the Devil's kingdom and replace it with His own. One day, He is coming to finally destroy the kingdom of Satan and all those who are his subjects.

Fourthly, Jesus Christ has a crown of glory now in heaven, but on earth this was not generally seen. In fact, we put a crown of thorns on His dear head at Calvary, but what a mercy if we can at this time say, not only that 'Jesus was born to die,' but also, like Simeon, say of Jesus: "He is my salvation." This is to put a crown on His dear head and this is true happiness of which only the believer in Him knows.

May each of our readers be taught to pray: "Thy kingdom come."

With best wishes from your sincere friend and Editor.

OUR FRONT COVER PICTURE

Our front cover this month, is a reminder of the poverty into which the Lord Jesus Christ came when He was born in Bethlehem. There being no room in the inn for Joseph and Mary, they were directed to the stable where Jesus was born. The manger, in which the Lord of life and glory was laid, was almost certainly just a stone feeding trough from which the animals would have fed. What a contrast to Herod's palace back in Jerusalem, and yet we believe that the manger was an infinitely richer place than the best of earthly mansions. It was made so by He who lay there. So wherever the Lord Jesus dwells, as "Christ in you, the hope of glory," that favoured person, young or old, is the richest of this earth. Our hearts are even less worthy of His presence than the manger was, but what a mercy if we can say with Paul: "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty, might be rich."

When the Lord Jesus Christ died, again there was no room for Him, except on a wooden cross outside Jerusalem's gate. But it was there, in His greatest poverty, He made those sinners rich for whom He suffered and died.

May the Lord make room for Himself in our hearts, that we may know that it was for our sakes He stooped so low.

STRONG FAITH

That was strong faith of a godly woman in Scotland in former days. When sorely tempted that the Lord Jesus would leave her at last, and that she would drop into hell, she exclaimed:

"He stands to lose more than I shall!"

The faithfulness of God is inseparably bound up with His people's salvation. "He *cannot* deny Himself." As is sometimes sung:

"His honour and His name's at stake,
To save me from the burning lake."

Friendly Companion 1991.

THE PROBLEM IN THE POST OFFICE

The post office officials were much interested as they read the words on an envelope which had just arrived from Japan: "To the man of God – Monmouthshire, England."

"Who can that be?" asked the sorting official; but his colleagues were unable to answer his question. Then one man exclaimed: "Well, it is not the parson, anyhow," and instantly they all agreed. The local clergyman did not fit the description. One by one, the names of the other ministers were mentioned; but in spite of the fact that several of these men were nice fellows and exceedingly popular, they did not fit the description on the envelope.

The problem of delivering the letter was becoming acute, when rather abruptly a member of the staff said: "I know. Yes, I know who he is. He's old Mr. —. If any man in this town has earned the right to that title, he is the man." The listeners agreed, and one was deputed to take the letter to the man's house.

The old Christian marvelled that the post office staff should think him worthy of such a compliment; but when he opened the letter, he discovered that their choice had been sound. The letter had been written to him by a Japanese student whom he had entertained months earlier.

The young man had been studying in Wales, and had been received into the home of his new friend. When he returned to Japan, he desired to send a letter of appreciation; but alas, he had lost the address of his former host. However, that presented no problem for he had gained the impression that he had stayed with a man of God. He smiled and was reassured, for in his own country, a man of God was known near and far.

Surely this would be the case in other lands. Everybody would know the man of God, and if he addressed the letter in that fashion, it would reach its destination.

One wonders what would happen if such a letter were addressed to the man of God – in my town. Would the postal officials think of me?

Selected

FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES**NOTHING IMPOSSIBLE WITH GOD**

For hundreds of years people had been waiting for the birth of a very special Baby. The child they were looking for was the promised Saviour. Perhaps many Jewish women hoped they would be given that great honour.

One day, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a young woman named Mary. He said: *"Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God."* She had been chosen to be the mother of the Lord Jesus who is the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. Mary wondered how such a thing could be, since she was not yet married. The angel told her: *"The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee."*

Mary needed faith to believe and understand this great mystery that would take place. Gabriel gave her a sign of the wonderful power of God, saying: *"For with God nothing shall be impossible."* And Mary answered: *"Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word."*

QUESTIONS:

1. Who was sent from God to Mary?
2. What did he say Mary had found? (3 words)
3. What shall be impossible with God?

Please 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.

ANSWERS TO NOVEMBER QUESTIONS

1. Faith.
2. At the set time.
3. Isaac.

Contributed

*“For
with
God
nothing
shall be
impossible.”
Luke 1. 37.*

BIBLE LESSONS

LESSONS FROM JESUS

Leaving Decapolis, Jesus sailed north with His disciples to the coasts of Magdala. Very quickly a multitude of people gathered around Jesus. Did they come to hear Him preach the Word of God or to see Him heal the sick? No. They wanted Jesus to show some special sign that He really was the Messiah that was to come. They were the Pharisees and the Sadducees who were joined together in their hatred of Jesus. They had already seen Him heal the blind, the lame, the lepers, and the deaf. However, they wanted some other sign. Perhaps they were thinking that Jesus would call fire down from heaven as Elijah had done. However, Jesus would not satisfy their unbelieving curiosity. He told them that the only sign they would be given was that of the prophet Jonah. As Jonah was in the belly of the whale for three days and three nights, so Jesus would lie in the grave for three days and three nights.

Leaving the Pharisees and Sadducees, Jesus journeyed to the city of Bethsaida. This was the city of Andrew, Peter, and Philip. Some of the Jews brought a blind man to Jesus, asking Him to touch him. Would Jesus grant them such a request? Suddenly the blind man felt Someone take hold of his hand. It was Jesus. What a sight: the Son of God gently leading a blind man down the road, out of the city! The poor blind man must have wondered what was happening. The Lord says in His word: *"I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not."* Jesus still leads His people who are spiritually blind, just like this man who was naturally blind.

What a strange way Jesus chose to heal the blind man! He spat on his eyes and put His hands upon him. He then asked him if he saw anything. Yes, the blind man answered: *"I see men as trees, walking."* Although he now had sight, it was not very clear. Men are far different from trees, and trees cannot walk. Jesus works in the same way with His people when He opens the eyes of their understanding. They see but very little of themselves and less still of the Saviour. They need further light and teaching in the

Scriptures. Their prayer will be: *“Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law.”*

Would Jesus leave the man in this state? Surely not! The Bible tells us: *“The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me”*. Jesus put His hands upon his eyes a second time and made him look up. The man did so and saw every man clearly.

Leaving Bethsaida, Jesus journeyed with His disciples to Caesarea Philippi. Along the way He asked the disciples: *“Whom do men say that I am?”* We must not think that Jesus was ignorant of what the people were saying about Him, but He would prove His disciples. Were they influenced by what the people said? They told Jesus that some people thought He was John the Baptist risen from the dead. Others thought He was Elijah. Still others thought He was Jeremiah or one of the prophets.

Then Jesus asked them: *“But whom say ye that I am?”* After all, that is what really mattered! Such a question must have stirred all their hearts. Peter answered for the rest: *“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”*

Jesus answered: *“Blessed art thou, Simon ... : for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven.”*

You can read about this in Matthew chapter 16 verses 1 to 20 and Mark 8 verses 10 to 33.

QUESTIONS:

1. What sign did Jesus say would be given to the Pharisees?
2. How many days would Jesus lie in the grave?
3. What city was the blind man from?
4. What answer did Peter give to Jesus' question? (ten words)
5. Who revealed this truth to Peter?

Please 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. G. TenBroeke

ANSWERS TO NOVEMBER QUESTIONS

1. Depart from their country.
2. Put His hand upon them.
3. He hath done all things well.
4. Three.
5. Seven.

BETHLEHEM

The “little town of Bethlehem” has had a remarkable place in the history of God’s purposes. Its very name is significant, meaning “House of Bread,” no doubt naturally gaining its name from the rich arable lands that surrounded it, of which Boaz’ fields were part (Ruth 2. 3). Of course, the deeper meaning is much more important, for it was because Christ was born there, who said of Himself: “I am the Bread of Life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst” (John 6. 35). In this way, Bethlehem wonderfully set forth the gospel of Christ.

Because there were two places named Bethlehem in the land of Israel (one being in Zebulun not far from Nazareth), the well-known place of the birth of Christ was generally called Bethlehem-Judah.

Its first claim to fame was that it was the birthplace of David. Hence it was often known as “The City of David.” For this reason, when Joseph and Mary went to be “taxed” (or enrolled), they had to go to Bethlehem because they were direct descendants of David. This proved the fulfilment of the Lord’s promise to David that the Messiah would come from his descendants. (See also Isaiah 11. 1.)

Evidently its water was especially pure: for when Bethlehem was besieged, David longed to drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem which was by the gate. Three of his mighty men risked their lives to fetch some for him, which when they had done, David refused to drink but poured it out unto the LORD. How much more precious is the “deep sweet well of Bethlehem” of which the Lord Jesus Christ is the source and pureness in His gospel and Word! (2 Samuel 23. 13-17).

But, of course, its greatest fame is that the Lord Jesus Christ was born there. This had been prophesied by Micah in his prophecy (5. 2), and when the wise men went to Herod in Jerusalem, thinking to find the baby Jesus in the capital town, the chief priests and scribes reminded him of the prophecy: “And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least

among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule My people Israel" (Matthew 2. 6). How surprising to human reason that such a humble place should be chosen as the birthplace of Christ! Yet God's ways are not our ways, and this amazing condescension of God in sending His own Son to be a man, reminds us that "He humbled Himself."

Yet Bethlehem, like the world in general, could find no room for this wonderful Gift.

"The crowded inn, like sinners' hearts,
(O ignorance extreme!)
For other guests, of various sorts,
Had room, but none for Him."

It is, then, not surprising to find Herod with all his malice spilling the blood of those innocent babes in his envy at this supposed usurper to his throne. His reaction is but the mirror of the enmity in the hearts of all men by nature. "We will not have this Man to reign over us."

Yet despite man's rejection at Bethlehem, and throughout the life of our Lord until He was nailed to the tree at Calvary, God's precious purpose was in no way hindered but these things rather mysteriously furthered His design "to save His people from their sins."

How thankful, then, should God's children be for Bethlehem, and more especially for this fact:

"In that dear Babe of Bethlehem I see
My God, contracted to a span for me!"

May God give us each that faith which makes Bethlehem "the House of Bread" to those who believe in His name.

G.D.B. (Friendly Companion December 1991)

EDITOR'S POSTBAG

First answers to the monthly questions have been received from NOAH BARKER and ARLICIA VAN DE MONT.

A BOY FROM STAVENISSE**Chapter 12: Mother**

“Hush, walk softly, Mother is very sick.” Father looks at the sisters and puts a finger to his lips. Then he sees Leen standing in the door opening. “Leen, Mother has suddenly become much worse. You must go to the doctor at once. Tell him he has to come along with you. Mother has vomited a lot of blood.” The sisters are sitting at the kitchen table with white faces and fearful eyes. Father and son give each other a brief, silent look.

Leen reads the grief in his father’s eyes and understands how serious it is. Mother is very ill. As fast as a twelve-year-old can, he runs through the village to the doctor’s house. But he already meets him at the beginning of the street.

Worriedly, the doctor looks into his perspiring face. “Your mother?”

Leen nods briefly.

“I had already thought so. I was just planning to come for a quick look. I am coming with you.”

They walk the dyke together. The doctor goes to Father and Mother’s bedroom. Leen tiptoes after him. Does he hear Father crying? That big, strong father? Has Mother already ...? He stands frozen to the spot in the hallway. His heart beats with heavy throbs. Mother! It cannot be. Mother’s sins ... Were her sins forgiven? Does she now have to appear before God, before the Judge?

When he sees the doctor standing before him, his eyelids flutter wildly. The doctor puts his hands on his shoulders and says something to him. Leen cannot understand him. The sound of the rushing ocean resounds in his ears. He does not hear what the doctor is saying. Now his head is beginning to feel strangely dizzy too, and everything looks askew. “You have to sit down a minute and drink some water,” commands the doctor.

A neighbour lady already brings a glass full. The doctor pushes Leen down on a chair. His hand is sure trembling

strangely. He almost cannot hold the glass still. Slowly the buzzing in his head subsides. The fog in his eyes goes away.

Leen looks around. Across from him at the kitchen table his sister, Sien, is sitting with red, teary eyes and catches his glance. She has her arms wrapped around little Cornelis. On her other side, Johanna is sobbing loudly. Her blonde, curly head is pushed tightly against her sister's shoulder.

He cannot look at it any longer. He wildly pushes his chair backward. He has to go away, out of the house. He needs to be alone. He stumbles into the attic and pours out his heart before the Lord. But praying does not help, for Leen does not agree with the Lord. The Lord has allowed his mother to die. Maybe she did not have a new heart!

Many people came to look at Mother. Mother is lying still in her coffin with folded hands. Leen has to keep looking at her deathly still face. Does she have to be buried soon? Her soul is no longer in her body. He learned that at catechism. Her soul goes to the place it belongs. Is that with the Lord?

The days pass quickly. Mother is buried in Stavenisse. But who has to care for the family now? Sien is only nine; she is too young.

One day Grandmother enters the kitchen. She has put on her work apron and looks at Father. "My boy, now that your father is not here any more either, I thought I must come here to let everything continue here as usual. I have nobody to care for at home any more. What do you think about it?"

The children look at Father intensely. All four of them love Grandma very much. But does Father want it? Father thinks that his mother has such a strict religion. The oldest two children have noticed this.

Father bows his head and thinks about it. He is far too sad to think about the children. Father loved Mother very much. She was still so young. Father shakes his head. "Ah, Mother, I do not know if I may ask this of you. You are not all that young any more."

"You are not asking me, I am coming myself. I want to help you. I want to be here for you and the children. Would you rather have a stranger in the house?" Her voice is kind. Father has to say what he wants.

He looks at her and takes her hand. "Promise me that you will honestly tell me when it becomes too much for you. Maybe we can hire a maid." He looks a bit worried. Father actually does not earn all that much money.

She waves her hand. "Do not be silly. Sien, you can help me a little after school, can you not?"

The girl blushes. "I helped Mother with everything at the end."

"Yes, that you did. I often was proud of you," says Father.

Then they are all quiet. Now everyone was thinking about Mother. Leen slips out of the kitchen.

In the attic, he again pours out his heart before the Lord. Leen cannot let his mother go. He asks the Lord why she has died, and why he does not know if she had a new heart ...!

When Leen is struggling and praying, the Lord gives Leen an answer. The Lord saw that Leen could not yield the matter to the Lord. Then the Lord asks Leen: "Am I not the Creator? Did I not create her? May I then not do with her as I please?"

Leen sits up in fright. Suddenly he understands. The Lord is the Creator. He made everything, also Mother. Leen should not want to interfere with the Lord's doings for then he does not trust Him. Leen wants to know better than the Lord.

Leen is ashamed. He again falls on his knees: "Lord," he prays: "Thou art right. Thou art just and this means that Thou canst make no mistakes. What Thou doest is good. It is good that Thou hast taken Mother away. Help me to believe this time and again. Do not let me doubt Thee."

Finally he can completely let Mother go. The Lord takes the great sorrow from his shoulders. How glorious it is to know, to believe, that the Lord is good.

(To be continued)

(Slightly adapted)

A LESSON FROM THE SHEPHERDS

What story is more dearly loved than that of the birth of the Lord Jesus and of the angels and the shepherds in the fields of Bethlehem? What a song: “Glory to God in the highest”! And what a message: “Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour”!

“He left His radiant throne on high!
Left the bright realms of bliss!
And came to earth to bleed and die!
Was ever love like this?”

We want to think of a few wonderful things in the religion of these shepherds. How many there were we do not know, nor do we know their names; but we believe they were God-fearing men. And they were the ones who were honoured to be told the glorious news of the Saviour’s birth.

1. THEY WERE VERY HUMBLLED.

They received the angel’s message as a message from God Himself. They said: “Which the Lord hath made known unto us.” So they were humbled. This is always the effect of divine revelation or any blessing received from heaven.

2. THEY HASTENED.

There was urgency in their religion (Luke 2. 16). There must have been many things that puzzled them, many things they could not understand – especially that the Son of God should be “lying in a manger.” But they obeyed. They did not stay to reason. They hastened.

3. THEY LEFT THEIR SHEEP.

This must have been a trial. What if wild beasts came? How many reasons could have been urged for them to stay! But they left their sheep in the Lord’s hand. We are called to leave all for Jesus’ sake.

So they left their sheep and lambs to “behold the Lamb of God.” True faith will leave everything, part with everything to be found where Jesus is.

4. THEY WERE NOT OFFENDED.

After the glorious appearance of the angels from heaven, the stable at Bethlehem must have seemed a strange contrast – a poor man and woman, and a helpless Babe in the manger. But they were not offended. “Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me.” Their hearts were filled with wonder and they glorified God.

On December 25th many years ago, I was asked to attend a service. It was taken by a man (not a clergyman) in my native town. I knew him to speak to and had a respect for him. But as he spoke, he quite touched my heart. Referring to the shepherds being poor men about their daily business, he said: “And I was working at the loom when the Lord revealed Himself to me.”

May the blessed experience be ours: “Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.”

From being quite young, two words have been precious to me: BETHLEHEM and EMMANUEL. And I wonder if any of our young readers love hymn 1095 as I was taught to love it in my early days?

B.A.R.

“THE BIG BANG THEORY”

A lot has been heard in recent months of what is called “The Big Bang Theory” and the attempts by scientists to reproduce it in an experiment deep under the Swiss Alps. Below is an explanation of this godless theory by courtesy of the Creation Resources Trust. In all these things we must remember three important facts:

- 1. That the science of the world around us should always be in final subjection to the truths of God’s Holy Word, and not the other way round. God’s Word tells us: “For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is” (Exodus 20. 11).*
- 2. That most of the scientists of the modern age are atheistic*

who neither believe in God nor have any respect for those who do. This colours all their theories. This is nothing new. Paul warned Timothy about the "oppositions of science falsely so called" (1 Timothy 6. 20).

3. That creation is in itself a great mystery as well as a mighty miracle. We are told that "by the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth" (Psalm 33. 6). Paul tells us that this is to be believed through faith (Hebrews 11. 3). Just as 'no man by searching can find out God' (Job 11. 7), so no scientist will ever be able to fully plumb the depths of how God in His wisdom made the worlds. That does not mean that it is wrong for man, in humility, to seek to understand God's handiwork, but proud man should never attempt to take the place of God. To such God has said: "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision" (Psalm 2. 4).

Editor

"The Big Bang Theory came about because man, in his sinful nature, had to find a way to explain the marvels and complexities of the universe without any divine intervention. To admit the abrupt appearance of the universe, created out of nothing, by Special Design, would be the same as admitting that there was a God. Not wanting to believe that there is a Creator, man came up with an explanation of the origin of the entire universe through natural physical laws. The problem with that is that the laws cannot always explain everything and one is left with the question of where the original matter came from, and how and why it exploded.

This godless theory of the origin of the universe states that all the matter in the universe was once condensed into an infinitely small dot that contained an infinite amount of mass and energy. This dot exploded (no explanation for the explosion is ever given) and the explosion formed all the chemical elements. By some unknown process, protons and neutrons were able to come together to form nuclei, and then

by some other unknown process, these new nuclei were able to combine with the appropriate number of electrons. This explosion threw matter out into space for millions and billions of years. At some point, gravity became an effective force (no explanation is given for why particles of matter would start to attract together rather than continue to expand out into space) and matter began to clump into primordial swirling gases. These clouds of swirling gases formed the first protogalaxies which were cold and dark and without stars. From these *cold* protogalaxies came the galaxies: clusters of stars which are *very hot*, burning stellar objects. It is of interest to note that not all scientists agree with the Big Bang Theory, and many have never agreed with it at all." *Creation Resources Trust*

"For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent" (1 Corinthians 1. 19).

It is the same worldly wisdom which denies the work of God in creation, as that which denies that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. This ignorance of man caused the cross at Calvary to be set up, and the Saviour to be crucified. However, as at the cross, so in creation, God will always have the last word.

Editor

BBC "BIG BANG DAY" CRITICISED

The BBC has been accused of over-the-top reporting and secular bias in its coverage of the Collider experiment in Geneva, reports the Christian Institute.

Radio 4 designated Wednesday 10 September as "big-bang-day" to coincide with the start of the massive physics experiment using the Large Hadron Collider.

The publicly-funded broadcaster dedicated hours of coverage to the event, with suggestions that the experiment would unlock the secrets of the universe and throw light on what happened after the so-called "big bang."

But the reporting has drawn stinging criticism. Newspaper

columnist, Stephen Glover, says the BBC's coverage was "utterly preposterous" and "barmy." "Perhaps this is what happens when non-scientists, who comprise the great majority of the BBC's editorial staff, attempt to assess the importance of complex scientific experiments," he said.

"But I think there is more to it than that. The BBC represents a materialist, mechanistic consensus which has rejected God and deludes itself that science is capable of providing a complete explanation of existence. Hence the ludicrously inflated claims that are being made of what is going on near Geneva."

Christian Institute

BIBLE WORDS/WORDS OF SCRIPTURE (XII)

Priest

We read of priests many times in the Bible. The priesthood was a position which God appointed; certain men were chosen by God to be priests. They had a particular role, especially in worship. The priest was one who stood between God and man.

Why was it necessary for there to be priests? In the garden of Eden there was perfect harmony between God and Adam until man sinned by disobeying the command of God and taking the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Then Adam and Eve, knowing that they had sinned, were afraid and hid themselves from God. God is perfectly holy and righteous and hates sin. He must punish sin. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." He is a consuming fire and if a sinner were to approach God directly, he would be consumed.

In mercy, God appointed priests to go between Himself and sinners. They were to make prayers of confession for the people, and to offer sacrifices to God for the sins of the people. So priests were a continual reminder of the holiness of God.

In the days of the children of Israel, God chose from the tribe of Levi those that attended to the ceremonies of the tabernacle and the temple. They were consecrated for their

office, and were given special clothes to wear. From among them was the High Priest, who performed the sacrifice each year on the Day of Atonement, and took the blood of the sacrifice into the holiest of all, on behalf of the people.

The office of priest pointed to One who should come, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the great High Priest and He stands between a sinner and a holy God. The high priests of old had to make a sacrifice for themselves because they were sinners, but not so the Lord Jesus. He is sinless and the beloved Son of God 'in whom He is well pleased.' The Lord Jesus gave Himself a sacrifice for all His people and God accepted that sacrifice. The Lord Jesus Christ has now ascended into heaven, that holy place, taking His own precious blood. There He intercedes for His people, and each for whom that precious blood was shed will certainly come to heaven.

Sadly, these days we may hear the word "priest" used to describe officials in the Church of England, in Roman Catholicism or other denominations, but really this is blasphemous. To use this title is, in effect, to say that the death of the Lord Jesus is not sufficient to save sinners from their sin. But the atonement once made by the Lord Jesus means that there is no need now for another sacrifice or for the office of a priest on earth. God's people may now approach Him with reverence and godly fear at His mercy seat.

Old Testament priests did not always carry out their duties faithfully, and we read of the sins of some of them. But the Lord Jesus is the perfect High Priest. The Apostle Paul, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, explains the perfections of Christ compared with the Old Testament priests. Christ has compassion on the ignorant and them that are out of the way. He is a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. He is 'touched with the feeling of the infirmities' of His people. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

Contributed

*BIBLE STUDY FOR THE OLDER ONES***CHRIST IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS****Joseph**

Joseph, as a person, is one of the most beautiful types of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament.

He was especially loved of his father. So was the Lord Jesus Christ

He was despised and hated by his brethren. The Lord Jesus “came unto His own, and His own received Him not.”

He was sold for 20 pieces of silver. The Lord Jesus was sold by Judas Iscariot for 30 pieces of silver.

In Potiphar’s house he was falsely accused and cast into prison. So the Lord Jesus was falsely accused.

Joseph was elevated to the second ruler in the kingdom of Egypt immediately from prison. We read of our Lord Jesus: “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2. 5-11).

When Joseph was reunited with his brethren he wept tears of love and joy. The Lord Jesus on the cross of Calvary prayed: “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”

We see the spirit of Christ in Joseph after his father, Jacob, died. “And when Joseph’s brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him. And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying, So shall ye say unto Joseph,

Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil: and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him. And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we be thy servants. And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them” (Genesis 50. 15-21).

The wicked Jews meant evil towards the Lord Jesus when they took Him and crucified Him, but God meant it for good, for the salvation of His people.

May the God of heaven open your eyes to behold the glory of Christ in all the Scriptures.

J.R. Rutt

BIBLE QUESTIONS

This month the questions are about TEACHING AND LEARNING. 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. What did the disciples ask Jesus to teach them? (Luke 11. 1)
2. What was different about the teaching of the Lord Jesus compared to that of the scribes? (Matthew 7. 29)
3. Who “heareth his father’s instruction” and who “despiseth his father’s instruction”? (Proverbs 13. 1 & 15. 5)
4. What hard lesson did the Apostle Paul say he had learned in Philipians 4. 11?
5. Which king was looking for those who were “cunning in knowledge, and understanding science”? (Daniel 1. 4)
6. The king in question 5 had to learn some hard lessons, too. Write out a few words from Daniel 4 which you think best

describe what he learned.

7. In Psalm 27, what did David want to be taught and where did he want to be led?
8. Who did the Apostle Paul say should be "apt to teach"? (1 Timothy 3; 2 Timothy 2)
9. Jesus, quoting from Isaiah, said, "And they shall be all taught of God." What will one who has "heard and learned of the Father" do? (John 6)
10. Who in the Bible said, "I have learned by experience that the LORD hath blessed me for thy sake"?

ANSWERS TO NOVEMBER QUESTIONS

1. Hezekiah.
2. "Come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."
3. Hannah was weeping because she had no children, and her adversary provoked her sore to make her fret.
4. Mary Magdalene. "Mary".
5. At the grave of Lazarus at Bethany.
6. Beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. (Isaiah 61. 3)
7. Josiah. (2 Chronicles 34. 27)
8. "Thy sins are forgiven." "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." (Luke 7. 48, 50)
9. "Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh." "Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep." (Luke 6. 21, 25)
10. The raising from the dead of the widow of Nain's son (Luke 7. 13). The raising of Jairus' daughter. (Luke 8. 52)

Contributed

THE FRIEND OF SINNERS

One there is, above all others,
 Well deserves the name of Friend:
 His is love beyond a brother's:
 Costly, free, and knows no end;
 They who once His kindness prove,
 Find it everlasting love.

Which of all our friends, to save us,
 Could, or would, have shed his blood?
But the Saviour died to have us
 Reconciled in Him to God:
 This was boundless love indeed!
 Jesus is a Friend in need.

When He lived on earth abasèd,
 “Friend of sinners” was His name;
Now, above all glory raisèd,
 He rejoices in the same:
 Still He calls them brethren, friends,
 And to all their wants attends.

Could we bear from one another
 What He daily bears from us?
Yet this glorious Friend and Brother
 Loves us though we treat Him thus;
 Though for good we render ill,
 He accounts us brethren still.

O, for grace our hearts to soften!
 Teach us, Lord, at length to love:
We alas! forget too often
 What a Friend we have above:
 But when home our souls are brought,
 We shall love Thee as we ought.

J. Newton

They are truly happy who are taught to say of Jesus: “This is my Friend.” May it be so of each of us.

Editor

THE FRIENDLY COMPANION

*A Monthly Magazine for Children
and Young People*

Editor: G.D. Buss

2008
Volume 134

GOSPEL STANDARD PUBLICATIONS
12(b) ROUNDWOOD LANE, HARPENDEN,
HERTS. AL5 3BZ

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OUR MAGAZINES

Through the mercy of God we are brought to the end of another year and another volume of the *Friendly Companion*. With deep gratitude we acknowledge the help the Lord has provided in giving willing hearts and pens to assist the Editor in so many ways to produce the magazine month by month. Also the encouraging support of many of our readers gives us courage to venture on with the Lord's help.

May it please the Lord in these dark and un-spiritual days to use our weak efforts to awaken some careless young sinners and encourage young believers in the narrow way which leadeth unto life.

"Brethren, pray for us."

G D Buss, December 2008